

FOOT PRINTS OF LEOPARD IN THE VICINITY OF LONAR CRATAR LAKE

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Abstract - Lonar crater lake is a biogeographical natural wonder found in Buldhana District of Maharashtra state India. It is the world's third largest meteoritic crater & only the saline water ecosystem in Basalt rock. It is situated between latitude of 19°58' and longitude 76°31'. The Lonar lake is India's largest and World's third largest meteoritic crater.

It is formed some 50,000 years ago (Lafound and Dietz 1964). The peculiarity of the lake lies in the presence of abundant spirulina in the salt water, total absence of fishes, & the common acoustic animals, dominant water bird fauna, presence of funnel spiders on the ground & huge height of the trees (Deshpande R.P. 2019.)

Keywords: Foot prints, Leopard, lonar Crater Lake.

INTRODUCTION

In Buldhana District about 125 km from Parbhani District there is a naturally formed lonar crater lake. Scientifically it has been proved that, it was formed about 52 to 60 thousand years ago due to the collapse of huge meteorite. The circumference of the lake is about 6 km towards the top & 3.5 km area is occupied with saline water. The lonar crater lake is a Biogeographical natural wonder with an assemblage of about 6 different kinds of ecosystems. It contains unique biodiversity with special features, due to which present two days visit was given.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

For the investigation of lonar crater lake about its faunal diversity Binocular and handycam of Sony company along with cell phone for obtaining geotag photographs of the spots were used. Along with this naked visual observations were also done & records have been mentioned at the spot.

RESULT & CONCLUSION

For the investigation of faunal diversity of lonar crater lake, Visit was given on 24 & 25 Dec. 2020. During the visit thorough investigation was made. Early in the morning when we have started our observation at that time for the first time we have observed the foot prints of Leopard in the vicinity of Lonar crater lake. Resident population also warned us about the presence of Leopard in the vicinity of lake. Besides that countless no of different fauna & flora were also observed. The other specialty of Lonar crater lake is presence of funnel & signature spiders in abundance. Geotag photographs also support the same thing. (Geo-tag photographs of foot prints of Leopard, funnel spider, flamingo birds.)

