

# PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

Vol. XVIII No. 5

October 2012 (No. 99)

## **LIST OF CONTENTS**

### **EDITORIAL**

The real costs of 'Coalgate' 3

### **NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES**

#### **Assam**

Two poachers killed in Rajiv Gandhi (Orang) NP  
Elephant killed by speeding train near Amchang  
Wildlife Sanctuary 3

#### **Gujarat**

Scanty rainfall in Gir; FD makes alternative  
arrangement 4

#### **Karnataka**

State opposes TR status for Kudremukh 4

#### **Kerala**

Solar powered fences for Wayanad forests 5

#### **Madhya Pradesh**

Tribal museum to be set up near Kanha TR 5

#### **Maharashtra**

Wildlife conservation plan for Chandrapur district  
Panel for management plan for Pench Tiger  
Reserve buffer zone 6

State wildlife board clears Gargai Dam; to  
submerge part of Tansa WLS

#### **Nagaland**

Workshop on Community Conserved Areas in  
Nagaland 7

#### **Orissa**

Alternative livelihoods planned for Simlipal forest  
dwellers 8

#### **Rajasthan**

Mordoongri village moves out of Ranthambhore  
More tigers to be re-located to Sariska TR 8

#### **Tamil Nadu**

Buffer zones notified for Anaimalai, Mudumalai  
and Kalakkad Mundanthurai TRs 9

Merchants federation urges exclusion of Valparai  
from Anaimalai TR

In-principle nod for Sathyamangalam TR;  
proposal for TR status for Srivilliputhur  
Grizzled Squirrel and Meghamalai WLS  
CEC rejects road connecting Theni forests and  
Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Sanctuary  
Delay in relocation from Mudumalai TR

#### **Uttar Pradesh**

Thermal power plant in Sonbhadra rejected  
because of proximity to Kaimur WLS 11

### **NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA**

CBSE warns against use of rare/endangered  
species in classrooms 11  
Coal mining threat to 1.1 million ha of forest, over  
10 tiger reserves in Central India  
The IBN Network Young Indian Leader award for  
Kamal Medhi  
TN Khushoo Memorial Award for Vidya Athreya  
Five new tiger reserves approved

### **SOUTH ASIA**

Bhutan, India, and Nepal agree to enhance  
cooperation in the Kanchenjunga Landscape 13



#### **Bangladesh**

10,000 deer killed every year in the Sundarbans

## **Special Sections**

### **• The Forest Rights Act, Protected Areas and Wildlife Conservation**

15

#### **National News**

Tiger reserve cores, buffers and ecotourism – An update

#### **Gujarat**

Consultation in Kachchh on the FRA

### **• Important Bird Areas Update**

18

#### **National News**

Concern over threat to vultures from veterinary  
painkiller Aceclofenac

#### **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**

Coast Guard radar project on Narcondam Island  
rejected

#### **Gujarat**

Gujarat has the highest number of Lesser floricans

#### **Maharashtra**

Six wetlands proposed as Ramsar sites

New IBAs being identified in Maharashtra

#### **Punjab**

Fishing contractors raid range office at Harike  
Wildlife Sanctuary

#### **Tamil Nadu**

No new construction work within 5 km radius  
around bird sanctuaries near Chennai

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Quick NEWS**

21

#### **READERS RESPOND**

22

#### **FROM THE ARCHIVES: A Decade Ago**

23

#### **PERSPECTIVE**

24

Thoughts from a conservation gathering: SCB Asia 2012

## **Protected Area Update**

**Vol. XVIII, No. 5, October 2012 (No. 99)**

Editor: **Pankaj Sekhsaria**

Editorial Assistance: **Reshma Jathar, Anuradha Arjunwadkar**

Illustrations: **Madhuvanti Anantharajan, Peeyush Sekhsaria**

Produced by

**The Documentation and Outreach Centre**

**KALPAVRIKSH**

Apartment 5, Shri Dutta Krupa, 908 Deccan Gymkhana, Pune 411004, Maharashtra, India.

Tel/Fax: 020 – 25654239. Email: [psekhsaria@gmail.com](mailto:psekhsaria@gmail.com)

Website: <http://kalpavriksh.org/protected-area-update>

## **Publication of the PA Update has been supported by**

**Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)**

<http://fes.org.in/>

**Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation Trust, C/o FES**

**World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - India**

**Bombay Natural History Society**

**Action Aid**

**Donations from a number of individual supporters**

Information has been sourced from different newspapers and

<http://indiaenvironmentportal.org.in>; [www.conservationindia.org](http://www.conservationindia.org)

## EDITORIAL

### **The real costs of ‘Coalgate’**

How much really is Rs. 1.86 lakh crore? This is the figure presently doing the rounds of the loss the nation has incurred because of the corruption in the allocation of coals blocks in different parts of the country. This huge amount of money is at the centre of a huge churning that is taking place in the political establishment and in the media. There is an outrage at what looks like a loot of unprecedented proportions.

Even as political parties slug it out, skeletons tumble out of corporate cupboards, as the electronic media finds juicy bits to occupy airtime and the many column inches of newspaper space get consumed by Coalgate, there is a more fundamental question that has neither been asked nor answered - what is it really that we are losing? The Rs. 1.86 lakh crore is an evaluation in one dimension, in one metric, actually, in only one world view. It is a computation of the loss in Indian National Rupees (INR) that has been incurred to the national treasury because a whole set of people (almost) successfully ducked the system. It is the alleged illegality, the cheating of the system where the real money for the coal was not paid.

