

THE ARK
FOUNDATION



RAGHU AND THE LESSER FLORICAN



How Raghu saves
his family with
the help of the
Lesser Florican



RAGHU AND THE LESSER FLORICAN



This is the story of Raghu, a boy of 14 who lives in one of the many villages that dots the grasslands of sailana in Ratlam District of Madhya Pradesh, India. This is one of the few places where the Lesser Florican, an extremely endangered species of bird comes during the monsoon season to breed. With fewer than 2500 of them left in the world, the Lesser Florican, commonly known as 'Kharmor' needs active protection for its survival. And Raghu is one such individual who is helping in protecting the bird and its habitat.

M.P. STATE BIODIVERSITY BOARD



Madhya Pradesh State Biodiversity Board in an effort to strengthen the conservation initiatives in the State has undertaken a survey in and around Sailana and Sardarpur Sanctuaries to look into the role of community in effective conservation of the species. The Board has also developed and distributed posters for popularizing the 'Lesser Florican Reward Scheme' floated by M.P. Forest Dept.

MADHYA PRADESH FOREST DEPARTMENT



The Madhya Pradesh Forest Department has been in the forefront of the effort to conserve the Lesser Florican. The 'Lesser Florican Reward Scheme' was developed by the Department to provide an alternative source of income to those land owners who voluntarily preserved the grasslands and provided a habitat conducive to the Lesser Florican.

THE ARK FOUNDATION & CLP

This project is supported by Conservation Leadership Programme, a partnership of 4 leading international conservation organisation and BP. The project is executed by the Ark Foundation team with active location support from the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department.

**THE ARK
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contact.arkfoundation@gmail.com



**BirdLife
INTERNATIONAL**



Conservation Leadership Programme

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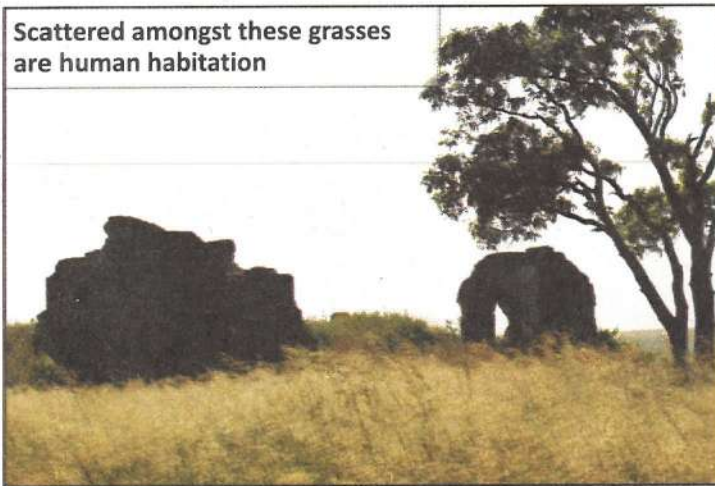
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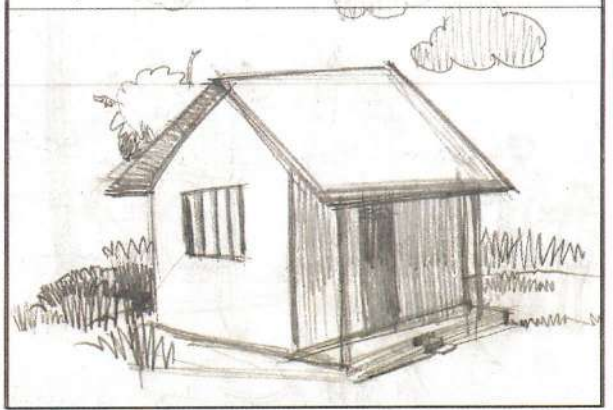
Grasslands of Sailana, Central India....



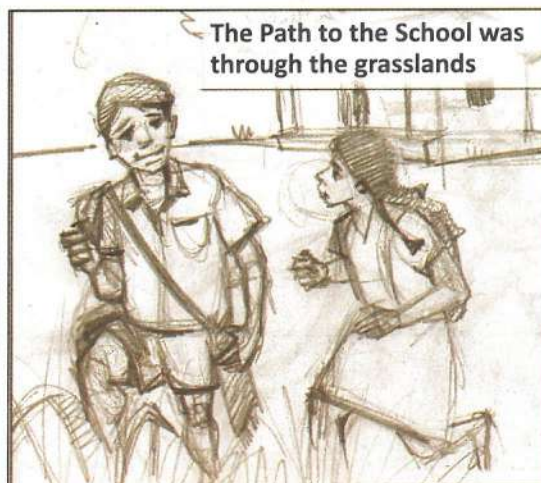
Scattered amongst these grasses are human habitation



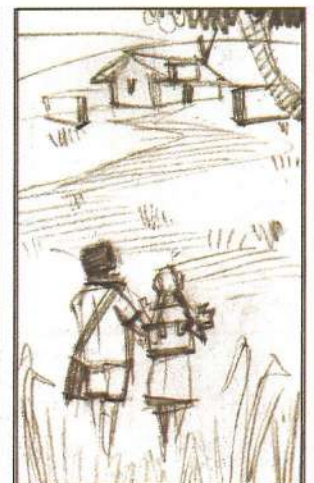
In one such house lives Raghu with his parents and younger sister.



Though not rich, they are a content family....with enough to eat and clean clothes to wear.....



The Path to the School was through the grasslands



Suddenly, they see a strange bird.....



A really strange bird....



And it was jumping up and down from one spot.

