

Report Submitted to the M.P Forest Department.

Training rural residents as Naturalist
Guides:
Introductory training program at Satpura
National Park, Madhya Pradesh.

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Introduction to the project

In highly populated India wildlife cannot be seen in isolation and the people who live in and near nature areas and interact with wildlife have to play a participative role in its BIOTA Para-ecologists in conservation. The two serious issues that are threatening the future of the India's natural areas and wildlife are ever increasing direct dependence on natural resources and employment of rural Indians. National Parks are playing a bigger role in promoting natural- history- based tourism (ecotourism) (*Pia Paaby, David B. Clark, Hector Gonzaliz, 1991*). And in India the gradual increase of visitors to National parks supports this view. As of now there are virtually no naturalist training schools in India that offer short courses to people who wish to pursue a career as a Naturalist. The few Institutes that do offer courses offer courses as academic programs (W.I.I, WCS- Indian Program, Salim Ali Institute of Ecology, etc) and are more science based programs. Often an interested person joins a wildlife resort and learns from his peers. The lodge owners usually look at the "gab of the mouth" and how presentable the person is to the clients as the basic qualification than the amount of knowledge the person has on interpreting nature to their clients. And majority of so called naturalists positions are filled up by men (the Indian wildlife tourism field is not yet an equal opportunity employer) from "well to do" backgrounds usually with a city education. The park management on the other hand recruits locals as guides and a guide is allotted to every tourist vehicle that enters the National Park. The local guides earn a stipulated amount of money (between 100-200 Indian rupees/ trip). The Park management conducts a 3-5 day introductory training course in wildlife to all the local guides at the start of the season (Usually in October). The guides are poorly equipped and most times do not even have a binocular at their disposal. Their English speaking skills are poor and their knowledge on nature and wildlife is what they pick up from their colleagues, which is most times inaccurate information. There is a big difference in the amount of money earned by the park guides and the naturalists employed by the local tourist resorts. This particular rural guides training project is a well thought out initiative of Mr. Hashim Tyabji, the wildlife board of M.P and others. The idea was to take inputs from biologists and experienced naturalists and to design a program that will focus on key aspects of nature and wildlife that will prove useful to develop the guiding standards of the rural locals. Further the guides also have a responsible role as local conservation advocates. This method may effectively raise the guiding standard of the rural guides and give them an opportunity to earn reasonable amount of income from wildlife and nature tourism.

Project execution

The program

An introductory 10 day training program is designed to impart various components of natural history, ecology, wildlife tracking and understanding wildlife. This would be followed by a program on Bird watching skills, identifying local plants and trees and guest handling skills.

I designed the mammal component of the training and it will be presented to an "Extension Expert" identified by the Park Authorities. The extension expert is expected to have a good grasp of the local language and some experience in executing training projects. In a program of this nature the extension expert is expected to have working knowledge of ecological concepts and wildlife, good grasp of local language, to have an understanding of the local cultures, respect for the locals and lots of patience.

The project will comprise of class room theoretical sessions, small assignments, discussions, demonstrations, documentary films and lots of field work.

Recommended schedule for the day

Start at 6.30 Am

Field trip.

1. Stop at a place and do some class room work.
2. Demonstrations and Field exercises follow.

Lunch and a small break.

Start at 3.30 PM

1. Filed sessions followed by class room session.

5:30 PM – 7.00 PM

Discussions on the learning from the day and a film on wildlife.

Post program follow up

After the 10 days of training an evaluation will be done to understand the impact of the program on the trainee.

Based on the feedback. A training program with 2-3 years in mind will be planned. Training will be a regular input that will be imparted to the rural guides to update and hone their knowledge, to keep them motivated and to increase their income earning capacity. A knowledgeable and a friendly guide will always earn more.