But, what if we assume for a moment that the game would be played by the book, that there would be competitive bidding, that the ‘correct’ price would be paid? The state would earn the Rs. 1.86 lakh crore but would anything else change? To answer that question, even if as a partial counterpoint, one has to look at Greenpeace India’s most recent report ‘How coal mining is thrashing tigerland’ (Page 12). Over 1.1 million hectares of forest, mostly dense, is at risk from coal mining in just 13 coalfields in Central India that the report analyses; there are 40 other coalfields which still remain to be evaluated.

These forests are home to a diverse range of flora and fauna including mega fauna such as the tiger, leopard and elephant; these forests are the carbon sinks which we want to exploit and market in international fora; and these are the lands that are home to thousands of adivasi communities who have lived here for generations. The Rs. 1.86 lakh crore is only the notional value of a single resource that lies buried deep; it does not include the value

of anything and everything else, even if a valuation was indeed possible.

The mining, where it will happen or where it has already happened, cares neither for the estimated economic losses nor the legality. The coal is the same, the processes are the same and the outcomes are same. The forests will be ripped apart, watersheds will be destroyed, rivers and streams poisoned, livelihoods and cultures of the adivasi communities sacrificed at the alter of development. It doesn’t matter that these people bear the lightest footprint on the planet in these times of a climate change crisis and neither will it matter that many of these forests are adjacent to tiger reserves or are part of corridors linking one tiger or elephant habitat to another. Let’s also not forget that conservation policies which aggressively seek to evict traditional communities for purposes of conservation are rendered almost completely impotent in the context of this discourse.

Coalgate could be an eye-opener, but only if we understood the real value of this Rs. 1.86 lakh crore!

## NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

### **ASSAM**

#### **Two poachers killed in Rajiv Gandhi (Orang) National Park**

Two alleged poachers were killed in an encounter with forest guards at the Rajiv Gandhi (Orang) National Park late night on July 31. A .303 rifle, 18 rounds of ammunition, three mobile phones, two bags containing food, clothes and other items were recovered from the encounter site. An Imphal-Dimapur bus ticket was also recovered from them, triggering suspicion that one of them could be either from Manipur or from Nagaland. The ticket was purchased on July 29.

Forest officials said that a gang of four poachers had crossed the Purnoi river and entered the park when they were accosted

by a group of forest guards. They opened fire with their two .303 rifles and it was in retaliatory fire by the forest staff that two of them were killed. This was the fourth attempt by poachers to kill rhinos in Orang this year.

Source: 'Two poachers killed in Orang', *The Telegraph*, 02/08/12.

Contact: **DFO**, Orang NP, Mangaldoi Wildlife Division, P.O. Mangaldoi, Darrang - 784 125, Tel: 0914-22065(O), 22349(R)

### **Elephant killed by speeding train near Amchang WLS**

A young female elephant was recently killed in a collision with an inter-city train in the Kurkuria area under Sonapur forest range of Kamrup district. The train was going from Guwahati to Tinsukia in upper Assam. The railway track where the mishap occurred is close to the Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary. Forest officials said the elephant may have been around seven years old.

The total death toll of elephants due to collision with trains in Assam this year has now reached four. In July an elephant succumbed to injuries after being hit by a train in the Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary in Jorhat district, while two elephants were killed in the Karbi Anglong area in February and June respectively. In May this year, another elephant was injured by a moving train in the Deepor Beel area.

Last year, five elephants were killed in collisions with moving trains in different parts of the state, including three in Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary alone. In 2010 seven elephants were killed by speeding trains in Karbi Anglong and Deepor Beel areas. Assam tops the national list with 36% of elephant casualties due to train-hits since 1987, followed by West Bengal with 26% and Uttarakhand with 14%.

Source: 'Elephant killed by speeding train', *The Times of India*, 03/08/12.

## **GUJARAT**

### **Scanty rainfall in Gir; FD makes alternative arrangement**

A severe shortage of rainfall in the Junagadh district has forced the forest department (FD) to operationalize a contingency plan to provide water

for wildlife in Gir. The district received only 10% of normal rainfall till August and water levels in water bodies have fallen drastically. The seven rivers — Hiran, Saraswati, Datardi, Shingoda, Machhundri, Ghodavadi, and Raval — that pass through the forests here too have been drying up.

The FD has been replenishing more than 500 artificial waterholes in the Gir National Park and its periphery but they are worried that there were no such arrangements in Amreli, Bhavnagar and in the coastal areas. In normal course, forest authorities stop filling the artificial waterholes in and around Gir by June 15 every year — unless it is required in summer. But nearly after a decade, they have been forced to fill them up in August as well.



Source: Himanshu Kaushik, '500 artificial ponds to be filled up for thirsty lions in Gir National Park', *The Times of India*, 18/08/12.

Contact: **CF (Wildlife)** Junagadh, Sardar Bag, Junagadh, Gujarat. Tel: 0285 - 631678/630051. Fax: 631211. Email: [cfwildlife\\_adl@sancharnet.in](mailto:cfwildlife_adl@sancharnet.in)

## **KARNATAKA**

### **State opposes TR status for Kudremukh**

The Karnataka state government has opposed the declaration of the Kudremukh Tiger Reserve, the final approval for which was recently accorded by the Union Ministry for Environment and Forests. The state has also opposed the heritage tag accorded to 10 sites in the Western Ghats by UNESCO recently.

