

## **Through My Lens: My Journey in Wildlife Photography & Filmmaking**

The initial magic of being out somewhere wild, camera at the ready, waiting for that perfect moment. The thrill of seeing a shy predator, the hush of a misty morning, the flurry of feathers still in flight these are the moments that make worth every second of patience. It's more than taking pictures and shooting videos; it's storytelling to feel the heartbeats within nature and to be part of a world in which most of people only imagine.

### **How It All Began**

Wildlife photography was not one of my main interests. I began as someone who enjoyed outdoor activities, taking pleasure from walking in Pilikula Zoo and watching animals. The chirping of the birds, rustling of leaves, and rare sighting of a deer or wild dog would brighten my day. The story changed the day I picked up a camera for the time and pointed it at a deer staring directly at me with its piercing eyes. I suddenly came to realize that a photograph could narrate a story, invoke emotions, and transport someone to the wild. I understood instantly that this would be something I loved to do all my life.

It was quite a learning experience as I started taking my camera out in the woods. Most of the time I came back without a shot, made the most awful mess ups and missed fantastic shots. But in each failure, I had something new to learn. Gradually, I began learning things like the importance of light, animal behaviour, and the patience needed to get that perfect photo. Wildlife photography is about much more than just taking a snapshot; it's about seeing that world, waiting for that moment, and paying homage to the surroundings.

### **The Reality Behind the Shot**

The majority of people think, "Wow, that's an amazing shot!" when they view a stunning wildlife photograph. They don't see the mosquito bites, the hours of waiting, or the moments when I've almost given up.

On a distant occasion, while filming a tiger in a thick set of trees in a zoo, I had to sit still for over an hour. I could hear my heartbeat, feel the sweat rolling down my back, and resist the impulse to drive away a pesky fly. But as soon as the tiger stepped out of the shadow to catch the rays of light on its moving fur, all pain and anxiety faded away into nothingness. Every fraction of a second spent waiting was worth it. This is the beauty of wildlife photography; it's all unpredictable; sometimes you want to throw your camera, but at the end of every good day, it is the greatest reward.

Nature throws unexpected challenges at me. I have done days of shoot in summer heat. The hands freeze at times, and no matter how perfectly you plan, nature has her own way of telling you who is the boss. But that is what makes it special! You can't control nature; you can only respect it and adapt to its unpredictability.

## **Lessons from the Wild: Tips I've Learned Along the Way**

### **1. Be Patient, Always**

Yes, wildlife photography and haste do not go hand in hand. The animals do not give us time to position ourselves in the right frame. They run their race according to their own schedules and rhythms. Waiting sometimes could take hours with nothing happening, but at some instant an extraordinary occurrence could happen quite suddenly. Thus, there's nothing left but to be patient, observe, and prepare for when that moment occurs.

### **2. Know Your Camera Like a Best Friend**

There are never second chances in wild life. You have to be prepared. I've miffed shots just because I was fidgeting with settings. Now, adjusting shutter speed and ISO and focusing has become almost a simple reflex. Knowing every single detail about your equipment could mean the difference between getting that once in a lifetime shot and missing it altogether.

### **3. Respect the Wild**

I've witnessed people approach animals too closely for a decent photograph. That's disturbance, not photography. My guideline is straightforward: I am obviously too close if my presence alters the animal's behaviour in any way. After all, we are visitors to their world. In my opinion, the best photos are those in which the animals act regularly and are not aware that people are around.

### **4. The Golden Light is Your Best Friend**

Sunrise and sunset are not merely beautiful; they bring photos to life. I always try to plan my shooting schedules around these times, for the warm light adds depth and drama to every frame. The golden hour enhances the texture of an animal's fur and makes landscapes appear like a dream.

### **5. Sometimes, the Best Camera is the One You Have**

You don't need a high end camera to start. I began with an old DSLR and later I shifted to mirror less camera, and some of my favourite shots were taken on a basic lens. What matters most is how you see the world, not the gear you use. A good photographer can capture emotion and story with any camera, even a smartphone.

## **The Moments That Stay With Me**

There are some moments that no camera can fully capture. Like the time when a flock of birds took off in perfect unison, painting the sky with their wings. Some moments are too raw, too real, and too beautiful to be limited to a single frame.

Once, I was tracking a leopard in the zoo. It was almost evening time, and I was about to call it a day when I spotted her, gracefully walking along a narrow trail. She paused for a moment, looked straight at me, and then disappeared from that place. I didn't get the shot, but I got something even better a memory etched in my mind forever.

Photography and filmmaking aren't just about getting "the perfect shot." They're about experiencing these raw, unscripted moments of nature. Every time I go out with my camera, I feel like I'm seeing the world with fresh eyes, noticing details that most people overlook.

### **Why I Keep Going**

It's not just about the pictures. It's about the stories they tell. A photograph of a lion staring into the distance isn't just a portrait it's a glimpse into a world most people never get to see. A video of a bird feeding its chicks isn't just a clip it's a reminder of how delicate and beautiful life is.

Wildlife photography and filmmaking have taught me patience, respect, and the beauty of waiting for the right moment. Every experience in the wild teaches me something new not just about photography, but about life. The unpredictability of nature has made me more adaptable, and the stillness of waiting has taught me the value of patience.

And as long as there are stories to tell and nature to explore, I'll keep going, camera in hand, ready to capture the next wild moment. Maybe it will be another tiger emerging from the shadows, or some random birds soaring against a golden sky, or a simple, quiet moment that tells a story words never could. Whatever it is, I'll be there, waiting, watching, and capturing the world through my lens.