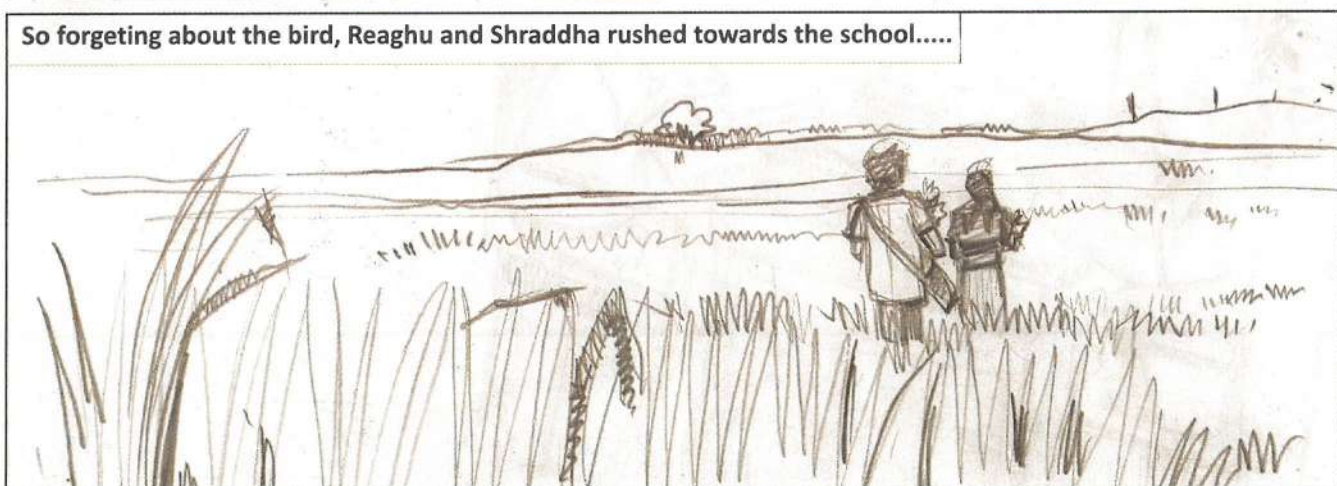
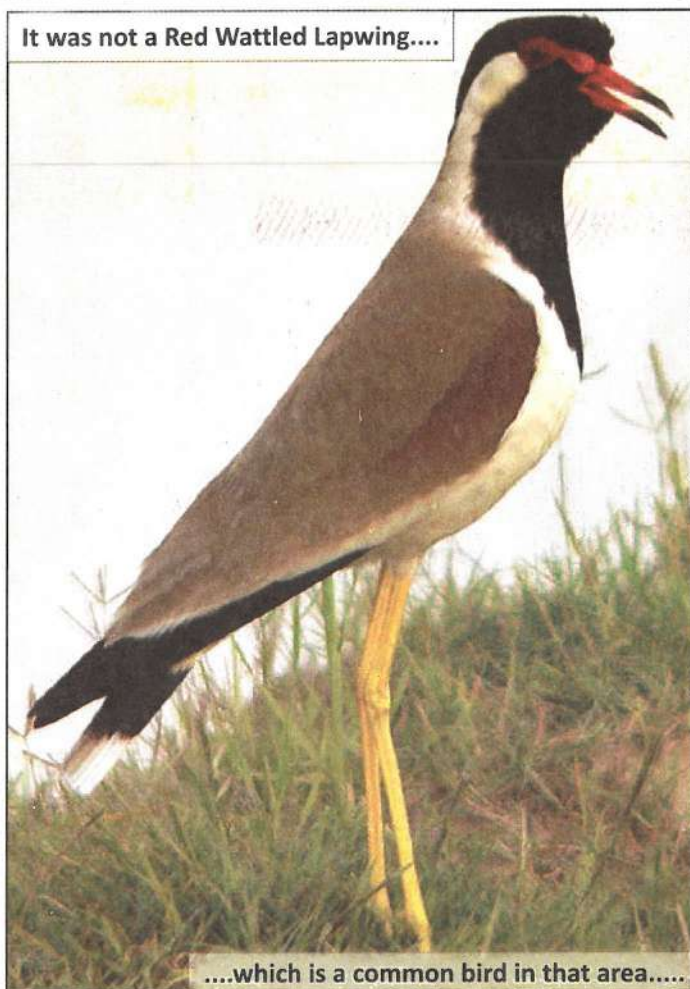


Making a strange sound as it was jumping....



It would jump, come down, wait for a while, then jump up again.....





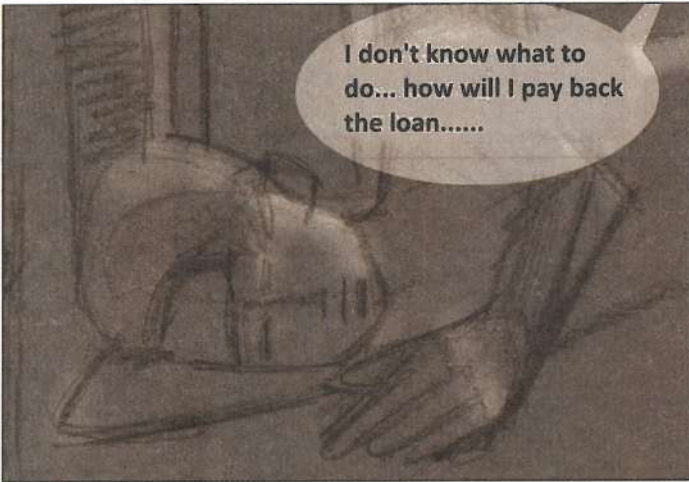
That night.....



While Raghu slept....

