CASE STUDY

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➢ Introduction

- This study explores a familiar yet foreign “other” in the minds of local people living near Sariska Tiger Reserve (Sariska), India. Formerly a dominant part of Sariska’s ecology and culture, tigers were missing from some areas of this land-scape for decades before being officially declared extirpated (locally extinct) in2005. In response, three tigers from Ranthambore Tiger Reserve were relocated to Sariska in 2008 and 2009; six more relocations followed over the next four years. In 2017, these tigers and their of spring number 14 tigers. This case study examines the intergenerational (re)negotiation between people and tigers and that it is a struggle rooted in place and territory, with boundaries con-structed by both human and non-human actors.

- Because Sariska was completely void of tigers in 2005, the translocation was a reintroduction the first tiger reintroduction in the world. The term re-introduction can be applied to any organism at any conservation scale for example, fish in a lake or rodents in a reserve. The reintroduction of threatening apex-predators to a large conservation area uniquely affects both the eco-logical and the human cultural landscapes. Bringing apex predators "back in … where both the physical and cultural animal" affects the socio-physical landscape has a variety of impacts. To distinguish this kind of reintroduction from the broader sense, I employ the term rewinding. Rewinding refers to species reintroduction, ecosystem restoration, and restored human-wildlife interactions that influence humanbehavior and decision making. Together, this combination of factors Rewild the landscape.

- Rewilding has a complex history. NGOs and advocates of restoring large predators primarily used the term Rewilding, appearing less often in scientific publishing.1 However, a review by Svenning et al. (2016) of the international scientific literature on Rewilding found that: (1) the number of publications using this term had increased, (2) the majority were essays or opinion pieces rather than empirical studies, and (3) there was a geographic bias of projects in North American, European, and oceanic islands. Literature on Rewilding historic tiger landscapes is limited but critical to policy development, as proposals for reintroduction proliferate to other countries and tiger less land-scapes in India. Also, translocations will likely increase in popularity after Jhala, Qureshi, and Gopal (2015) reported a 30% increase in India's tiger population, now reported at 2,226. Rising tiger populations in isolated protected areas pose a conservation concern, as competition for resources can ex-pedite intraspecific conflict prompting translocations.

➢ Abstract

- This case study explores the reintroduction of tigers to Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan, India, highlighting how the (re)negotiation between people and tigers is a struggle rooted in place and territory, with boundaries co-constructed by human and nonhuman actors. While the reintroduction came only three years after the official admission of complete species loss, tigers as a dominant force on the landscape were absent for more than a decade in some places. Accordingly, the people of Sariska see the reintroduced tigers as foreigners without place-knowledge and as disturbers of the interspecies boundaries created by the interactions of Sariska's original tigers and many generations of local people. This study speaks to conservation sciences and animal geography to contribute to the scientific knowledge of the human dimensions of rewilding, still a nascent area of restoration ecology specifically in the case of apex predators in the global south.

➢ Keywords

- Animal geography – coexistence – rewilding – boundaries – multispecies landscape

➢ Wildlife Conservation in Animal Geography

Animal geography scholarship focused on the spaces where "animals live and how those spaces help determine the nature of the human-animal relationships" has made a major contribution to human-animal studies. Geographers' principal contribution to has is arguably "the full spectrum of place as a conceptual tool" in that "to understand the human-animal interspecies power geometry we must first map the place relations that shape practices in the first place". Spatial thinking and a foundation in human-environmental relations provide geographers with a lens with which to shed light on interspecies entanglements within the conservation landscape.

Employing a trans species spatial theory, animal geographers can un cover how humans conceptually and physically place animals. How humans imagine wild animals not only affects whether humans respect or exploit wildlife but also forms dominant conservation and tourism strategies that confine wildlife to incongruent places. The interactions within and transgressions of these placements reinforce imaginings such as animals out of place, problem species/animals, and fear-based responses to them, all of which culminate in reworked place-based practices. To contextualize wildlife conservation struggles, animal geographers have grounded their work in the idea that people and animals co-construct places landscapes, and ecosystems.