While initially the state had favoured the tiger reserve declaration, it changed its stand following pressure from legislators representing Udupi, Dakshina Kannada and Chikmagalur districts (*PA Updates* Vol. XVIII, No. 2 and Vol. XVII, No. 4).

Legislators from these areas are contending that nearly 1,500 tribal families in the Kudremukh NP and 4,000 families living on its borders would be affected if the park becomes a TR.

While answering a question in the legislative assembly, state Forest Minister, Mr. C.P. Yogeshwar announced that a Government Order spelling out the state's stand on the TR status would soon be issued.

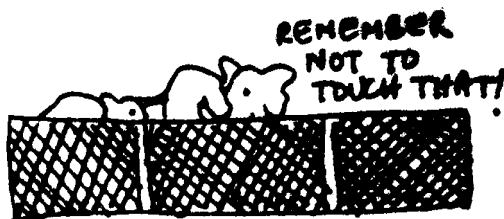
Source: Muralidhara Khajane, State opposes tiger reserve tag for Kudremukh National Park, *The Hindu*, 17/08/12.

Contact: **DCF**, Kudremukh Wildlife Division, Karkala, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka. Tel: 08258-221183(O), 221004(R). Fax: 08258-221183

**Chief Wildlife Warden** - Karnataka, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 18<sup>th</sup> Cross, Malleshwaram, Bangalore – 560003, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3341993.

## KERALA

### Solar powered fences for Wayanad forests



A Rs. six crore project to curb the increasing human-animal conflict in the Wayanad district is to be implemented soon. As a part of the project, 300 km of solar power fence would be installed around human settlements adjacent to forests, in the border areas of the North and South Wayanad forest divisions, as well as in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. Fencing will also be installed in some areas of Palakkad, Malappuram, Kasaragod, and Kannur districts.

The National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned Rs. six crore for the project which will be executed by the Kerala Forest Development Corporation (KFDC). It has proposed to establish a base station at its tea estate at Kamba Mala in Manathavady for coordinating the maintenance of the fencing network. Technicians will be located every 5-kms for ensuring timely maintenance. Training would

also be given to forest watchers for installing and maintaining the fences.

The memory of the electric shock that will not harm the animal is expected to serve as a psychological deterrent and prevent the animals getting into areas and situations with conflict possibilities. Some experts have however cautioned that movement paths of animals could be interfered with because of these fences, resulting in increased aggressive behavior and even more conflict.

Source: 'Rs.6-crore project to curb man-animal conflict', *The Hindu*, 10/08/12.

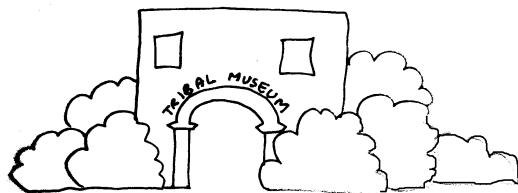
K.S. Sudhi, '300-km-long solar fence in Wayanad', *The Hindu*, 13/08/12.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Wayanad Wildlife Division, P.O. Sulthan Bathery, Wayanad-673 592, Kerala. Tel: 0493-2620454

## MADHYA PRADESH

### Tribal museum to be set up near Kanha TR

The Corbett Foundation is setting up a Tribal Museum in village Baherakhar on the outskirts of the Kanha Tiger Reserve. To be built completely by members of the Baiga tribes and in the style of a 'Baiga House', the museum will showcase the culture, heritage and art of the Baiga and the Gond tribes through information panels, artifacts, implements and instruments used by these tribes. There will be a dedicated workshop for members of the tribes to make articles out of natural resources and to sell them through a self help group as well.



Source: 'Tribal museum in Kanha'. Newsletter of the Corbett Foundation, July 2012.

Contact: Corbett Foundation, Email: [info@corbettfoundation.org](mailto:info@corbettfoundation.org) Web: [www.corbettfoundation.org](http://www.corbettfoundation.org)

## MAHARASHTRA

### Wildlife conservation plan for Chandrapur district

The Maharashtra Forest Department (FD) is chalking out a plan for wildlife conservation in the Chandrapur district. This is being done in response to the demands made by wildlife activist Bandu Dhotre during his recent fast in Nagpur to save tigers.

Principal Secretary (Forest) Praveen Singh Pardeshi has directed officials to take measures in this direction. CCF Virendra Tiwari has been asked to review the action taken on a monthly basis. In July, Bandu Dhotre, under the banner of his organization Eco-Pro, had launched an indefinite fast in Nagpur to press 16 demands for the protection and conservation of tigers in Chandrapur. The fast was called off nine days later after the state government conceded to nearly all his demands.

Forest officers have been directed to prepare a 'wildlife conservation plan' for the area under the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM) and non-buffer areas in the district for tiger protection on the lines of the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR). This plan will incorporate a number of measures, including alleviating burden on forest guards, building protection huts and raising check posts.

A proposal has already been forwarded for the re-formation of beats in TATR and re-acquiring the fire fighting rights in the core area from the FDCM. TATR presently has 32 forest beats, which will be restructured into 85 beats. Fire fighting responsibility of TATR is now shouldered by the FDCM. The department is contemplating handing over the fire fighting responsibility to TATR. This, however, will need recruitment of additional staff.

Steps have also been initiated for mapping of tiger corridors and of declaring these corridors as eco-sensitive zones. The Forest Minister, Mr Patangrao Kadam has reportedly also agreed to declare Chandrapur a tiger district. This will be done once the tiger conservation plan for FDCM and non-buffer area is prepared. The announcement is likely to be made in the winter session of the assembly in Nagpur. Proposals over demands for installing electronic eye surveillance in TATR and

raising heights of parapet walls of wells in the fringe areas have also been set into motion.