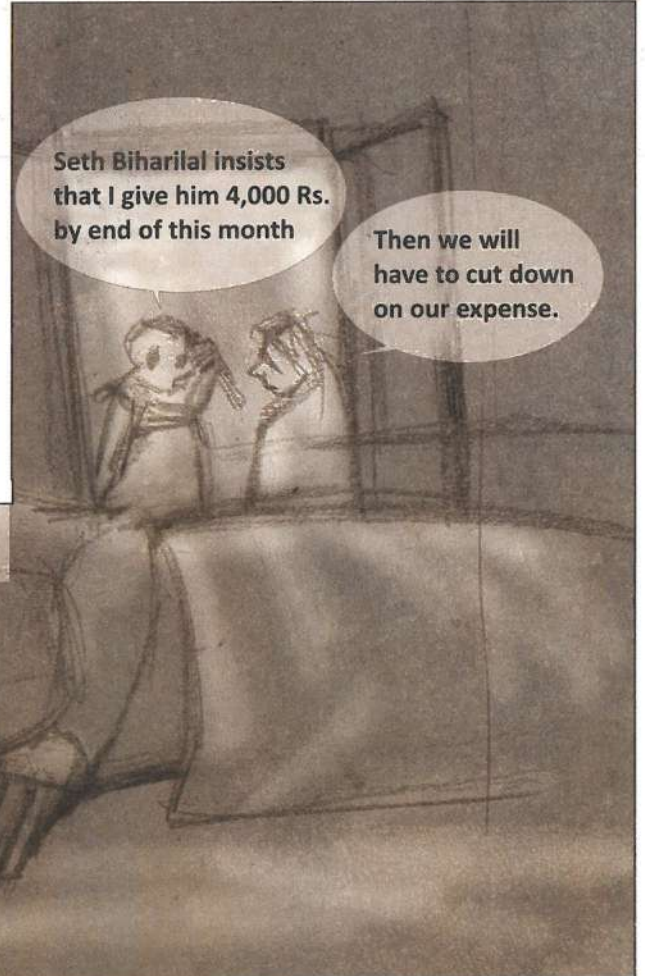


I don't know what to do... how will I pay back the loan.....



Seth Biharilal insists that I give him 4,000 Rs. by end of this month

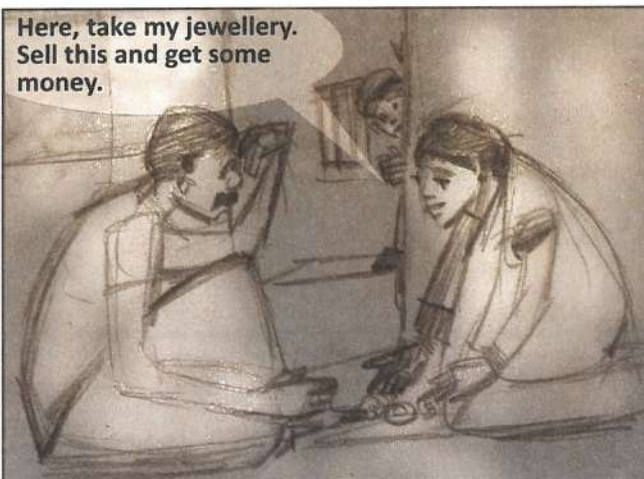
Then we will have to cut down on our expense.



The whispered conversation between his parents woke Raghu up.....

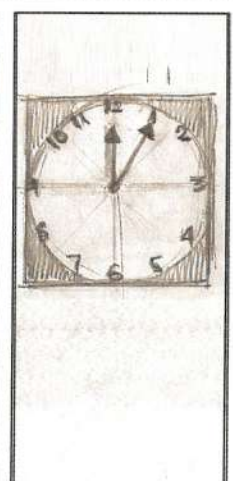
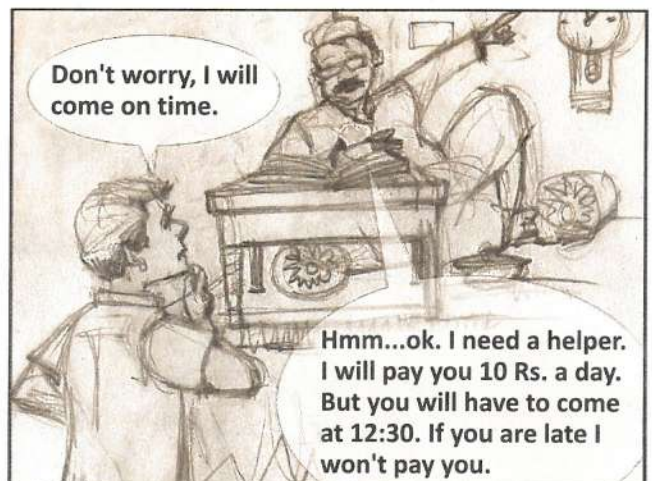
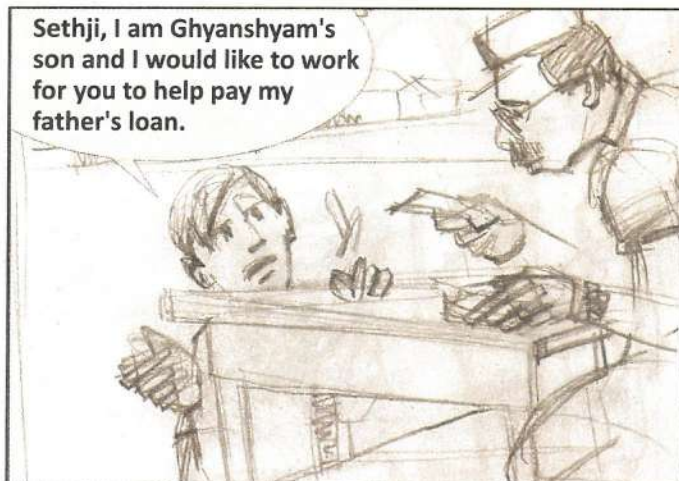
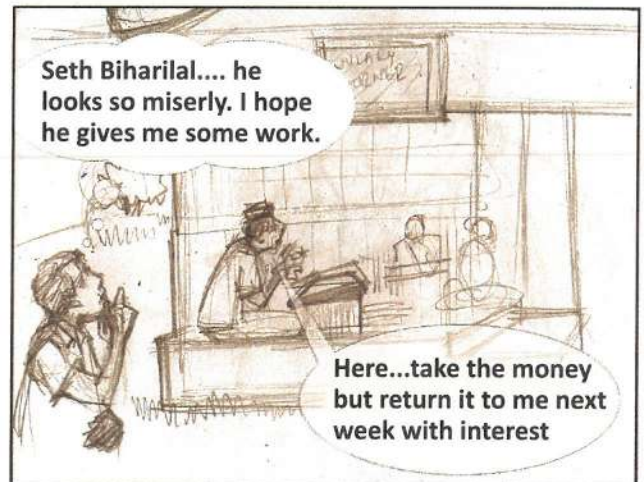
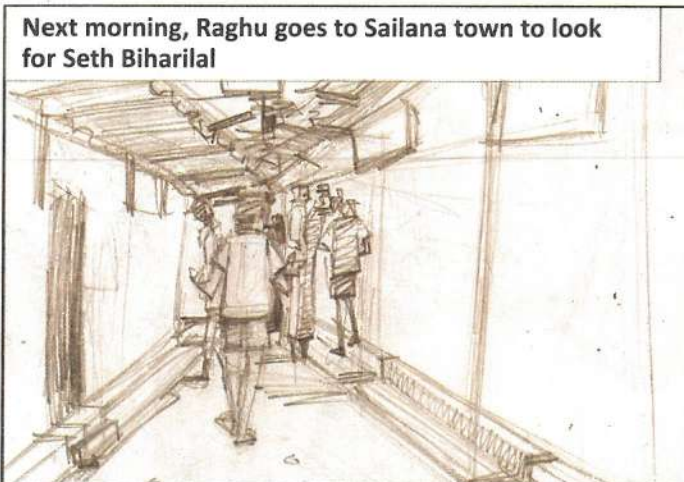
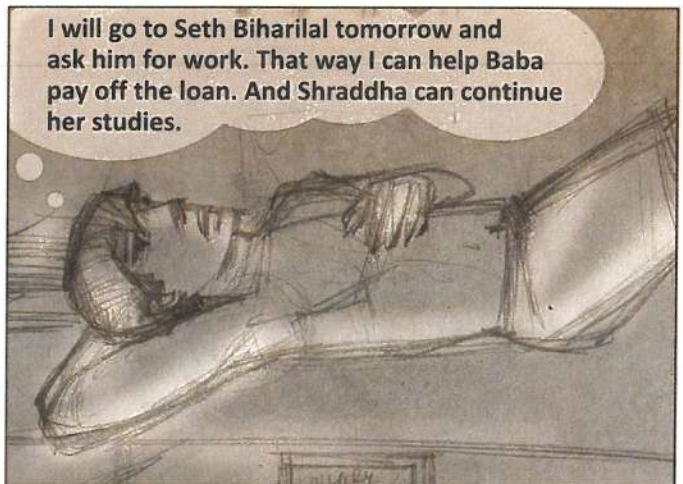


