

LIVING
WITH
GAUR

"Living with Gaur" is an educational booklet aimed at increasing awareness about Gaur and their behaviour. This booklet is meant to be used across all age groups and a short documentary titled "Gaur in my Gardern" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fl_9amK3-s) can also be used as supplementary material, in addition to this booklet.

We at Keystone Foundation strongly believe in co-existence among wildlife and humans. To better understand the relations humans share with Gaur in Kotagiri, we undertook a study, tracking their movements in and around town areas, as well as observing their behaviour and other interactions. This booklet puts together some of the information gathered through this study and we hope it will be beneficial to you and help you build many wonderful memories of Gaur around you!

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The town folk of Kotagiri.

The Gaur around us.

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LIVING WITH GAUR

A YOUNG GIRL WAKES UP
TO FIND EVERY ONE AT HOME
IN A BIT OF TUSSELE. NORMALLY
SHE WOULD HAVE RUN STRAIGHT
OUT OF THE FRONT DOOR AND LOOK
FOR HER PARENTS ENJOYING
THEIR CUP OF TEA. TODAY,
BEFORE SHE COULD MAKE IT TO
THE DOOR, THERE WAS A RINGING
AND RATHER AGITATED CALL
FROM HER GRANDMOTHER,
"AYE DON'T RUN OUTSIDE, THERE
ARE BIG INDIAN GAUR STANDING
OUTSIDE RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR HOUSE."



DESPITE THE WARNING,
SHE WALKS UP TO THE WINDOW
AND GAZES AT THE LARGE BOVINE
STANDING ON HER LAWN AND GRAZING
RATHER NONCHALANTLY.



INTRIGUED BY THE BIG BROWN ANIMAL THAT WAS CHEWING AT THE GARDEN PLANTS, SHE MOVES TOWARDS THE DOOR AND OPENS IT. AS SHE IS ABOUT TO STEP OUT, SHE HEARS HER MOTHER CALLING LOUDLY, "AMMU, DON'T GO OUT OF THE HOUSE AND CLOSE THE DOOR!"



SULKING, AMMU APPROACHES HER MOTHER AND ASKS, "AMMA, WHAT ARE THOSE COW LIKE CREATURES STANDING OUTSIDE OUR HOUSE? AND WHY DON'T YOU WANT ME TO GO OUTSIDE?" SMILING, HER MOTHER EXPLAINS,



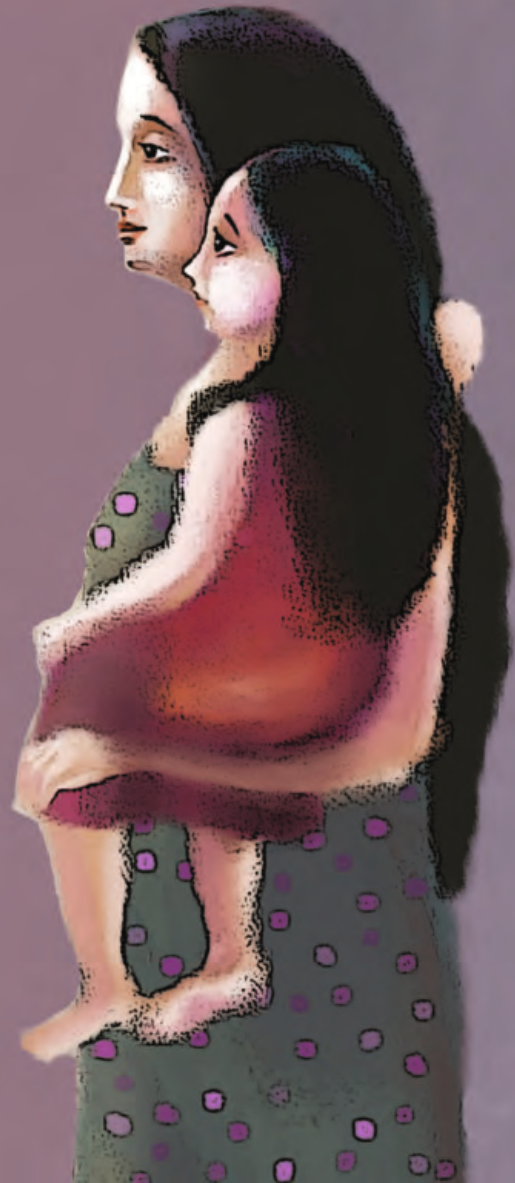
"AMMU, THOSE ANIMALS ARE NOT COWS. THEY ARE CALLED GAUR (BISON). THEY ARE WILD ANIMALS, WHO ARE SIMILAR TO COWS. BUT THEY ARE NOT DOMESTICATED. THE GAUR ARE ONLY FOUND IN CERTAIN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, AND LIKE COWS, THEY EAT ONLY PLANTS. AND, DO YOU KNOW THEY CAN SOMETIMES WEIGH ALMOST 1000 KG."



