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Cover: *Geodorum laxiflorum* Griff.—inflorescence (Orchidaceae) © Ashish Ravindra Bhowar.



## Book Review: Conservation Kaleidoscope: People, Protected Areas and Wildlife in Contemporary India

L.A.K. Singh 

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The launching of *The Protected Area Update* (PAU) by Pankaj Sekhsaria in 1994 speaks about the very unique foundation and sustainable foresight for perennial source of information. PAU has grown in its contents and deliverables. At regular interval while it is updating its readers with all that is happening in the country about wildlife, the volume of information the PAU have amassed have developed into a historical data bank.

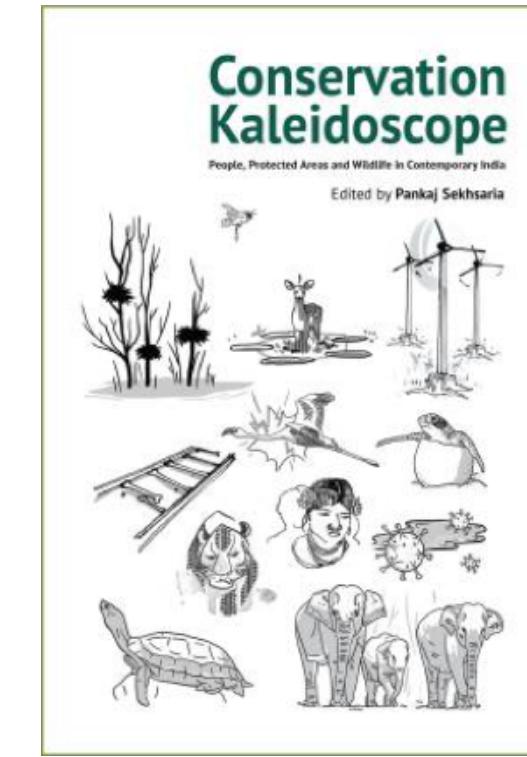
For a researcher it would have been difficult to go back and search the contents of PAU for crisp and meaningful data pieces, anywhere. In 2013, Sekhsaria brought out *The State of Wildlife in North-East India 1996–2011* within 295 pages, and in 2015 it was the turn for *The State of Wildlife and Protected Areas in Maharashtra*, within xii + 235 pages. I had the opportunity to go through the second masterpiece (Singh 2020).

This time, as a person ever hungry for data and information, I have profound pleasure and satisfaction while going through *Conservation Kaleidoscope: People, Protected Areas and Wildlife in Contemporary India*, compacted within xviii + 412 pages. The book has a simple and attractive cover within 23 x 15 cm. From the small art works, one is able to know the scope within the book.

I reaffirm my own opinion (Singh 2015) that information relating to wildlife and natural history photography have now expanded to people who are beyond full time field researchers, and the platforms used for dissemination of information are often outside impact-loaded journals. One needs to see his observation or writing quickly in the print or electronic media. PAU has very ably harvested upon these changing trends.

Field discoveries, management remarks, instances of policy flouts, and people interfaces are now possible by tourists, amateur photographers, and users of normal mobile phones. Data do not have to wait for confirmation by full time researchers from large institutions or

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sophisticated equipment or costly laboratory profiling.

PAU has the pages where these are documented and getting accessibly organised in the compilations edited by Sekhsaria. The data doesn't come only from India, but from the neighbourhood, as well. For example, "Only two rhinos poached in Nepal in 2007" (Page 347). The piece on "Do we want the cheetah back?" (Page 351) from October 2009 is interesting to browse back in the light of present developments. The volume includes more than a hundred editorials from old issues of PAU. Congratulations!

Obtaining authentic information from nook and corner of the country is extremely difficult, time consuming and depends on the level of networking. The editor, Mr. Sekhsaria, has handled these faculties with grit and efficiency so well for nearly two decades. That has made this book possible.

Organising the contents for such a data base is a hard task, considering the range of topics, over historical account of states, and the variety of happenings. Yet, the contents have been well planned and laid out in 14 chapters. Well done! The chapters include 1. Law, Policy, and Governance; 2. Human Rights in Protected Areas; 3.

The Developmental Threat; 4. The Linear Infrastructure Nightmare; 5. The Local Context; 6. At the State Level; 7. Specific Geographies; 8. Changing Seasons; 9. Tourism; 10. Communicating Conservation; 11. Tiger and Tiger Reserves; 12. Fate of the Elephant; 13. Rhinos, Bees, Bats, Dolphins; and 14. A Colourful Mosaic. The Editor's Note is very explicit. There is also a very exhaustive list of abbreviations running to 5.5 pages. The entire work is carefully woven. An index would have made usage more at once.

I am confident that the volume will draw references for students, historians, and general readers in India and overseas keen to know the happenings around wildlife in this part of the globe with the scope of a wide-ranging chapter titles.

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#### Article

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