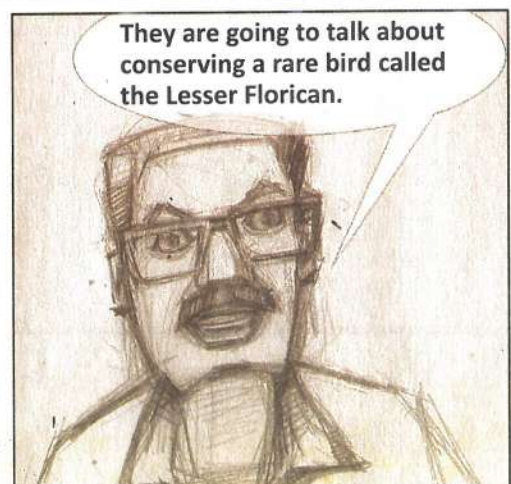
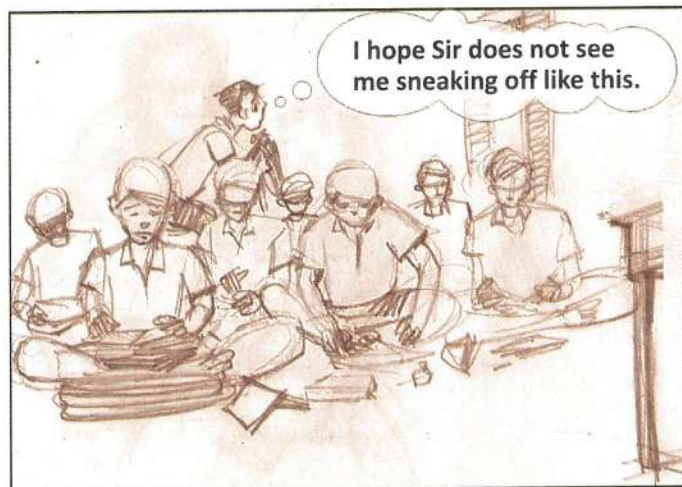
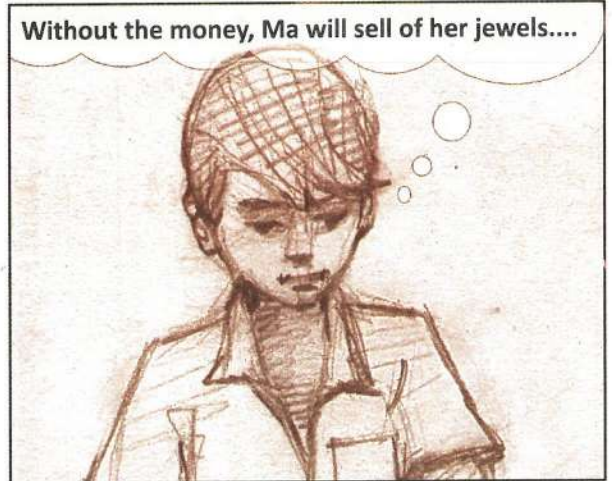
Here, take my jewellery. Sell this and get some money.