Source: Mazhar Ali. 'Wildlife conservation plan being chalked out for Chanda district', *The Times of India*, 06/08/12.

Contact: **Field Director**, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Project, Mul Road, In front of Sanchiti Chamber, Chandrapur – 442401, Maharashtra. Tel: 07172-51414(O), 56382(R)

### Panel for management plan for Pench TR buffer zone

A six-member committee has been constituted to study forestry operations and other management issues in the buffer area of Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR). The committee that was constituted on August 23 by the principal chief conservator of forests (wildlife), SWH Naqvi, consists of the additional PCCF (wildlife), AK Saxena as chairman and chief conservator of forests (CCF) and field director of Pench, MS Reddy as member-secretary.

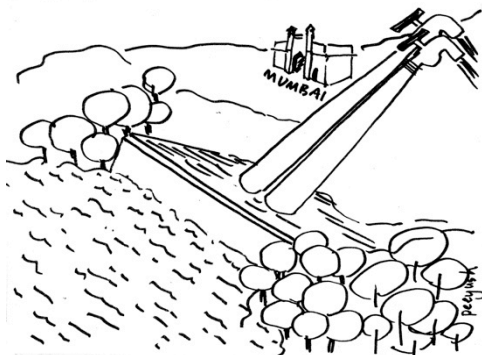
The other members of the committee include CCF Nagpur, SH Patil; General Manager of the FDCM, Jarnail Singh; representative of the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), Prafulla Bhamburkar; and honorary wildlife warden, Kundan Hate. The committee has been asked to submit its report within one month.

The terms of reference (ToR) of the panel include studying present forestry practices as per the prescriptions of the approved working plan and management plan being followed in the area falling in the buffer zone of Pench and to recommend a set of activities that are in consonance with NTCA guidelines. The panel will suggest the ideal administrative set up for achieving the objectives and also make other recommendations in the interest of the overall management of the buffer zone.

Source: Vijay Pinjarkar. 'Panel set up for Pench buffer management', *The Times of India*, 29/08/12.

Contact: **DCF, Pench National Park**, Near Govt.  
Press, Civil Line, Nagpur - 440 001,  
Maharashtra. Tel: 0712-2524727(O),  
2267282(R) Fax 0712-2539226

### State wildlife board clears Gargai Dam; to submerge part of Tansa WLS



The Maharashtra State Wildlife Board has cleared the Gargai Dam that will submerge a part of the Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary. The approval was granted on June 5 earlier this year and the proposal will now be sent to the National Board for Wildlife for the final clearance.

The 440 million litres per day (MLD) dam is to come up on the Gargai river in the Wada taluka of Thane district and is being constructed, mainly, to supply water to the city of Mumbai. An environment impact assessment (EIA) report is being prepared by the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI). It is expected that the EIA report will be cleared by the Central Ministry of Environment and Forests by December next year. The actual work on the dam will then begin in 2014 and is slated to be completed in four years.

Source: Eknath Makne. 'Gargai dam gets nod; now, over to Centre', *DNA*, 14/08/12.

Contact: **Dy. Conservator of Forests**, SGNP, Borivili (East), Mumbai – 400066, Maharashtra. Tel: 022-28860362, 28860389(O), 8862780(R) Email: [sgnpmumbai@gmail.com](mailto:sgnpmumbai@gmail.com)  
**Chief Wildlife Warden**, Maharashtra State, Dr. Ambedkar Bhawan, 4 & 5th Floor, M.E.C.L. Building Seminary Hills & Campus, Nagpur – 440001, Maharashtra. Tel: 0712-2526758 / 2530126. Fax – 2510671. Email: [cfwl@nagpur.dot.net.in](mailto:cfwl@nagpur.dot.net.in) -

## NAGALAND

### Workshop on Community Conserved Areas in Nagaland

A two-day workshop 'Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) and Framework for Management Plans' was held in Kohima in the month of July. The workshop was organized jointly by Nagaland Empowerment of People through Economic Development (NEPED) and Foundation for Ecological Security (FES).

The two main objectives of the workshop were:

- Evolving broad principles in the context of developing the Management Plan.
- Developing a framework for the Management Plan that can be replicated with appropriate changes in similar socio-ecosystems.

80 odd participants representing government departments, educational institutions, churches, Community Conserved Areas and civil society organisations working in the arena of community led conservation participated in the workshop.

Source: 'Community conserved areas and framework for management plans', [www.nagalandpost.com](http://www.nagalandpost.com), 14/07/12. 'Greater ecological service in the age of climate change'.

[www.morungexpress.com](http://www.morungexpress.com), 17/07/12

Contact: **FES North East**.  
[northeast.fes@ecologicalsecurity.org](mailto:northeast.fes@ecologicalsecurity.org)  
**NEPED, Kohima**.  
Email - [nepedkhn@yahoo.co.in](mailto:nepedkhn@yahoo.co.in)

## ORISSA

### Alternative livelihoods planned for Simlipal forest dwellers

The Orissa government has decided to scale up livelihood projects to provide alternative livelihoods for the people living in the forests of the Simlipal Biosphere Reserve (BR). There are an estimated 1265 villages with a total population of about five lakh people spread over the reserve area.