Contents

Day 1

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| • A Classification of the Senses lesson will teach the participants how to observe, describe and compare. |
| • Class Demonstration |
| • Field Assignment |
| • Discussion |

Day 2

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| • Observations & Senses and Introduction to Journaling |
| • Introduction to simple English words used commonly in wildlife (common names of popular trees in English, names of animals in English, etc) |
| • Field Assignment |
| • Evening: A wildlife film and discussion on the animal. Use a black board to describe the animal and its habitat. |

Day 3

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| • Class Room : Fundamentals of ecology |
| • What is an ecosystem? |
| • What is a Habitat? |
| • What are tropical dry deciduous forests? |
| • Food chains and food webs? |
| • <u>Afternoon</u> :Field exercise and on the field discussion on; |
| • Planning and reconnaissance for a nature trail |

Day 4

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| • Class room: Guiding in National parks and role of a naturalist. |
| • Afternoon : Demonstration on how the above work. On field. |
| • Evening Wildlife film |

Day 5

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| • Tracks and Signs – Field exercise. |
| • Observing tracks and signs on the field. |
| • Using the Field guide on tracks and signs. |

Day 6

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| • Tracks and Signs – Field exercise. |
| • Observing tracks and signs on the field. Using the tracks and signs book. |
| • Making casts and measuring tracks. |

Day 7

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| • Field demonstration on Observing animals |
| • Protocols: Wildlife watching and the best ways to watch wildlife. |

Day 8

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction, fundamental ecological concepts: forest structure, types. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using binoculars effectively. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evening exercise, Using boats for nature trips. |

Day 9

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amphibians and reptiles: Distinguishing poisonous and non poisonous snakes. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the ecology of the aquatic ecosystem. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spending a day near a stream or a water body and learning the about the influence of an aquatic ecosystem on terrestrial wildlife, aquatic wildlife and bird life. |

Day 10

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to Threats to wildlife. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feed back. |

The Training

The first introductory training module was conducted from 22nd – 28th September 2008 in Madhai.

The original training module was to cover 10 days. However, time constraints required this to be reduced to 7 ½ days.

(Annexure)

Feed back from individual course trainers on the modules they delivered.

Date 22-9-08

Time :0730 – 0830 hrs

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Component particulars Introduction of first batch of trainees.

How it was delivered : Short individual interviews with particulars on background, daily functions of each trainee recorded.

Your reflection on the exercise: The boys from the Churna area had not arrived so this exercise had to be repeated in the day.

How the trainees may have felt: Several of them appeared to be hesitant and unsure of themselves but gained confidence by being treated as equals.

Improvements you suggest.: A necessary selection stage which should have been done only when the entire group from Churna had arrived and the final selection made.

Date 22-9-08

Time :0900 - 1130 hrs

Component particulars: Introduction to guiding and to the basic field kit that should be carried and brief instructions of how to use this kit.

Training component delivery :

Instructors reflection on the exercise: The boys from the Churna area had not arrived so this exercise had to be repeated in the day.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt: Several of them appeared to be hesitant and unsure of themselves but gained confidence by being treated as equals.

Instructors suggestions on this component: A final selection of the trainee candidates should have been made only after the entire group from Churna had arrived.

Date 22-9-08

Time :1300 - 1630 hrs

Component particulars: Final selection of trainee candidates

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji, M. Pathak, Dy. Director Satpura TR & R. Srivastatva

Training component delivery : The candidates from the Churna/Khokrapar area had arrived in the meantime. The total number of candidates was 25. Along with the Deputy Director Mr. M Pathak and the Range Officer Mr. R. Srivastava, it was agreed that only 10 people should be selected for training. The selection process was via a simple interview designed to test the candidates interest in wildlife and their wildlife knowledge.

Instructors reflection on the exercise: Ideally this should have happened a day earlier allowing us another extra day of training. However, since this was the first time for everyone and candidates were coming from a long way, these minor delays are inevitable. They can be avoided in the next round of training.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt: Initially tense and very nervous as senior officers were members of the selection panel. On realising this officers left Hashim Tyabji (principal instructor) alone to make the selection. Candidates remained nervous and there was disappointment amongst those who failed to get selected.