Will have to take Shraddha away from school.



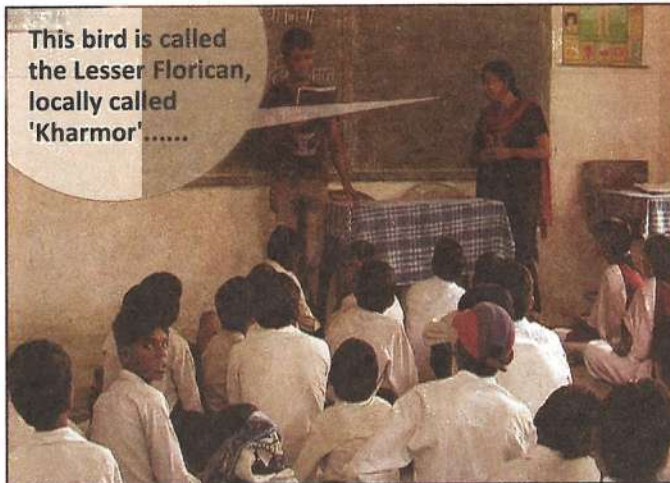




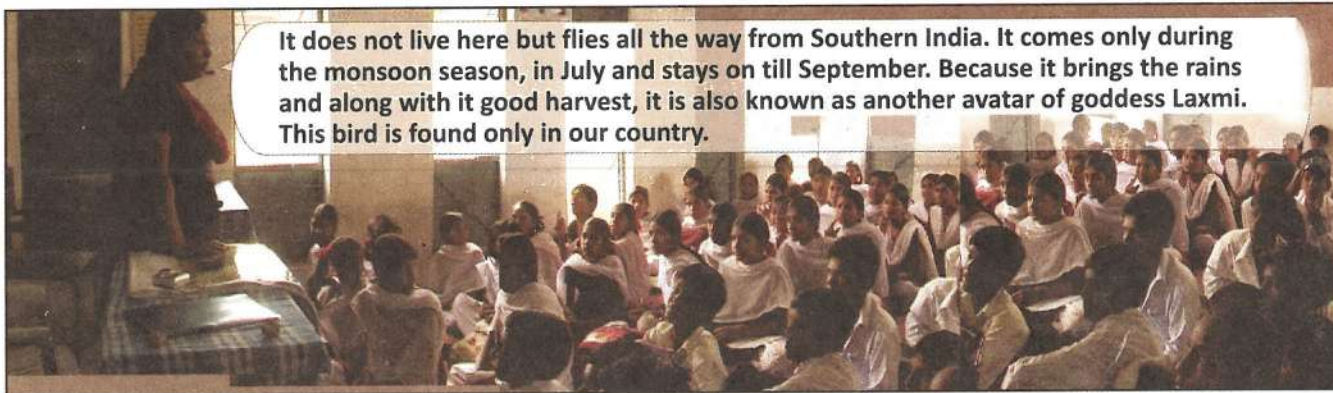
Hello everyone, I am Supriya and I am going to talk to you about a rare bird that comes to your grassland.



This bird is called the Lesser Florican, locally called 'Kharmor'.....



It does not live here but flies all the way from Southern India. It comes only during the monsoon season, in July and stays on till September. Because it brings the rains and along with it good harvest, it is also known as another avatar of goddess Laxmi. This bird is found only in our country.



The bird is about 3-4 hands tall.....



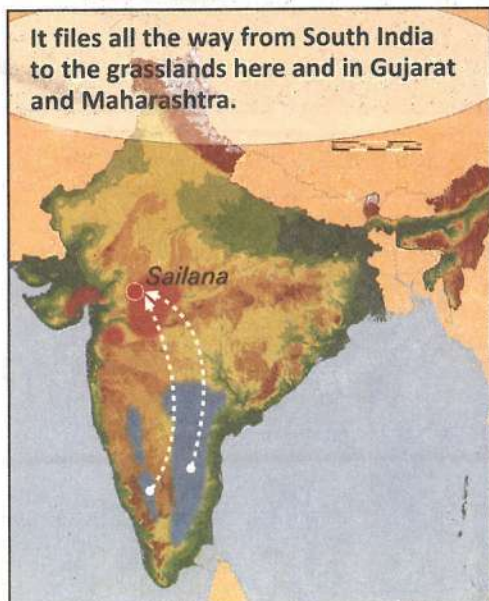
.....and it looks like this...



And many times it is mistaken for this bird



It flies all the way from South India to the grasslands here and in Gujarat and Maharashtra.



But because of loss of habitat, grazing, hunting and use of Pesticide that kills the insects it eats, they number only 2500 in the whole world.

2500

It is important that we save all species of animals. They are like your friends. If your friend dies then you are alone, lonely! So like your friends, all animal species make this world a better, happier place for all of us.



The florican is one of our friends and we must save it. The Forest department has started a reward scheme that encourages everyone to protect the bird. Even you can help.



So if you see a Florican in the field.....

Immediately tell a Forest Guard.....

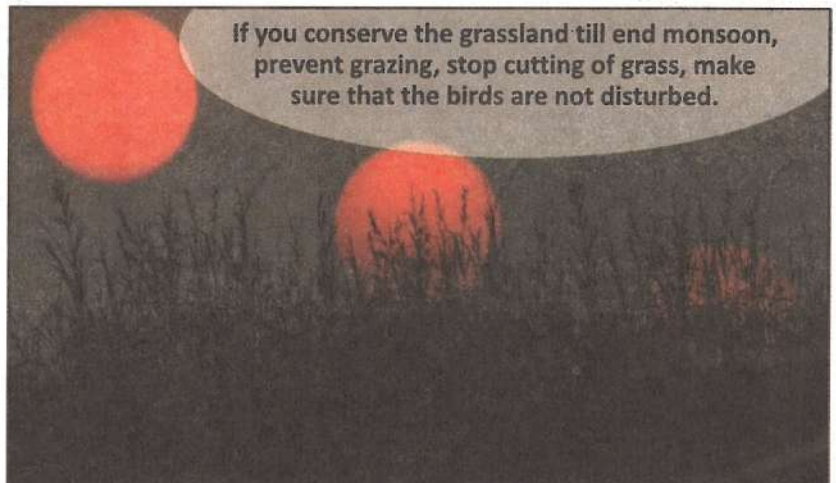
Who will come and verify your sighting.....