The decision was taken during a recent meeting of the Simlipal Biosphere

Reserve Management Council that was chaired by the state Chief Secretary, Mr. Bijay Kumar Patnaik. The officials of the Forests and Environment and that of Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Departments have been asked to prepare an integrated action plan for providing alternative skills and vocations to the people living within the Simlipal forests.

The council also reviewed the action plan for 2011-12 and finalised the action plan for management of the bio-sphere for the year 2012-13. Rs. 65 lakh had been allocated for the year 2011-12, while the annual action plan has been estimated at Rs. 2.41 crore for the year 2012-13.

Source: 'Comprehensive survey for dwellers inside Similipal bio-sphere mooted', *Pragativadi*, 01/08/12.

Contact: **Director**, Simlipal Tiger Reserve, P.O. Baripada, Dist. Mayurbhanj – 757002, Orissa. Tel: 06792-252593(O), 252773(R) Fax: 256705  
**CWLW– Orissa**, Plot No. 8, Shahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar – 751007, Orissa. Tel: 0674-2512502 / 2513134 / 2515840. Fax: 512502

## RAJASTHAN

### Mordoongri village moves out of Ranthambhore

The Mordoongri village has moved out from the core of the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve (TR). 30 families — with an approximate population of 150 and many heads of livestock - are said to have voluntarily relocated to Amla, some 35 km away in Tonk district. They have been provided with land as compensation and the authorities have provided them with below poverty line cards, gas connections, water supply and roads.

The Sawai Madhopur Collector is reported to have played a pivotal role in the process. Along with the authorities, the local tourism sector also helped the outgoing families settle in the new environs. The full cooperation of non-government organisations and non-interference of local politicians is cited as another reason for the smooth transition in Mordoongri.

In the past five years, efforts to shift villages have been renewed (*PA Update* Vol. XV, No. 6) here - Indala was the first settlement to go, followed by Padra. According to the Divisional Forest Officer, now Katauli and Bhid villages are

now waiting to move out. A tigress, T-9 had moved into Padra soon after the villagers left, and it is expected something similar will be seen in Mordoongri as well. At least four tigers — T-13, T-22, T-23, and T-43 are known to frequent the area where the village used to be located.

Source: Sunny Sebastian, 'Men making way for tigers in Ranthambhore', *The Hindu*, 27/07/12.

Contact: **Director**, Ranthambore TR, Sawai Madhopur – 322001, Rajasthan. Tel: 07462-220223 / 222004 / 221139 / 221142

### More tigers to be re-located to Sariska TR



A decision was taken in the early part of August to re-locate more tigers to the Sariska Tiger Reserve. A tigress is to be moved from the Ranthambhore TR and one or two more tigers might also be brought in from the forests of neighbouring Madhya Pradesh.

The decision was taken at a meeting presided over by the Minister for Environment & Forests Ms. Bina Kak and attended by State Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Secretary and Head of the Forest Force in Rajasthan among others.

The proposal has been sent to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for its approval.

Source: Sunny Sebastian, 'More tigers for Sariska this monsoon', *The Hindu*, 09/08/12.

Contact: **Director**, Sariska Tiger Reserve, Sariska, Alwar – 301022, Rajasthan. Tel: 0144-41333 (O)

## TAMIL NADU

### Buffer zones notified for Anaimalai, Mudumalai and Kalakkad Mundanthurai TRs

The Tamil Nadu state government recently notified buffer zones for the three tiger reserves in the state – the Anaimalai, Mudumalai and Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserves. The move came in response to the recent Supreme Court reprimand that also imposed a fine on some states, including TN, for failing to notify the buffer zones. The court had given the states time until August 22 to submit details of the notification or face contempt proceedings.

Source: 'Tamil Nadu notifies buffer zones in tiger reserves', The Times of India, 15/08/12.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Mudumalai WLS, Mt. Stewart Hill, Udthagamandalam - 643001 Tamil Nadu. Tel: 0423-244098

**Field Director KMTR**, NGO 'A' Colony, Palayam Kottai, Tirunelveli - 627 007. Tel: 0462-273075, 2552663(O), 2580115(R). Fax: 0462-2580115

### Merchants federation urges exclusion of Valparai from Anaimalai TR

The Valparai Merchants Federation and various other associations have urged that Valparai be excluded from the core and buffer areas of Anaimalai Tiger Reserve (TR). It has been noted that traditionally, Valparai had been a land of plantations providing livelihood to thousands of workers from backward and suppressed communities. It houses a number of reservoirs and hydel power stations. In addition, there are a number of places of worship frequented by devotees for hundreds of years.

It has been pointed out that things have actually worsened after the Forest Department (FD) declared Valparai as a constituent area of Anaimalai TR. Using the TR status, the FD started issuing tickets and collecting charges. The Monkey Falls, The Chinnakallar falls, upper Nirar, and the 100-year-old hanging bridge have all been closed for the local population. The Nallamudi Pooncholai estate and number parai (number rock), which are on a private estate area at a visible distance from the forest boundary, have also been closed for the local population.

The federation has expressed the fear that today's buffer was likely to become a core zone tomorrow and considering this possibility, the Valparai pocket should be excluded from the core and the buffer zones, so that the local population did not face any denial of rights.