Instructors suggestions on this component.: Better communication with the candidates so that they are prepared for selection prior to arriving for training.

Date 22-9-08

Time :1730 - 2030 hrs

Component particulars: Audio visual presentation of the park and wildlife

Resource Person: Shri. M. Pathak, Dy. Director Satpura TR.

Training component delivery : Digital slide presentation with commentary by Mr. Pathak

Instructors reflection on the exercise : Excellent introduction to the park.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : Seemed very interested and stimulated by seeing and learning about the variety of wildlife in the park.

Instructors suggestions on this component : More such audio-visual presentations and films should be organised during training.

Date: 23-9-08

Time :0630 - 0800 hrs

Component particulars: Introduction to guiding

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery: The background to why a tourist comes was discussed; the personal and organisational requirements for a guide – punctuality, advance preparation of logistics; personal neatness and hygiene. Behaviour inside the park and how to brief visitors courteously while firmly ensuring acceptable behaviour by explaining clearly the logic behind the Do's & Don'ts.

Importance of knowledge and the ability to communicate the guides sense of excitement and enthusiasm about the jungle and wildlife; the importance of gradually converting visitors to an appreciation of the entire eco-system rather than a few charismatic species. This package was delivered through interactive discussions, short demonstrations and individual exercises and mock scenarios.

This exercise was rounded off by a few minutes of work on the essential equipment for a nature guide – binoculars, field guides, tape, notebook and pen, torch and magnifying glass. The trainees were divided into groups of 3 and each group had the mentioned field kit except binoculars of which there were only 2 pairs which were shared around.

Instructors reflection on the exercise : This is an essential and neglected aspect of training since emphasis is always on the accumulation of technical knowledge. The actual 'guiding' skills are side-lined. This area has to be re-in forced through regular revisions and monitoring. Every day during the training period 30 minutes was always put aside to revisit this element of the training.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : Once they grasped the logic and essential importance of what was being explained to them they became very attentive because they understood that client satisfaction translates into added earning on the one hand and adherence and respect to the rules and courtesies and protocol of wildlife watching would ensure continued employment on the other.

Instructors suggestions on this component : Access to more equipment like more binoculars.

Date: 23-9-08

Time : 0800 - 0900 hrs

Component particulars: Practicing the use of binoculars and key points that aid identification of birds and mammals. Use of field guides.

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery : The main functioning parts of binoculars explained and each trainee was given 10 minutes to get some familiarity with looking at birds and mammals using these. Identification techniques were carefully explained using guide books and checking plants, birds, butterflies and mammals in the field. The importance of being able to identify and name the various parts was stressed and how colour and characteristics were to be identified through careful observation without jumping to conclusions until every part corresponded with the identified species. Habitat and habit were also stressed. All this was

done using the examples of various species of fauna and flora to be seen in and around the Madhai meadow.

Instructors reflection on the exercise : This is a vital aspect of naturalist training and much more time needs to be spent on this during the incremental training over the next several months. Close and careful observation is a habit that needs to be cultivated.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : Some of them understood the principles immediately but a few struggled (right through the training) with the first principle of identification – not jumping to conclusions.

Instructors suggestions on this component : Access to more equipment like more binoculars, field guides in Hindi are essential.

Date: 23-9-08

Time :1000 - 1330 hrs

Component particulars: Practical training of guiding during a wildlife/nature walk.

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery : The entire process was rehearsed for the trainees from pre-activity preparation to client briefing. Then each trainee was made to lead the walk for about 20 minutes. Emphasis was on field craft, identification and observation of tracks, droppings and other sign, communication with clients, control and safety procedures – especially when confronted by bear or tiger.

Instructors reflection on the exercise : This is the primary function of a guide and this is the area where natural history, field craft and guiding skills intersect. No amount of training can ever be enough.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : They responded very positively to this exercise and even the quietest got an understanding of what was required of them. This was also an excellent opportunity for them to interact with each other and learn from each other.