And if found correct then you will get Rs. 1000.



This is just part of the scheme. The second Part is.....

If you conserve the grassland till end monsoon, prevent grazing, stop cutting of grass, make sure that the birds are not disturbed.

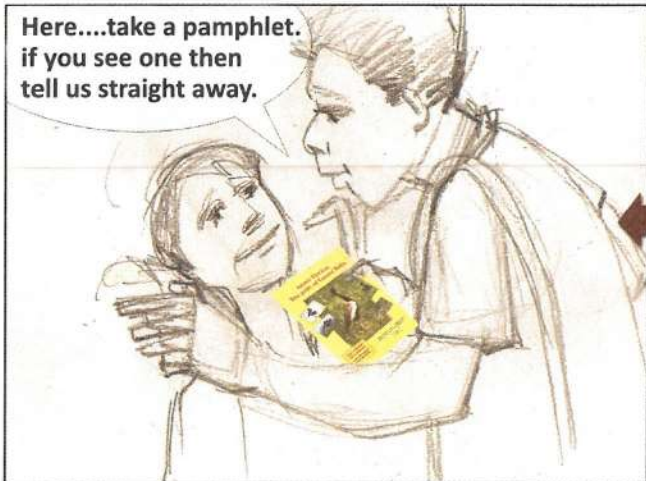


In September/October, if the bird is still jumping in Your grassland, Or if evidence of nest or eggs is found then...



You will get another Rs. 4000 So you get the chance to earn Rs. 5000 by saving the grassland. And at the end of the season both the grass and the reward is yours.



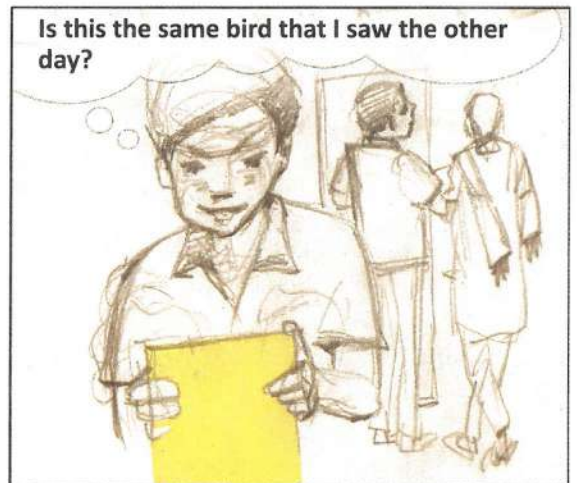
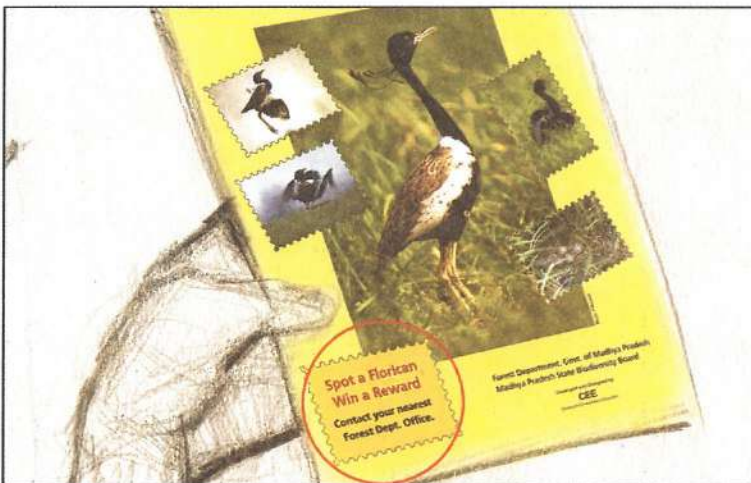


Lesser Florican The pride of Central India

**Spot a Florican
Win a Reward**
Contact your nearest
Forest Dept. Office.

Forest Department, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh
Madhya Pradesh State Biodiversity Board

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Raghu ran over to the nearest Forest Department post



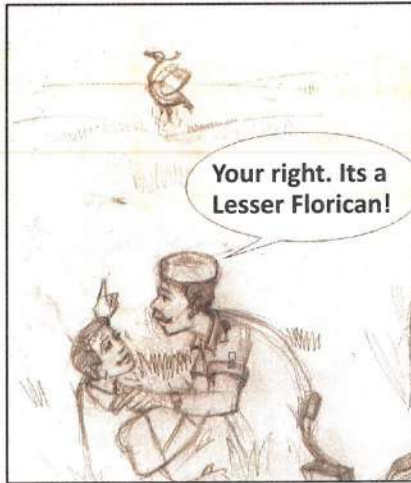
I saw a Lesser Florican in my grassland!



Come. Lets go and check.