Source: 'Exclusion of Valparai from core, buffer areas of tiger reserve sought', *The Hindu*, 09/08/12.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden, Indira Gandhi WLS** 178, Fisheries Dept. Road, Govt. Timber Depot, Pollachi 642 001, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 04259 - 225356

### In-principle nod for Sathyamangalam TR; proposal for TR status for Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel and Meghamalai WLS

The Union Environment and Forest minister, Ms Jayanthi Natarajan, recently announced an in-principle approval for notifying the Sathyamangalam forests as a tiger reserve. The announcement which was made in the Rajya Sabha also invited Tamil Nadu to send a proposal for converting the Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Sanctuary (SGSS) into a tiger reserve.

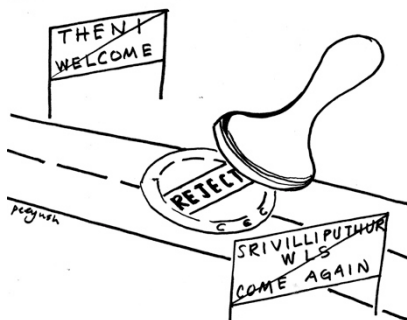
Where the Sathyamangalam TR is concerned, forest officials have said that the nearly 1400 sq km reserve will have a core area of 790 sq km. Locals in the region have strongly opposed the tiger reserve for fear of the impacts this will have on their livelihood activities (*PA Updates* Vol. XVIII, No. 4, 3, 2 & 1 and Vol. XVII, No. 6)

The proposal for the new tiger reserve includes the Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Sanctuary (SGSS) in Virudhunagar and the Meghamalai sanctuary in Theni. SGSS shares a border with the Periyar TR in Kerala and it is hoped that the creation of this tiger reserve will help consolidate the corridor for tigers between TN and Kerala.

Source: 'Two more tiger reserves for Tamil Nadu?' *The Times of India*, 15/08/12.



## CEC rejects road connecting Theni forests and Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Sanctuary



The Supreme Court appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) recently rejected a proposal cleared by the Tamil Nadu government for a road connecting Karumbarai in Theni forest division with the Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Sanctuary near Watrap in Virudhunagar district.

The CEC, after inspecting the areas in Theni and the sanctuary on June 13, held public hearings on four occasions. The last one was on August 7, at which it announced the rejection of the proposal. It stated that the laying of a road in the ecologically sensitive forest area would only help ganja cultivators, encourage poaching and tree-felling, besides encroachment in the forests.

It pointed out that more than 600 trees would have to be cut for the proposed road and this would lead to soil erosion and landslips, which would ultimately de-stabilise the entire region. It would also affect the seasonal migration of elephants from the neighbouring Periyar Tiger Reserve and Theni forest division towards the sanctuary areas.

The CEC team also expressed its concern over increased encroachment of forests in the Karumbarai area in Theni forest division. It was noted that a larger number of people have, over the last three decades, cleared the forests here and raised silk cotton plants and cashew-nut plantations.

Source: P. Oppili, 'Supreme Court panel rejects State proposal for road to sanctuary', *The Hindu*, 17/08/12.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Srivilliputhur WLS, No.8 Kallikulam Street, Srivilliputhur – 626129.  
Tel: 04563-260565

## Delay in relocation from Mudumalai TR

A long delay in the relocation process of forest dwellers and tribal people living in 30 villages, including Mudhuguli village, located inside Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (TR) may cost the state nearly double the amount in compensation as the number of families in the villages has increased significantly in the past five years.

Villagers, most of them belonging to the Mountadan Chetty community, have been waiting to be relocated for over five years. In 2005, the community leaders had approached the Madras High Court seeking a directive for their resettlement. The court ruled in their favour in 2007. A survey was then held in 2007 and around 449 families (1,940 people) from 20 villages in Mudumalai panchayat and 10 villages in Nilakottai - both inside the Mudumalai wildlife sanctuary - were found to be eligible for voluntary resettlement.

However, as per the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) guidelines, an individual of age 18 and above is considered a separate family. So, the FD fixed a cut-off date - December 31, 2010 - for identifying families that were to be relocated. After the cut-off date was fixed, the FD received claims from 763 families (almost one and half times the number decided in 2007) from the said 30 villages. Almost all villagers who are to be relocated own titled land. The Revenue Department is scrutinizing the authenticity of the 763 families who have submitted the claims.

According to the officials, 398.47 hectares of land near Ayyankolli has been identified for relocation, of which 289.49 hectares come under the Gudalur forest division.

Source: Shantha Thiagarajan, 'Delay on relocation of villages in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve to cost govt dear' *The Times of India*, 14/08/12.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Mudumalai WLS, Mt. Stewart Hill, Udahgamandalam - 643001 Tamil Nadu. Tel: 0423-244098

## UTTAR PRADESH

### Thermal power plant in Sonbhadra rejected because of proximity to Kaimur WLS



The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has rejected a proposal by Jaiprakash Associates Ltd. (JAL) for setting up a captive thermal power plant at Churk in Robertsganj tehsil of Sonbhadra because of its proximity to the Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS). The Uttar Pradesh Principal Secretary (Forests) has been informed about the decision, taken by the standing committee of the National Board of Wild Life (NBWL).

Work, however, is reportedly going on and two 125-meter tall stacks are the most conspicuous structures. The proposed integrated project includes 4X60 MW captive thermal power plants with a one million tonne per annum cement grinding unit and a one million tonne per annum coal washery. These are reportedly situated within a distance of 1.5 km from the boundary of Kaimur WLS. JAL had applied for environment clearance in 2011. Since the site was close to the Kaimur WLS, the MoEF had referred the matter to the NBWL.