Instructors suggestions on this component : This exercise can be more structured in the future with smaller-size class groups to more effectively instruct the trainees.

Date: 23-9-08

Time :1500 - 1700 hrs

Component particulars: Classroom exercise on the broad division of mammals into carnivore and herbivore. The natural history of tigers, leopards, wild dogs. Their prey species and the habits of these. What is a habitat?

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery : In a classroom setting with field notes being dictated, re-enforcement of knowledge through constant question and answer exercises which also draws out their observations and local knowledge.

Instructors reflection on the exercise : These classroom exercises whether held in the field or in a slightly more formal setting are a vital medium through which key technical information and data is transmitted and taken on board. It also allows the trainer to regularly monitor the learning capacity of individuals and also assess the effectiveness of his/her teaching methods.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : Many of them were clearly challenged by this type of 'book learning' and structured thinking but were also intrigued by linking basic information like tiger size and food requirement with abstract concepts of territoriality and the future of the tiger. As also the linkages between types of habitat, prey density and tiger numbers.

Instructors suggestions on this component : This training needs to be more structured. Unfortunately the field notes that had been translated into Hindi were not available due to a logistical glitch.

Date: 23-9-08

Time :1715 - 1930 hrs

Component particulars: Nature walk – observing wildlife on foot without disturbing it.

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery : A long walk was taken through the Madhai meadow and then east. Walking silently without quick movement, watching for wildlife signs in the jungle and observing and communicating with others was practiced. Basic field craft was also practiced. Seeing wildlife and then positioning oneself and group in such a way as to remain unobserved while allowing the wildlife to approach and the advantages of sitting still waiting for animals to come to one rather than pursuing them was underlined.

Instructors reflection on the exercise : Gaur and deer were seen at close quarters and several birds and alarm calls etc were heard and interpreted. Again this is what wildlife guiding was all about and these kind of exercises hugely stimulate the enthusiasm of the trainees and make kindle the joys of wildlife viewing in them.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : There were thoroughly excited and enthused with this and voted it one of the best experiences they had had.

Instructors suggestions on this component : More trainers would mean smaller groups.

Date: 24-9-08

Time :0630 - 0800 hrs

Component particulars : Revision of various elements of previous training. Special emphasis on classroom work regarding the natural history of key species and habitats.

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery : In a class room type of setting through question and answers.

Instructors reflection on the exercise : Revision has to be done to ensure that there is constant reflection and revision on what has gone on and to allow trainees to seize on key pieces of information.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : Not sure – but they seemed to understand the importance of this.

Instructors suggestions on this component : Not really

Date: 24-9-08

Time :0800 - 0900 hrs

Component particulars: Field observation of birds and mammals and identification exercises using binoculars.

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery : Using binoculars and field guides.

Instructors reflection on the exercise : Essential field skills.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : Enthusiastic. This is the activity they all clearly enjoyed.

Instructors suggestions on this component : Access to more equipment like more binoculars, guide books in Hindi to be stocked as many as available.

Date: 24-9-08

Time :0930 – 1415 hrs & 1600 - 1830

Component particulars: Field excursion learning to identify plants and trees. Basics of botany. Differentiating between trees, shrubs and herbs. Basics of grassland ecology. Habitat use, natural history of gaur, cheetal and sambar. The meaning and importance of ecotones.

Resource Person: Mr. N.S. Dungriyal, Field Director Satpura Tiger Reserve

Training component delivery : Field exercise walking around the Madhai meadow and fringing woodland. Through questions and answers and active interaction drawing out the fund of local knowledge available amongst the trainees.

Instructors reflection on the exercise : A huge amount of information was delivered in a very digestible manner and informally using an interactive method of teaching that fully involved each trainee. It also served to emphasise for the trainees the importance of what they were doing given the fact that the field director was devoting an entire day of his time to them. Good for morale.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : Many of them had increased self-confidence when they realised how much they themselves knew. It also served to structure their traditional knowledge.