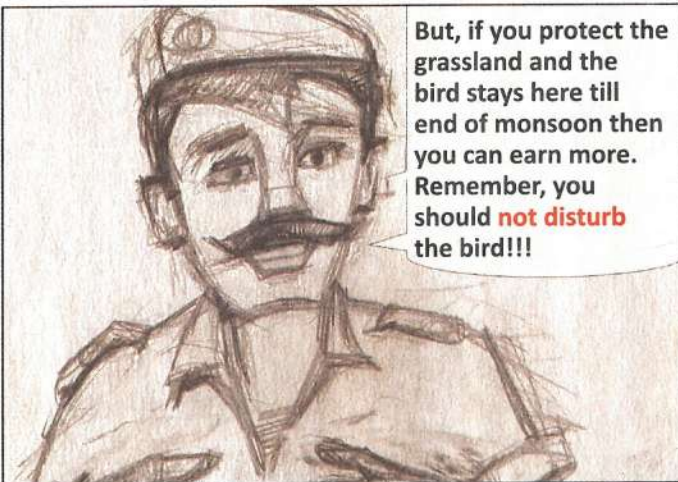
Your right. Its a Lesser Florican!



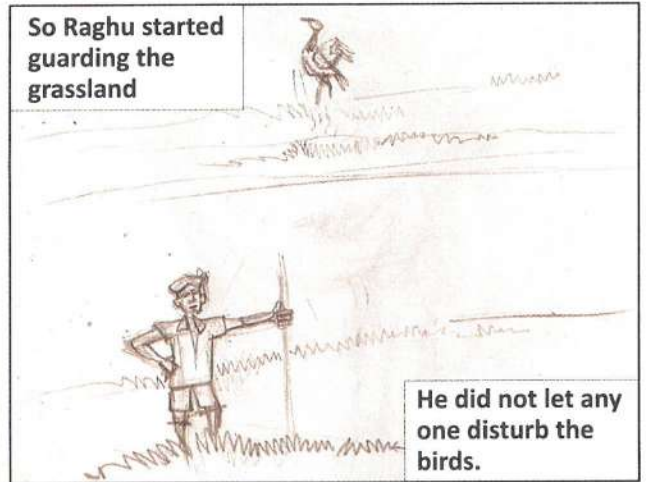
Here....take your reward of Rs. 1000



But, if you protect the grassland and the bird stays here till end of monsoon then you can earn more. Remember, you should **not disturb** the bird!!!

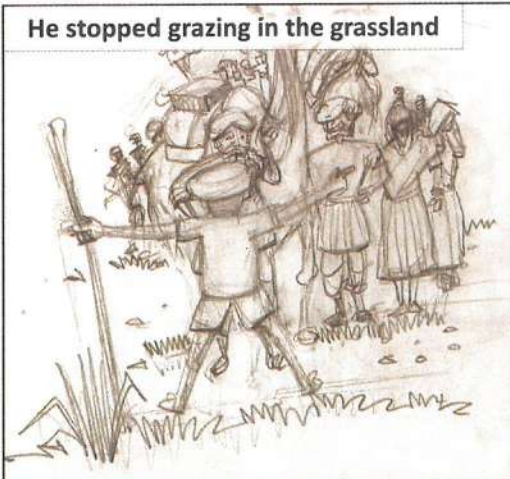


So Raghu started guarding the grassland

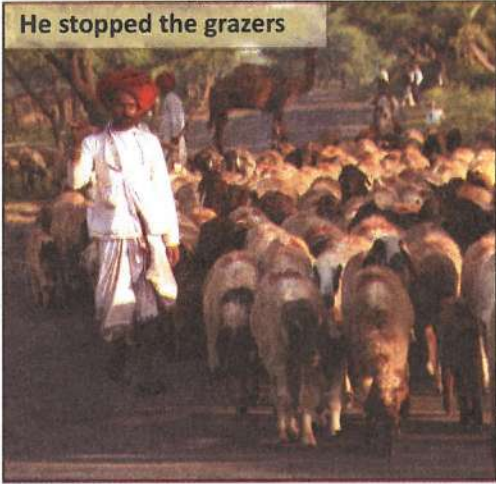


He did not let any one disturb the birds.

He stopped grazing in the grassland



He stopped the grazers



He chased away the dogs



He told the villagers not to cut grass right now....



All his free time he spent in the grassland



Raghu's parents were worried



Why are you spending all your time in the grassland?

Raghu told him about the reward scheme

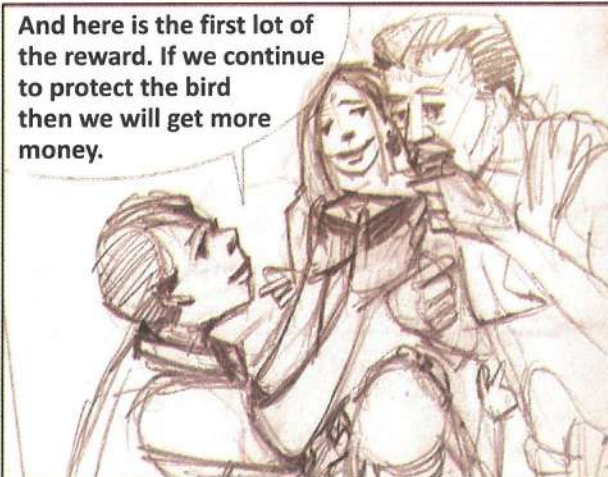


If you protect this bird then the Govt. rewards you with a cash gift.....

Spurred on by the reward scheme, the whole family started protecting the grassland.



And here is the first lot of the reward. If we continue to protect the bird then we will get more money.



Raghu and his family guarded the grassland right through the monsoon months....



Then one day, hidden amongst the grasses they spotted the treasure that they had been guarding all these days.



A female Lesser Florican with her chicks!!