➢ Boundaries and Classification

- Geographers have contributed significantly to understanding animals' roles in the establishment of social-environmental classifications and boundaries (e.g., Mans field, 2003; Doubleday, 2017). A prominent theme within this body of literature is assemblages referring to "associations between entities" like "humans, animals, plants, machines , devices like maps or diagrams" (Sundberg, 2011, p. 4) that influence nature-society delineations, outcomes, and maintain social structures. This framework requires agency tobe understood as part of the assemblage—bound in current and historicalrelations—among the actors (human and nonhuman) (Urbanik, 2012). Within this framework, nonhumans are active in the outcomes and structure of the more than human world. Wild animals' behaviours, actions, and species histories then are understood as contextual and relational features that connect strategic places like has and zoos (What more, 2002). Animal geographers re-searching areas of human-wildlife conflict (e.g., Ogra, 2009; Yeo & Neo,2010) are also an important voice in these examinations, as HWC is increasingly recognized as a primary concern comparable to habitat loss. Further, they endeavour to engage the ideas of topological spaces, where space is relative and deformed by time-space compression, distance decay, and other in situ and ex situ influences to identify conservation obstacles (e.g., Braverman, 2014).This framework leads What more to assert that, "wild animals and plants whose designation depends on their being forever somewhere else find their place in the world less than secure".

➢ Materials and Methods

- Thirty-two semi-structured FGDs (384 participants) were completed within a10-km buffer around Sariska, during the summer of 2014 and 2015.Guiding questions focused on attitudes of living near Sariska, alongside wildlife, perceptions of the tiger extirpation, and reintroduction. The questions were co-created from have pilot interviews and three test FGDs in 2014.This approach promoted participant-driven conversations, including participants revealing elements of reintroduction most important to them. Thus, FGDs were relevant but distinctive from other HWC and biologically focused studies, by providing insight into the narratives that produce animosity and/or coexistence.

- The study area was systematically divided into four quadrants with a goal of have FGDs per quadrant to capture the diversity of human-tiger cohabitation across the plane of spatially irregular removal, reintroduction, and tiger mobility. Secondly, criterion sampling was employed within each quadrant, forming a FGD when three criteria were met: (1) the availability of three persons for four age groups (2) the ability of 12 participants to attend for at least an hour, and (3) the access to FGD location within30 minutes of walking from our vehicle abandonment point. FGDs consisted of extended families and neighbours from four age groups, to allow for generational disagreement and varied perspectives . Requiring 12 people per FGD and the large sample size achieved a variety of demographic representation. This study design prioritized in-depth knowledge of everyday experiences and perceptions of Rewilding

➢ Results

- Ecologists are starting to research the impacts of animal personality, described as “consistent differences in behavioural patterns between individuals,” on re-introduction success (Jensen et al., 2017). Personality could be considered a variable for predicting the animal’s reproductive success, as certain personality types have higher survival rates. Participants discuss Sariska’s new tigers as having individual and collective spatial personalities that differ from the original tigers. The distinctive personality displayed by the new tigers is then interpreted and enriched in a narrative of either coexistence or conflict. This influences local willingness to coexist which is a great concern, even over individual fitness for reintroduction possibly, in bio diverse hotspots with dense human populations, like India. The growing call for social scientists to engage reintroduction studies is typically within the context of livelihood and economic development (e.g. ,Hayward & Somers, 2009), and is irrefutably essential to successful re introductions (and a part of this larger study). Yet, as this article demonstrates, there is more to the emotive, narrative dimensions within the broader network of influences on local rejection or acceptance of rewilding. The focus on narratives saturated across the landscape (Figure 3) presented here strives to understand how rewilding is understood by local people based on their physical and conceptual entanglements with past and current tiger populations.

Media Collection Sariska Tiger Reserve