

NT/SATURDAY 12/12/92

Goa's Wild-life artist

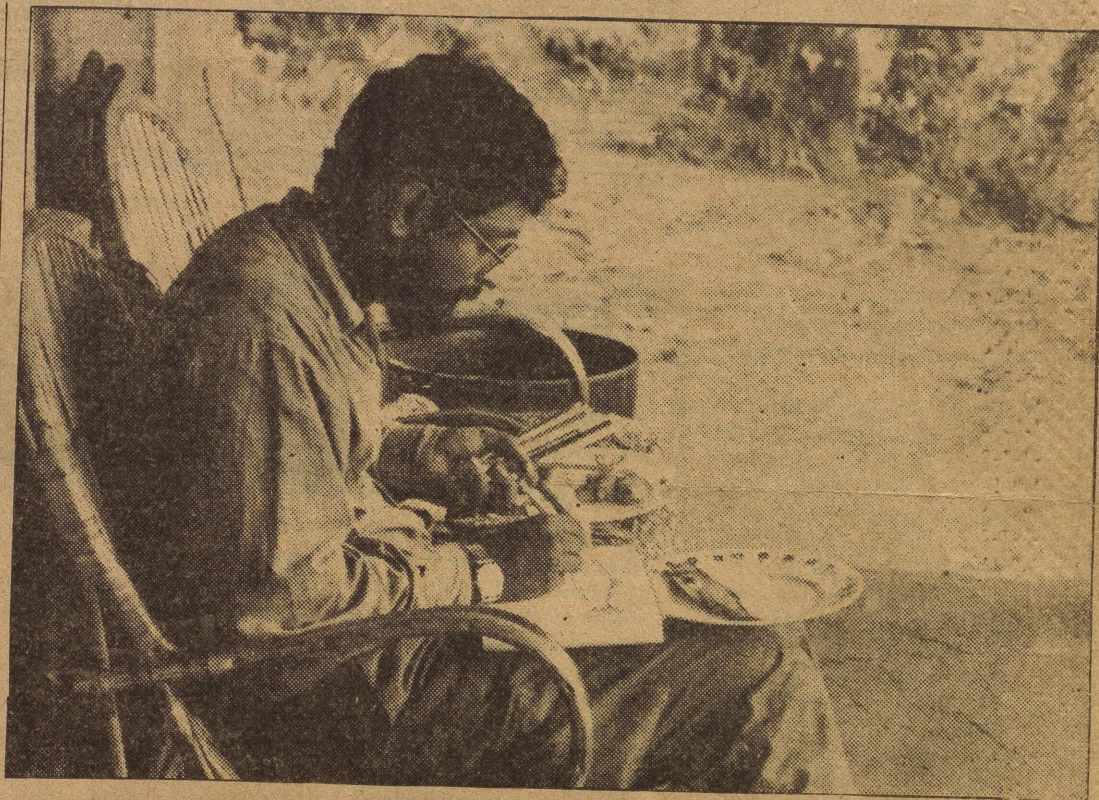
By Lloyd Rodricks

It was to my great advantage that I was invited by Carl D'Silva to go bird-watching with him on Carambolim Lake. Not only was the trip interesting and educational but I also got deep insights into the working life of Goa's internationally established Wild-life artist and Wild-life book illustrator. To reproduce on canvas and paper, wild creatures in their natural state, the artist must be exceedingly patient and have a genuine love and understanding of nature. Using telescope and binoculars, Carl introduced me to many species on Carambolim Lake and his knowledge of their habitat, colour variations, flight patterns and breeding cycles was amazing. It is no wonder then that Carl has become an expert Wild-life artist and that he has numerous assignments in progress.

In mid-November 1992 for the first time in Goa was held an exhibition, "Wild-life in Art" at the Menezes Braganza Hall organized by the World Wide Fund For Nature - India, Goa Division. This exhibition was kept open for 5 days and it attracted 43 exhibits, mainly by students of art and professional artists. The Convenor of this exhibition was Carl and the judges were himself, Mr. Avinash Deo, Principal Goa College of Art and noted architect Mr. Gerard Da Cunha. Writing in the brochure this is what the Convenor said of this form of art. "This art form has now found a place in the mainstream of the Fine Arts World. True Wild-life art is a culmination of first hand observations of certain life forms, an in-depth knowledge of their behaviour and an uncanny sense of creativity."

At the tender age of 17 Carl began his career in conservation and Wild-life art, working part-time with the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). In 1982 at the age of 19 he met the renowned Indian ornithologist, Dr. Salim Ali and since then the young artist resolved to make a career as a Wild-life conservationist and artist. His first bird survey for the BNHS was of the bustard in Gujarat, Kamataka and Andhra in 1984. In 1986 he undertook the study of the Lesser Florican and produced a painting of the bird he had observed in its natural setting. The significant break came for the up-coming artist in 1987 when two of his paintings, "Clouded Leopard" and "Scavenger Vultures" were selected by the London Society of Wild-life Artists to be exhibited there among the works of world renowned Wild-life artists.

Wild-life art in India is in its



Carl sketching a freshly-caught Rainbow Trout in the Rajamalai Hills of Kerala in 1990.

infancy but going by the first Goa exhibition, there appears to be a lot of talent especially among the young. It is a highly specialized form of art and it calls for total dedication and an approach to the understanding of nature which comes very near to a mystical experience. For a resident Goan of Caranzalem to have reached such heights of perfection in this unique and specialized field is truly laudable. Carl is working on many

assignments from his base in Goa. A major task in progress is the illustration of Dr. Salim Ali's book, "The Book of Indian Birds" in a new format, commissioned by the Bombay Natural History Society. Carl is part of a team of ten top bird artists, nine of them British, doing a major share of plates for a comprehensive field handbook to the birds of the Indian sub-continent. This handbook will be published in late 1995.

Every year since his work was selected for exhibition by the Society of Wild-life Artists, Carl has had his paintings exhibited in London. Numerous publications have accepted the artist's paintings, illustrations and designs. Painting wild-life in their natural habitat requires a great amount of field-work and infinite patience. The results of this kind of talent and dedication is clearly seen in the paintings of Carl D'Silva.