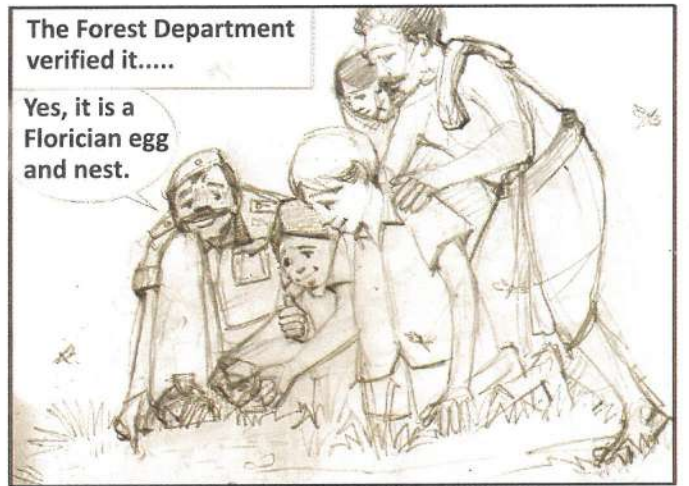


And in the nest were 4 broken eggshells....



The Forest Department verified it....

Yes, it is a Florican egg and nest.



And soon Raghu and his family got the rest of the reward



Raghu's father could pay off the loan, his mother kept the jewellery, and Shraddha still went to school....



.... and all because Raghu played host to a visitor which flew in from far away land.

Lesser Florican

The pride of Central India

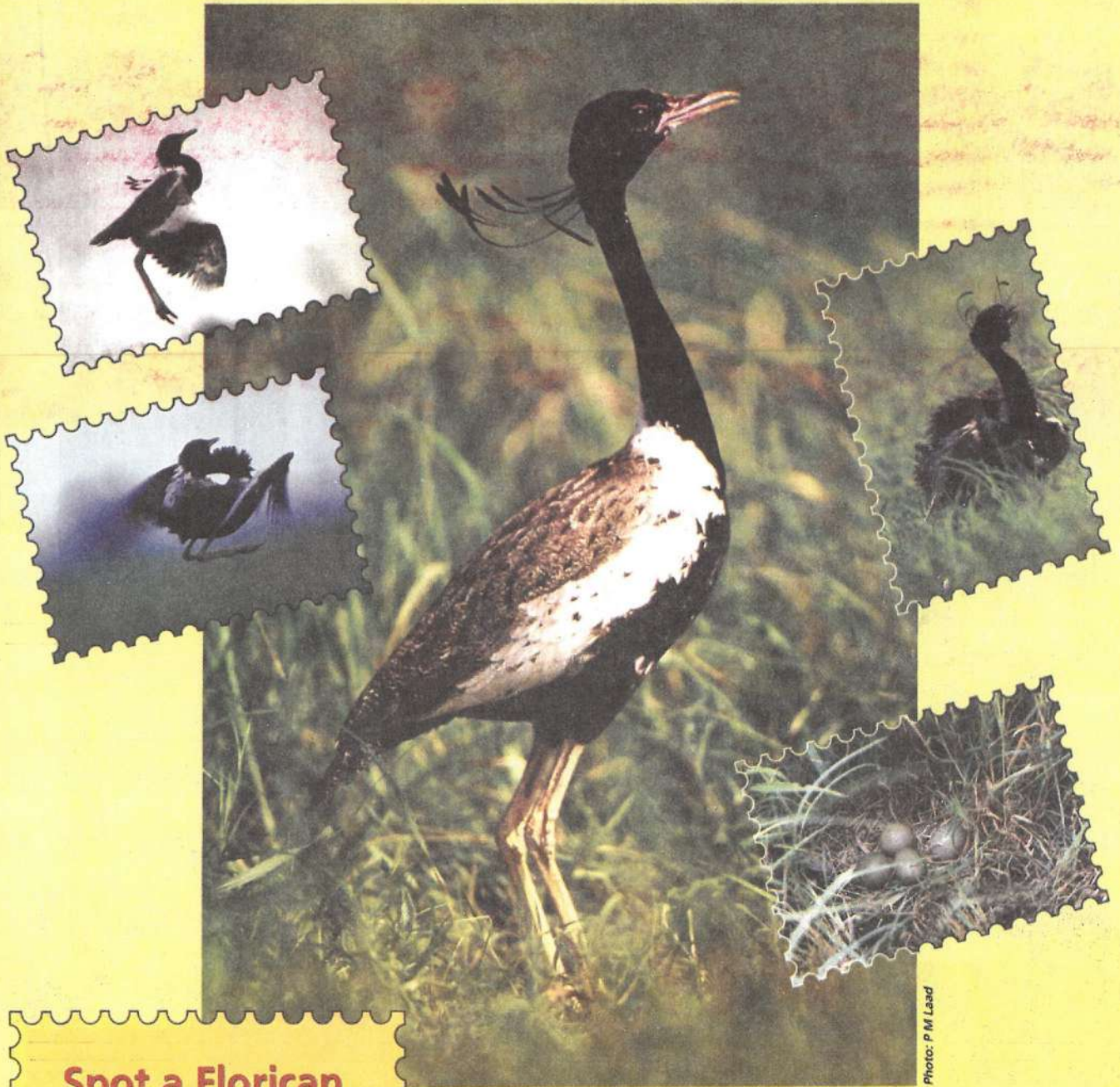


Photo: P M Laxd

**Spot a Florican
Win a Reward**

**Contact your nearest
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**Forest Department, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh
Madhya Pradesh State Biodiversity Board**

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Rs.1000 on sighting, Rs.4000 on conserving the habitat.

Check with your local Forest Dept. Office for details of the Reward Scheme. Conditions Apply.

Save the Lesser Florican

The Lesser Florican (*Sypheotides indica*) is a highly endangered bird belonging to the bustard (Otididae) Family.

It is estimated that less than 2500 individuals survive today.

It is endemic to India and migrates from southern India during the monsoon season (August to November) to the central Indian grasslands to breed and nest.

The Ark Foundation in partnership with Madhya Pradesh Forest Department has launched a unique communication- oriented community-based conservation project to help in the protection of the Lesser Florican.

Conservation Leadership Programme (a partnership of four international conservation NGO's) is funding this project.

ENDANGERED



Conservation Leadership Programme

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