

Listen to The Call of Wild Sri Lanka



“I am not a taxonomist, nor a naturalist. However, I have a deep rooted fascination about observing and experiencing nature with an admiration and a passion to protect and pass it on...” Priyantha Talwatte

Words Hansani Bandara

Get lost in the musings of ‘The Call of Wild Sri Lanka’ as Priyantha Talwatte pens down and captures his unforgettable experiences taking you on an exhilarating adventure to the deep wilderness of Sri Lanka. The book, 138 pages in total, delivers a firsthand experience of the thrill and the awe-inspiring moments the author has spent amidst wildlife.

Though most of us have a deep rooted love and respect for nature, not all are fortunate enough to experience its bliss, as we are involved in pursuing the delights that an animated life of a metropolis brings. However, through ‘The Call of Wild Sri Lanka’, even those who are pre-occupied with such a life can experience the beauty of nature as Priyantha Talwatte takes the reader to the untamed plains of the Island from the comfort of their own abodes. It is said that readers live a thousand lives before they die, and as one flips through each page, the reader can relive the moments spent with Mother Nature as alluring photographs and descriptions of wildlife reach out from the pages to grasp you.

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The book will undoubtedly serve as a remedy to quench the urge of an individual looking to escape into the trappings of wild Sri Lanka and catch at least a glimpse of the thrilling journeys that yield surprises at every turn. Mainly focusing on the 'Three Big Terrestrial Mammals'—the leopard, wild elephant and sloth bear—inhabiting the National Parks and sanctuaries of Sri Lanka, each picture captured relates a story that depicts the wild habits of these exotic animals in its true form.

The piercing stare of a leopard perched high on a tree or the wary glare of a spotted one about to flee, line-up the pages while the playful gamboling and theatrical antics of the Rukvila cubs will serve to endear the book to readers even more.

A leopard in hot pursuit of a monkey suspended mid-air, captured while leaping from one tree to another, or several leopards lazing together, will make the reader privy to chance encounters—an attempt to at least graze the surface of these wild beings. Furthermore, accompanying each of these pictures are narratives of the exciting encounter in vivid detail creating an episodic piece feeding the rampant imagination of the reader.

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Flip to the pages adorning pictures captured at Minneriya to witness The Gathering where the congregation of countless elephant herds gives a peek into, not only the push towards survival of a majestic species, but also the spirited yet playful interactions of these massive beasts. Skirmishes between Rosa, so named due to the pink hued pigmentation of his skin, and another dominant male will keep a reader at the edge of his/her seat while anecdotes of the elephants that have become well-known due to certain eccentricities will draw the reader further into the depths of the book. The slow gait of a mother sloth bear carrying her cub, captured through the 'third eye' of Talwatte and the details of a close encounter where the author had come face to face with another, albeit in the safety of his vehicle, make way for more memorable anecdotes.

'The Call of Wild Sri Lanka' is a book that draws an accurate description of Sri Lanka as a paradise for wildlife enthusiasts, harbouring a rich biodiversity. Though most of the pages are dedicated towards the three big mammals and their interactions, the book also provides a brief glimpse into other wildlife sharing the same space, acting as an adequate guide detailing the best times to witness nature at it best.

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Hence, The Call of Wild Sri Lanka can be described as the music of the wild that is waiting to be heard and explored. Wilderness should be explored but should also be protected and preserved for future generations. As Priyantha Talwatte pens, “once you have heard the call of the wild, you will yearn to hear more and develop a desire, a passion, a wanting to be in her presence. Automatically you will feel a sense of responsibility to protect it for others to experience and to protect it for future generations of wild animals who would call it their home. Long live wildlife, wild places and our wild memories. Ultimately the call of the wild is actually the call of our own souls.”

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