Instructors suggestions on this component : More such exercises need to be held but with the aid of Hindi field guides.

Date: 25-9-08

Time : 6.30 AM to 10.30 AM, 12.00 – 1.30 PM, 3.30 PM to 6.00PM

Component particulars: Walking through the forest looking for signs and tracks. Accurately identifying signs and tracks and making interpretations on the behaviour of animals.

Introduction to record keeping.

Tracks and Signs.

Resource Person: Shekhar Kolipaka

How it was delivered :

The big group was divided into 4 small groups. Each was given a task while walking through the forest. The 4 different group tasks were to look for animal tracks and signs on the ground, looking for bird nests, looking for animal signs on trees, keeping an ear for calls of animals and birds.

Your reflection on the exercise: I had to show them a few things initially and had to make sure that no one spoke and maintained contact with whistles and calls only. It soon revealed that the students had a knack to looking for things in the forest and quickly all sorts of hidden animal signs were being discovered. Along with the discovery of signs came stories that were related to the signs from some of the students. Some were interesting old village folk stories, some were nothing more than myths and superstitions. I found this the best time to explain about each of the discovered signs and this was how most of the classroom explanation was conducted, on the field in-front of the subject.

Record keeping: The idea was to make the subjects document what they see on a note pad. Date and Time of sighting, Area of the sighting (with a close reference point), Accurate description of the observation, Number of individuals (if animals or birds), spoor measurement, other relevant information.

How the trainees may have felt: Most were very curious and paid a lot of attention to the session. However I felt that they did not express enough until questioned or asked.

Improvements you suggest: Classroom tools like a white board, TV and a CD player and some stationary should be readily available for use.

Record keeping is a habit that will develop only with repeated practice. It has to be strictly enforced and it will take time to get precise and accurate.

Date: 26-9-08

Time : 6:30 AM – 9.30 AM, 9: 30 AM to 11:30 AM, 11.30 to 2.30 PM break, 2.00 PM to 3.00PM, 3.20PM to 6.45 PM

Component particulars:

- a) Recording animal Tracks and Signs while walking through the forest.
- b) Observing animals from a stationary point.
- c) Using binoculars.
- d) Walking through a forest looking for animals and counting them.

Resource Person: Shekhar Kolipaka

How it was delivered:

- a) Animal signs and tracks were recorded from the field just like on 25th. 4 teams observed determined and recorded signs and tracks found in the forest.
- b) Pairs of students were made to sit and observe from strategic points for 2 hours. They were to quietly observe, listen and record all sightings, sounds of wildlife activity around them. They were to return to a predetermined point exactly after 2 hours. The recordings of observations were later discussed in the class room.
- c) Each student was personally shown the parts of a binocular and to use binoculars effectively for wildlife viewing. They were given exercises that included finding objects hidden in trees (like nests and hollows), counting birds in a flock and establishing the herd composition of deer.
- d) The students were split I to two groups and were made to walk in two different directions through a forest track of c. 5 kilometers. Each group was further divided into two sub- groups. One sub- group had to look for animal tracks and identify the animal accurately and established the direction in which the animal was moving. While the other sub – group looked cautiously for animals and having discovered them count number of individuals, record animal reaction and note behaviour observed.

Your reflection on the exercise:

Large groups can be noisy and animals get easily alert in the forest. However it's an excellent way to introduce students to counting animals while on foot. Especially like in a line transact.

How the trainees may have felt: Their understanding of animal signs and tracks was limited and it demonstrated that while walking most times the animals saw us first. This was totally in contract to what they observed while they sat down in a place quietly. They saw a lot more and could enjoy the sightings in detail while they sat down and observed. Most of them enjoyed their time out in the forest and enjoyed the exercises and reported some amazing behavior accurately.