An eight member NBWL team, consisting of experts from the Wildlife Institute of India and senior forest officials had conducted a spot inspection between July 17 and 19, 2011. During the site visit, the team found that certain claims made by the company were incorrect. JAL had claimed there was no forest within a 10 km radius of the plant. However, the team found that the boundary of Raunp forest block is separated from the boundary of the project by a road with a distance of hardly seven meters separating them.

JAL had also claimed that there are no sanctuaries or national parks within a 25 km radius of the plant site. But the team found that the nearest boundary of Kaimur WLS was only 1.5 km from the boundary of the project site. JAL had also submitted an incomplete faunal checklist and many important species were missing.

The team reported that the proposed plant will have noisy equipment such as crushers, belt conveyors, fans, pumps, a milling plant, compressors, boilers, and turbines, which will

affect the local habitat and the flora and fauna of Kaimur. Further, the proposed unit will also emit gases along with particulate matter from two stacks, which will affect flora and fauna. The plant also proposes to draw water from a nearby river, which it is feared will have serious ecological impacts and negatively affect the availability of drinking water.

At the meeting of the standing committee of NBWL, which was held on June 13, 2012, it was pointed out there had been apparent violations of the Forest Conservation Act, the Environment (Protection) Act, and the Wild Life Protection Act as work on the plant had been started without requisite permission from the standing committee and without obtaining environmental clearance.

Source: 'Jaypee's power plant project in Sonbhadra hits green hurdle', *Indian Express*, 18/08/12.

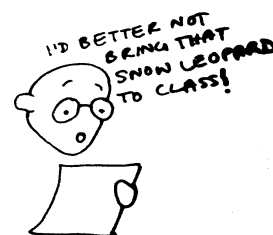
Contact: **DFO**, Kaimur WLS, Kaimur Wildlife Division, Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: Tel: 05442-253126  
**Chief Conservator of Forests & Chief Wildlife Warden**, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, 17, Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow - 226001. Tel: 0522-206584(O), 237715 & 223015(R). Fax 0522-222061/ 206188

## NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

### CBSE warns against use of rare/endangered species in classrooms

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has reminded affiliated schools that it is illegal to use rare/endangered species and plants in school laboratories

and classrooms. This recent letter was a follow up to a circular sent last year. In that circular the board had asked affiliated schools

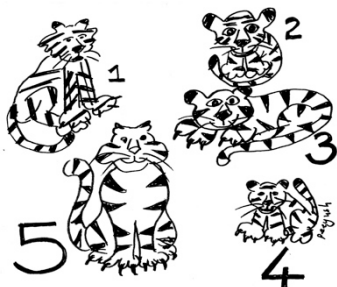


to surrender preserved museum specimens of plants and animals that are rare and threatened (as per the Wildlife Protection Act - 1972) to the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

A committee of experts at CBSE had unanimously agreed to follow the WP Act and to sensitise students towards care and protection of biodiversity. However, understanding the need for schools to teach students about such animals and plants, the board has encouraged the use of computers and virtual specimens to study plant and animal diversity.

Source: 'CBSE warns against use of rare/ endangered plants and species', *The Times of India*, 19/8/12.

### Five new tiger reserves approved



The National Tiger Conservation Authority has given in-principle approval for the creation of five new Tiger Reserves (TRs) - in Pilibhit (Uttar Pradesh), Ratapani (Madhya Pradesh), Sunabeda (Odisha), Mukundara Hills (Rajasthan) and Sathyamangalam (Tamil Nadu). The proposed Mukundara Hills TR comprises three wildlife sanctuaries - Darrah, Jawahar Sagar and Chambal.

States have also been advised to send proposals for declaring other areas including Bor, Nagzira-Navegaon (Maharashtra), Suhelwa (Uttar Pradesh), Guru Ghasidas National Park (Chhattisgarh), Mhadei Sanctuary (Goa) and Srivilliputhur Grizzled Giant Squirrel/Megamalai Wildlife Sanctuaries and Varushanadu Valley (Tamil Nadu) as TRs.

The Minister for Environment and Forests, Ms Jayanthi Natarajan has also confirmed that the final approval has been accorded to the Kudremukh TR in Karnataka.

Source: 'Centre gives approval for creation of five new tiger reserves', *The Indian Express*, 14/08/12.

Contact: **Dr. Rajesh Gopal**, NTCA, Annexe No. 5, Bikaner House, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi-110011. Telefax: 2338 4428. E-mail: [dirpt-r@nic.in](mailto:dirpt-r@nic.in)

### Coal mining threat to 1.1 million ha of forest, over 10 tiger reserves in Central India

A GIS analysis commissioned by Greenpeace and carried out by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE's) Eco-Informatics Lab has found that over 1.1 million ha. of forest, most of it dense, is at risk from coal mining in just 13 coalfields in Central India. It is feared that as mining expands in these coalfields, forest areas will be lost, possibly leading to greater human-wildlife conflict.

Greenpeace has warned that this is just the tip of the iceberg as Central India has about 40 coalfields, many of them in forest areas, most of which have not been analysed. The 13 coalfields analysed were in the states of Jharkhand (North Karanpura, W. Bokaro and Auranga), Madhya Pradesh (Sohagpur and Singrauli), Chhattisgarh (Hasdeo-Arand, Mandraigarh, Sonhat and Tatapani), Orissa (Talcher and Ib Valley) and Maharashtra (Kamptee and Wardha).