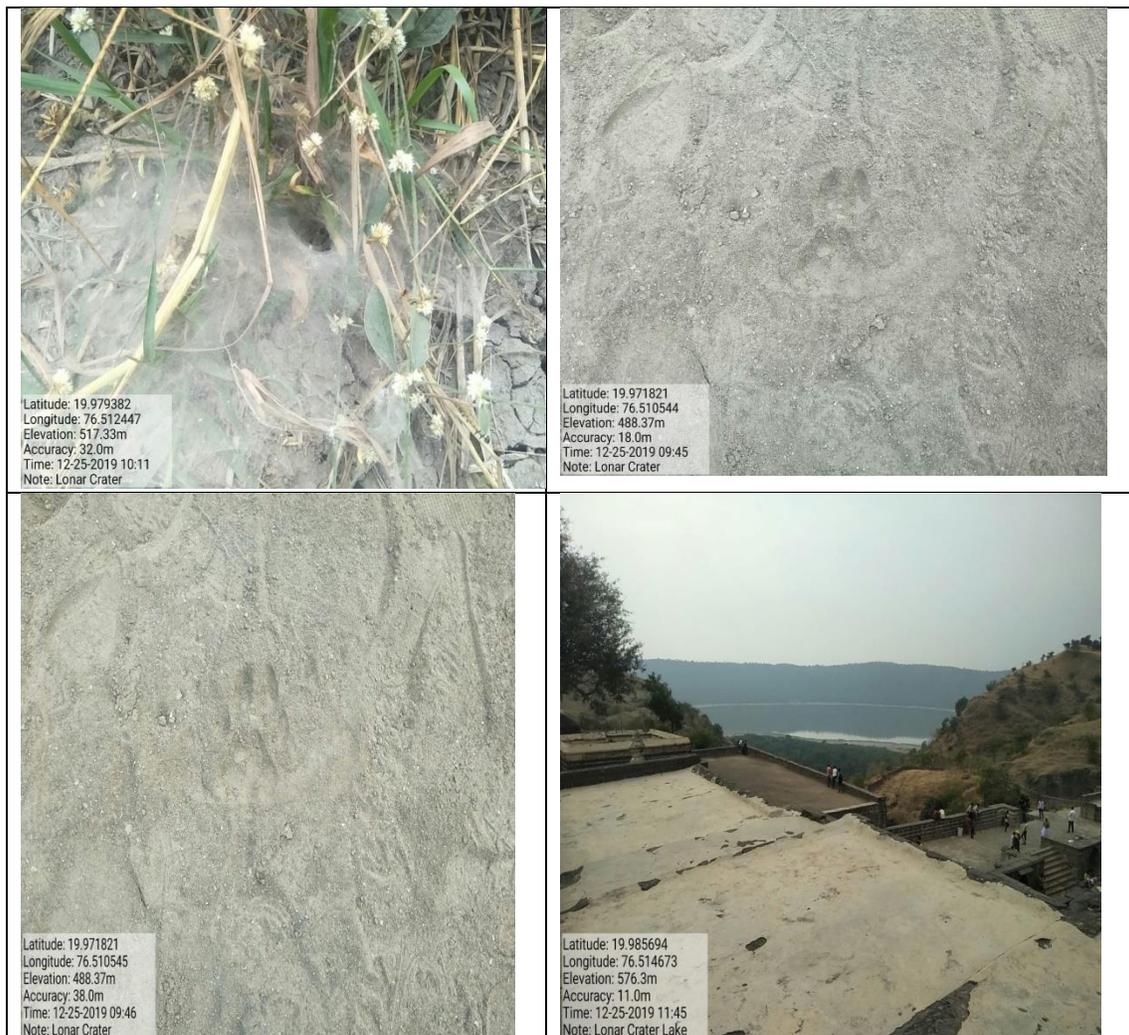
Another important observation was that in the lake water only one flamingo migratory bird was observed & the same was also photographed. Besides its natural unusual appearance different flora & fauna is inhabiting in the saline water & in the vicinity of loner crater lake, due to this present investigation has been taken for thorough study of faunal diversity.

The Lonar crater lake is highly rich in terms of biodiversity with its uniqueness. Around the saline lake water there is thick forest containing trees of various species. Badve 1993 studied the phytoplankton's of the lake consisting of eight genera of which three are dominant Viz spirulina, Arthrospira & oocillotria. Ghanekar (1996) identified 14 different genera of phytoplankton's of which spirulina was predominant. Due to the abundance of spirulina the waterbirds have considerably been

increased in population. During present survey on 25th Dec. 2020 morning only one migratory bird flamingo has been observed in lake water which was photographed. It has been proved by the study of previous workers that spirulinapopulationattractingdifferent kinds of water birds.

During the survey early in the morning of lonar crater lake one unique thing was observed i.e. the foot prints Leopard in the vicinity of Lonarc crater lake & same was photographed at the spot. This is the first time the Leopard inhabiting in the vicinity of Lonar crater lake was recorded. Local people also supported the appearance of Leopard in the vicinityof Lonar crater. Another peculiarity of Lonar crater lake is that it inhibits countless number of funnel spider & signature spider,the same was also photographed.

The forest ecosystem of Lonar lake comprises insectslike ants varietiesof butterflies&morths. The millipede spirobolus. Pedge&Ahirrao (2016) reportedArthropodaspecies out of which 13 species of butterflies belonging to 4 families of order Lepidoptera, 5 species of order Orthoptera& 2 species of order Odonta. In the parent investigation it has been observed that along with aforesaid fauna the lake area also inhabits wild animals like Leopard, & other wild fauna. Photographs of footprints, flamingo & funnel spider is shownhere.



Photographs showing Lonar Lake and foot prints of Leopard

CONCLUSION

The Lonar crater Lake is a biogeographical natural wonder with an assemblage of about six different kinds of ecosystems including one man made artificial ecosystems. The main saline water lake & surrounding other ecosystems provides best habitat to wildlife flora & fauna. But due to the local people & visitors it is getting disturbed & it should be protected from destruction & pollution. State & national Government should take necessary steps for the protection & consecution of this union heritage of the India.

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