Improvements you suggest: These exercises have to be repeated and re-repeated and the students have to be tested frequently.

Date: 27-9-08

Time : 0700 - 1330

Component particulars: Observation, identification and recording of species and sign encountered on a long walk. Exercise conducted as a mock nature walk with paying visitors.

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery : We drove out to Kali Mati waterhole and walked back cross country in a virtually direct line to madhai – observing as much as possible and identifying and talking about it as with a clients. Each trainee was given an opportunity to lead in a rolling rota.

Instructors reflection on the exercise: Re-in forced observation skills and sharpened the ability to see signs and small creatures that previously went un-noticed. Thus we saw spider, a toad in it's hole, Its of sign and old kills, a cat snake curled up on a teak leaf and quite hidden and much else. It was also interesting to see the variation in ability at this point after almost a week of training and also of interest. This training is the basic foundation from which the trainees can go the next step of identifying the individual species and also memorising their English names.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : The best of them remained engaged and focused right through this long exercise. They recognise that this kind of training teaches them all the basics of their trade and they appeared to enjoy the challenges of such a task.

Instructors suggestions on this component : Binoculars are a must – at least 1 pair for every two trainees and Hindi field guides.

Date: 27-9-08

Time : 1430 - 1530

Component particulars: Revision of all that was seen earlier and question and answer session regarding the natural history of various species that had already been taught earlier and in light of the morning's exercise.

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery : Question and answers and review of their notes and records.

Instructors reflection on the exercise : Essential revision.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : N/A

Instructors suggestions on this component : N/A

Date: 27-9-08

Time : 1600 - 1930

Component particulars: Watching and approaching wildlife – applying field craft as learned over the training period.

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery : Boat to the Denwa – Sonbhadra Mel and walk back to Madhai in groups of 4 – 2 guides and 2 trainee foresters.

Instructors reflection on the exercise : A fun and useful end of training exercise which was rewarding as everyone saw quite a lot of wildlife but some groups missed many of the signs along the way. It was in that sense a test of how far they still needed to go to really qualify as proper guides.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : They always enjoyed this type of exercise.

Instructors suggestions on this component : Trainee guides and guards should not be mixed in such large groups.

Date: 28-9-08

Time : 0630 - 1100

Component particulars: Basic test for guides in a class room rather field setting.

Resource Person: Hashim Tyabji

Training component delivery : Four basic questions were asked al of them:

1. Describe all preparations and organisation needed to be made prior to receiving guests and then taking them into the jungle.
2. A question on the natural history of gaur that had been talked about repeatedly.
3. Ditto on tiger
4. Questions on field craft

Instructors reflection on the exercise : The test scores are given on a 1 – 5 points basis with 1 point being excellent and 5 being unsatisfactory. So lower points mean a better result.

Instructors view on how the trainees may have felt : Nervous!.

Instructors suggestions on this component : With more time and for the next course – a structured field test along the lines of Shekhar Kolipaka's comprehensive test.

Trainee Evaluation

Ten trainees were selected including 3 regular guides from Madhai + 2 others from Madhai + 1 from Pattan and 5 from Churna/Khakrapara. In addition two others joined in who are daily wage staffs at Madhai. No Pass/Fail evaluation was done – simply an assessment of their knowledge at the end of the training based on a short test (see above) + trainers’ general assessment and remarks. Over this relatively short but intensive period of training the resource persons were able to arrive at some conclusions about the trainees. Based on this we have decided to place them provisionally into three categories. The Category 1 boys can be used as walking guides with a supplement to the fee although they will have to be supported for some time by someone who can translate for English speaking clients and who is also more knowledgeable about the birds. This way each excursion will also be a training exercise. We are additionally trying to organize a 6 month English-speaking course to the selected trainees.

Grading was based on:

1 means good – 5 bad. So more points mean a negative, unfavorable rating.

