

White PVC Pipe and Behaviour of a Hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*)

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There is a small sacred grove present around Shri Koteswar Mahadeo temple, near Shivgarh village in Sitamau Tehsil of Mandor district in Madhya Pradesh State. The temple is situated at the bank of river Gir. Old trees of *Anogeissus pendula* are present away from the banks while *Terminalia arjuna*, *Tamarindus indicus*, *Pongamia pinnata*, *Mitragyna parviflora*, *Crateva nurvala*, *Ficus religiosa*, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, *Phoenix sylvestris* are growing along the rocky banks of the river. Many tall trees of *Terminalia arjuna* are present in the river bed also. Many plants of xerophytic bush *Acacia jacquemontii* are also growing in the bouldery bed of the river.

At present, two water holes can be seen in the bed of Gir river adjacent to the temple area. One, called *Madakari (mandakini)* is near the exit path stair of the temple and another is half-a-kilometer away from the temple, called *Surajkund*. A few Hyaenas live in the dens, present in high rocky banks of Gir river near the temple. Surrounding areas have lost their forest cover completely and there is no suitable habitat left for Hyaenas. Since light vegetation cover and perennial water are available near the temple, Hyaenas live there despite high human disturbance.

On March 18, 2006, while surveying the biodiversity of Mandor district, I saw two Hyaenas around 1800hrs near a den in the proximity of the temple. When I approached

them, they skulked into the den. I saw one more active den near by. Fresh and old bones, brought by the Hyaenas were lying here and there near the dens. Foul smell was also present near a den.

After sunset, while returning, I saw a hyaena near Shivgarh village around 2100hrs. Probably it was one of the residents of temple dens. It was searching something behind a bush in a farmer's field. I stopped my jeep to have a better view but it ran away. I went to the spot, where the hyaena was present. A white PVC pipe of two inches diameter was lying in the field used for irrigation by the farmer. It was crushed badly by the Hyaena at two places. Probably the Hyaena was attracted to the white pipe mistaking it for a bone. It is difficult to say whether it was a case of misunderstanding or was just a play behaviour of the animal.

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