

First Photographic Record of Albino Gaur (*Bos gaurus*, H. Smith) in Kanha National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India

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Abstract: *The Indian Bison or Gaur is one of the large wild ungulates of Asian jungles (Corbet et al., 1992). It is the largest bovid confined to the oriental biographic region of the world. The Gaur is distributed in the Western Ghats southwards from Maharashtra; it is also present in the hilly tracks of central, south-eastern peninsular India and west Bengal (Rajesh Gopal, 2012). It is one of the most prey species for Tiger in forest ecosystem. Albinism is a congenital disorder occurs due to absence of melanin and known to affect all vertebrates. Albino, partial albino wild animals are extremely rare. Albinism has been reported in many mammals such as Tiger (Gee, 1954), Nilgai (Ranjithsingh, 1987), Sloth bear (Bharos, 1998), Chital (Prabu et al.) and in small mammals like common mongoose (Tehsin et al., 1994), common palm civet and Northern palm squirrel (Sharma, 2003) in India. Kanha National Park is one of the richest wildlife diversity areas in India. Sankar et al. (2000) estimated the gaur population in India at around 23,500. The sex ratio of free ranging gaurs is skewed towards females, viz. 80 males: 100 females in Kanha National Park (Schaller, 1967). On year 2019 an albino gaur sighted in beat Dudhaniya, Range Bhaisanghat, Kanha National Park (N-22°08'52.2'' E-080°50'40.8''). We observed the albinos by using binoculars and took a photograph on the very occasion (Fig.1 and 2). They was grazing along with the herd with 12 individuals (Fig.3). This the first photographic record of an albino gaur found in grasslands in Kanha National Park. Earlier to this no published studies on albino gaur but only few sighting evidence reported in Bhaisanghat, and kisli Range of Kanha National Park. Sighting of an albino gaur in grasslands of Kanha National Park is a significant observation.*

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Figure 1: The Albino Gaur in Kanha National Park



Figure 2: The Albino Gaur calf with her mother Gaur in Kanha National Park



Figure 3: A Gaur mixed herd with adult female, juvenile and Albino calves in Kanha National Park