Knowledge of wildlife	5 points
Ability to express and converse	5 points
Interest shown by the student during the training	5 points
Ability to operate individually	5 points

Total	20 points

HARI PRASAD BATTI (KAMTI - Madhai Guide)

Test score (see above) 6

General evaluation: Experienced, balanced keen to learn and knowledgeable. Has a responsible attitude. Some English. Can quickly grasp and master facts and detail and is good in the field.

JEEVAN LAL (PATTAN)

Test score 12

General evaluation: Very keen and willing to learn. Genuinely excited about being in the jungle and watching wildlife. Very young and gets nervous. Needs to improve his communication and ability to take on board facts and concepts. No English at all.

MUKESH YADAV (CHURNA)

Test score 10

Is knowledgeable in the field to but jumps to conclusions and makes up stories on the flimsiest or no evidence. Is easily tired and becomes impatient. Finds structured learning difficult. But has potential – good communication skills. No English.

RAM KISHORE OIKE (CHURNA)

Test score 14

Evaluation: Painfully shy and lacks self confidence. However, is knowledgeable about trees and plants – perhaps the best of the trainees in that department. However, he is slow and seems to find learning quite difficult. No English.

SHYAM DAS YADAV (CHURNA)

Test Score 7

Evaluation: Enthusiastic, knowledgeable with excellent field craft. Communication needs working on. No English.

ASHISH KUMAR PANDEY (SUHAGPUR)

Test score 6

Evaluation: Very enthusiastic and keen on wildlife and endlessly curious. Confident manner and communication is good. Slightly long-winded but that is a curable disease! Very observant and learning field craft fast. No English.

RAMESHWAR SINGH (SARANGPUR)

Test score 6

Evaluation: Intelligent, organized and quick learner but diffident and has much to learn in the field. Some English.

SANTOSH YADAV (CHURNA)

Test score 7

Evaluation: Keen, conscientious with some knowledge. Has a hard time putting lessons learned into practice. Has good potential. No English.

NARESH YADAV (MADHAI – working as temporary staff)

Test score 9

Evaluation: His potential is much greater than suggested by his test score. He is thoughtful, keen and very observant. He also thinks beyond the obvious and looks for reasons.

HARI LAL KASDEY (TEKAPAR – Madhai guide)

Test score 4

Evaluation: Experienced, very keen to learn, thoughtful. Reasonable communication skills and self confidence. Quick to pick up on field craft. Excellent potential. Little English.

JAGDISH (KAMTI – Madhai guide)

Test score 6

Evaluation: Experienced and knowledgeable about plants. Can get distracted. Of the three existing guides the one I would be most careful about. Has potential. Little English.

KANHAIYA LAL THAKUR (SARANGPUR – daily wage driver at Madhai)

Test score 4

Evaluation: Very intelligent and confident and good all round. Has to decide to stay as a driver or become a full time guide. Has excellent potential.

BHAGAN SINGH (CHURNA)

Test score 13

Evaluation: Is comfortable in the jungle but has surprisingly large gaps in his knowledge of the jungle. Also finds it difficult to grasp concepts and facts. Is very keen.

Short listed candidates:

Category 1 – potential as walking guides

- Kanhaiya Lal Thakur
- Ashish Kumar Pandey
- Naresh Yadav
- Shyam Das Yadav
- Hari Prasad
- Hari Lal

Category 2 – regular guides

- Santosh Yadav
- Jeevan lal
- Mukesh Yadav
- Jagdish
- Rameshwar Singh

Category 3 – Need more work to be guides

- Ram Kishore Oike
- Bhagan Singh

The next step

Shekhar Koliapka: My personal recommendation

- The selected individuals should be trained while on duty.
- A 2 year training course split into three levels (1, 2, and 3) will be designed and the selected guides will go through a continuous training which will include study modules like mentioned below.
- The core idea is not to allow the initial enthusiasm that has been generated slacken.
- The course is designed to teach trainers and the trainers in turn pick up individual modules and start the training program.
- A monitoring of the trainers will be done by the select group while the trainees will be monitored through periodic tests (written and spoken).
- Periodic tests (written and spoken).