AMMU RUNS BACK TO THE WINDOW, AND EXCITEDLY BEGINS TO POINT A FEW OF THEM OUTSIDE, "AMMA! BUT LOOK, SOME OF THEM HAVE DIFFERENT HORN SHAPES, AND LOOK THAT BIG ONE THERE IS ALMOST BLACK, AND THE LITTLE ONES ARE ORANGE, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?"



HER MOTHER WALKS UP TO HER,
PICKS HER UP AND OPENS THE
WINDOW. "YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE
SO CURIOUS. DON'T YOU?"



SHE SAYS SMILING AND POINTS
OUT A SMALL ORANGE GAUR
"THE NEW BORN GAUR ARE
CALLED CALVES AMMU. DO YOU
SEE THOSE LITTLE ONES, WHICH ARE
ORANGE IN COLOUR AND DON'T
HAVE WHITE SOCKS IN THEIR
LEGS?"

AMMU NODDING EXCITEDLY REPLIES
"YES AMMA, AND THOSE TWO AS
WELL RIGHT? AND WHAT ARE
THOSE TWO BLACK THINGS ON
THEIR HEAD?"



"THOSE WILL BECOME HORNS ONE DAY, AMMU. JUST HOW OUR NAILS KEEP GROWING, THEIR HORNS ALSO KEEP GROWING FROM THE TIME THEY ARE BORN." POINTING TO A FEW OTHER GAUR TOWARDS THE LEFT, SHE CONTINUES, "AMMU, DO YOU SEE THERE ARE DIFFERENT SIZES AMONG THE GAUR. THE BIGGEST ONES ARE THE ADULT GAUR. THE SLIGHTLY SMALLER ONES ARE THE JUVENILE GAUR, IF YOU SEE CAREFULLY YOU WILL SEE THAT THEIR HORNS ARE NOT VERY BIG, AND THE COLOUR OF THE HORNS IS MOSTLY BLACK AND LESS WHITE.

THE JUVENILES WHERE THE HORN START CURVING IMMEDIATELY OVER THE HEAD ARE JUVENILE FEMALES AND THE ONE WHOSE HORNS ARE SET A LITTLE MORE WIDE APART AND GROW UPWARDS ARE JUVENILE MALE.



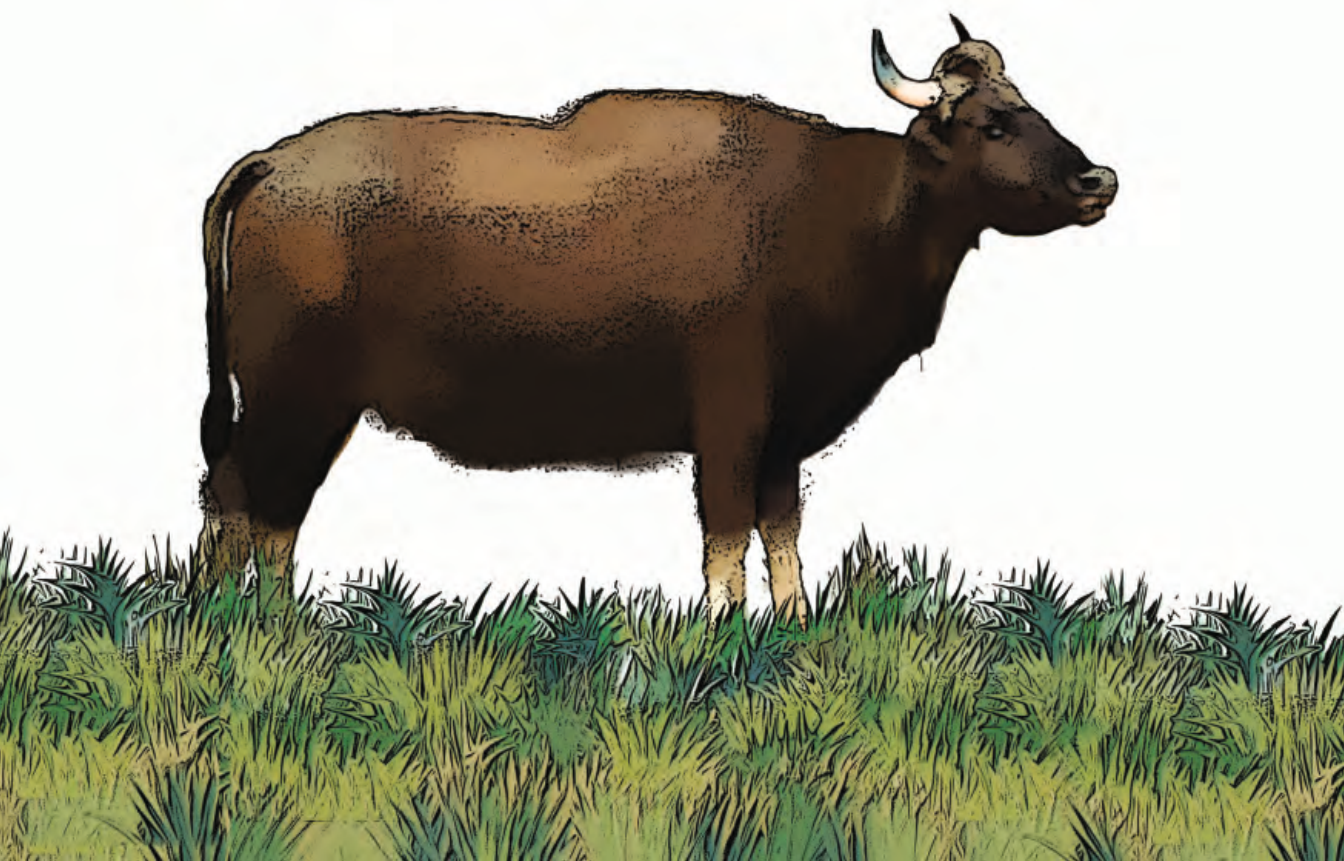
AS THEY CONTINUE TO STAND WATCH THE GAUR BROWSE THROUGH THEIR GARDEN, SUDDENLY, A BIG BLACK GAUR AMBLES IN FROM AROUND THE HOUSE AND PASSES IN FRONT OF THE WINDOWS. "AMMU, SEE THAT BIG FELLOW, THAT IS AN ADULT MALE. DO YOU SEE HOW HIS SKIN COLOUR IS BLACK, AND NOTICE HOW THE HORNS ARE VERY BIG AND IS GRAYISH WHITE?"