Proposed Course Modules:

Module # 1 Classification

Component # 1 Classification & Taxonomy

Component # 2 Evolution

Module # 2 Invertebrates

Component # 1 Introduction to Arachnids

Component # 2 Scorpions

Component # 3 Ticks & Mites

Component # 4 Spiders

Component # 5 Centipedes & Millipedes

Component # 6 Snails

Component # 7 Introduction to insects

Component # 8 Overview of Insect Orders

Module # 3 - Amphibia

Component # 1 Introduction to Amphibia and Frogs

Module # 4 - Reptiles

Component # 1 Introduction to Reptiles and Chelonia (Turtles and tortoise)

Component # 2 Lizards

Component # 3 Snakes

Component # 4 Crocodiles (Magar and Gharial)

Module # 5 Fish

Component # 1 Fish

Module # 6 - Birds

Component # 1 Introduction to Birds and Flight

Component # 2 Birds: General biology and Ecology

Component # 3 Falcons and Kestrels

Component # 4 Vultures

Component # 5 Kites and Buzzards

Component # 6 Eagles

Component # 7 Sparrowhawks, Goshawks, Harriers

Component # 8 Owls

Module # 7 - Mammals

Component # 1 Introduction to Mammals

Component # 2 Small mammals
Component # 3 Bats
Component # 4 Carnivora
Component # 5 Primates
Component # 6 Aquatic Mammals
Component # 7 Tiger
Component # 8 Leopard
Component # 9 Gaur
Component # 10 Deer
Component # 11 Antelope
Component # 12 Sloth Bear
Component # 13 Hyaena
Component # 14 Wild pig
Component # 15 Wild dog
Component #16 Elephant
Component # 17 Pangolins, Porcupine and Ratel
Component # 18 Otter
Component # 19 Rodents and Shrews

Module # 8 Ethology, Animal Behaviour

Component # 1 Introduction to Ethology
Component # 2 Social Organisation
Component # 3 Foraging and Predatory Behaviour
Component # 4 Communication
Component # 5 Grooming, Play and Sleeping behaviour
Component # 6 Territorial, Agonistic and Anti-predator behaviour
Component # 7 Sexual Behaviour & Parental care

Module # 9 - Botany

Component # 1 Introduction and General Overview of Plants
Component # 2 Lower Plants
Component # 3 Grasses
Component # 4 Checklist of common Tree species & characteristics
Component # 5 Detailed account of some common Tree Species

Module 10 - Ecology

Component # 1 Introduction to Ecology
Component # 2 Structural Components (biotic and abiotic)
Component # 3 Functional ecosystem Components
Component # 4 Climate and weather General (Central India)
Component # 5 Climate and weather Satpura region
Component # 6 Geomorphology, Geology and Soil
Component # 7 Dry Deciduous Forest Ecology
Component # 8 Ecosystem Dynamics

Module 11 Field Skills Part A

Component # 1 Anticipating animal behaviour
Component # 2 Approaching dangerous wildlife (On foot and vehicles)
Component # 3 Basic jungle navigation
Component # 4 First aid for snake bite
Component # 5 First aid for arthropods
Component # 6 The Night Skies
Component # 7 Principles of habitat management
Component # 8 Environmental sensitivity
Component # 9 Introduction to ecotourism
Component # 10 Local communities (Impact and involvement)
Component # 11 Sustainable tourism and sustainable utilisation

Module 12 Field Skills Part B

Component # 1 Animal census techniques – Tigers (Photo traps), Ungulates (line transects), Birds (Point counts)

- Component # 2 The Game drive vehicle, Spotlight & Boat
- Component # 3 Vehicle mechanics
- Component # 4 Planning game drives and jungle walks
- Component # 5 Dealing with guests
- Component # 6 Communication and Facilitation skills
- Component # 7 Working within the industry

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