AMMU NODS, AWESTRUCK BY THE SHEER SIZE AND IN A LOW VOICE ASKS HER MOTHER, "AMMA, WHAT IS THAT LUMP ON HIS BACK?"



" THAT IS PART OF THEIR BACK AMMU, AS THE GAUR GROW OLDER, THE MUSCLES ON THE BACK KEEP GROWING AS WELL, AND FORM THE DORSAL RIDGE. "

" ALL GAUR HAVE THE RIDGE, AND THIS BECOMES PROMINENT ONLY WHEN IT BECOMES AN ADULT. A BIG GAUR WITH A REALLY PROMINENT RIDGE IS AN ADULT MALE, THE ADULT FEMALES ALSO HAVE THE RIDGE, BUT NOT AS BIG AS SEEN IN THE MALES. " REPLIES HER MOTHER.



"DO YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING ELSE INTERESTING ABOUT THEM?" AMMA ASKS AMMU.

NODDING EAGERLY AMMU SAYS, "YES AMMA, TELL ME MORE."

"GAUR CAN TRAVEL LONG DISTANCES SEARCHING FOR FOOD, AN ENTIRE HERD CAN SOMETIMES TRAVEL UP TO 5 KM IN A DAY BROWSING FOR FOOD. AND ADULT MALES SOMETIMES TRAVEL TWICE THAT NUMBER."

THEY USUALLY MOVE AROUND IN HERDS, BUT ADULT MALES SOMETIMES WANDER OFF ON THEIR OWN. THEY LIKE OPEN SPACES WHERE THEY CAN SEE WHAT IS AROUND THEM, AND GENERALLY DO NOT DISTURB PEOPLE, UNLESS THEY HAVE BEEN DISTURBED FIRST.



So AMMU, IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DONT CHASE THEM AWAY ESPECIALLY WITH STICKS OR STONES, OR SHARP OBJECTS OR FIRE, BECAUSE THEY MIGHT ATTACK BACK, ESPECIALLY IF THERE ARE CALVES AROUND.



EVEN WHEN WE ARE DRIVING, HAVE YOU NOTICED
HOW PAPA, ALSO WAITS FOR THE GAUR TO CROSS
THE ROAD, AND HE DOESN'T SOUND HIS HORN, OR
FLASH HIS LIGHTS



THE GAUR, JUST LIKE HUMANS ARE VERY PROTECTIVE OF THEIR YOUNG. AND LIKE IN 6 YEARS TIME, YOU WOULD HAVE GROWN BIGGER, SO WOULD THE GAUR, EXCEPT IN 6 YEARS THEY WOULD BE ADULTS, AND YOU WILL STILL BE A "CHILD" SMILING. THE MOTHER CLOSES THE WINDOW AND TAKE AMMY INSIDE.



How to be better friends with gaur:

- Be patient let them cross the road first.
- If you are driving a vehicle, do not flash lights or make loud noises around the Gaur.
- Report an Injured Gaur to the local Forest Department Officials immediately.
- Don't tease/ provoke a Gaur particularly if it is injured.
- Respect their space, don't gather in large numbers around the Gaur.
- If the herd is seen with calves, keep your distance.
- Don't chase away/ throw stones at Gaur, wait for a while, they will leave.
- Don't try to feed the Gaur.
- Install Gaur friendly fences (Wire Mesh instead of Barb Wire).
- Blocking Gaur paths/movement may not affect you, but might affect your neighbours.
- Do not go out at night if there are Gaur present immediately around your house.
- Always carry a flashlight at night and never shine the light directly in the eyes of a Gaur.
- We can also help the Gaur, by preserving places they visit for food and water such as wetlands and forest patches.