Almost all showed significant presence of either tiger, leopard or elephant. Many corridors linking tiger reserves also pass through the coalfields and are at risk of being snapped by coal mining. These corridors have been identified by the National Tiger Conservation Authority but have yet to receive any kind of legal protection. The tiger reserves threatened by the loss of connecting corridors due to coal mining include Tadoba-Andhari, Kawal, Satkosia, Simlipal, Palamau, Sanjay-Dubri, Bandhavgarh and Kanha. The full report is available at <http://www.greenpeace.org/india/en/publications/How-coal-mining-is-trashing-tigerland/>

Contact: Ashish Fernandes.  
[ashish.fernandes@greenpeace.org](mailto:ashish.fernandes@greenpeace.org)  
Nandikesh Sivalingam.  
[nandikesh.sivalingam@greenpeace.org](mailto:nandikesh.sivalingam@greenpeace.org)

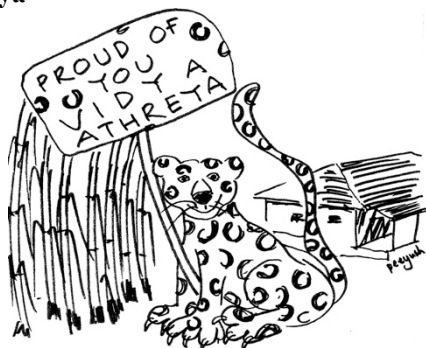
## **The IBN Network Young Indian Leader award for Kamal Medhi**

Kamal Medhi of the Samrakshan Trust was recently awarded the Young Indian Leader award for his efforts to involve local communities in conservation related work in the Lower Garo Hills in Meghalaya. The award was given by the IBN Network in partnership with IRB Infrastructure Developers Ltd.

Medhi was one of nine young Indians who received the award from Chief Guest Sachin Pilot, Minister of State for Communications & IT.

Source: Press Note, IBN Network

## **TN Khoshoo Memorial Award for Vidya Athreya**



Pune-based wildlife biologist, Ms. Vidya Athreya was recently conferred the prestigious 9th TN Khoshoo Memorial Award – 2012 for conservation, environment and development. She was awarded for her research on the dynamics of human-leopard encounters, the ecology and biology of the species, and the political and socio-cultural aspects of this encounter.

Athreya is a research associate with the Kaati Trust, Pune as well as the Centre for Wildlife Studies and Asian Nature Conservation Foundation, Bangalore. She has worked extensively with the Maharashtra Forest Department to decrease conflict by using knowledge-based management interventions, and contributed to the national guidelines on human-leopard conflict published by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The TN Khoshoo Memorial Award has been instituted to honour the memory of environmentalist, the late Triloki Nath Khoshoo,

who was the first secretary of the department of environment in 1982. 'Biodiversity Asia 2012', the second Asia region conference of the Society for Conservation Biology, organised by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and co-organisers hosted the 2012 TN Khoshoo Memorial Award this year.

Source: 'Pune wildlife biologist receives TN Khoshoo memorial award', *The Times of India*, 13/08/12.

## **SOUTH ASIA**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

(20 August 2012, Gangtok, Sikkim, India)

### **Bhutan, India, and Nepal agree to enhance cooperation in the Kanchenjunga Landscape**

The unique, culturally and biologically rich landscape around Mount Kanchenjunga covers parts of western Bhutan, northeastern India, and eastern Nepal and is one of several Himalayan areas where countries need to work together to conserve and manage biodiversity. In a meeting held at Gangtok in the Sikkim State of India from 16 to 18 August 2012, senior officials and experts from Bhutan, India, and Nepal developed a road map for carrying out collaborative work in this area.

The Kanchenjunga landscape includes 15 protected areas. The countries agreed to work towards connecting these areas through 'biodiversity corridors' for species migration to assist adaptation to climate change; and to address problems that cross borders such as poaching, overgrazing, forest fire, and spread of livestock disease.

The consultation was organized by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and hosted by the GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development (GBPIHED) in India, with support from the Forest Departments of

October 2012 (No. 99)

Sikkim and West Bengal. It was attended by more than 40 representatives of governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).



“The challenges of biodiversity conservation and management in the landscape can only be addressed if all three countries cooperate at various levels from local to bilateral to regional”, said Mr Bhim Prasad Dhungel, Minister of Tourism, Forests, Environment, and Wildlife Management of the Government of Sikkim, India. To this end, a similar collaborative initiative undertaken by ICIMOD in the Kailash Sacred Landscape could provide a model. “The work around Kailash already provides substantial scientific information to lead the process”, said Dr BMS Rathore, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

The joint biodiversity conservation effort will focus on the people living in the landscape. “People in the mountains have to be compensated for their conservation efforts”, emphasized Dasho Sherub Gyaltsen, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan. Mr Krishna Acharya, Director General of the Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation of the Government of Nepal, pointed out that the landscape programme must also jointly address wildlife-people conflict.

The participatory and consultative process of preparing the transboundary initiative during the next 18 months will be led by ICIMOD. The preparations will include a feasibility assessment report, a conservation strategy, and a comprehensive environmental plan, resulting in a framework for transboundary cooperation. “We are very satisfied with the progress made at this consultation”, said Dr Eklabya Sharma, Director of

Programme Operations at ICIMOD. “All three countries have given their full commitment for the preparatory phase of the Kangchenjunga landscape initiative”.

Contact: Dr. Nakul Chettri, Biodiversity specialist, Team Leader-BCM/ICIMOD. Email: [nchettri@icimod.org](mailto:nchettri@icimod.org)

## BANGLADESH

### 10,000 deer killed every year in the Sundarbans

A survey jointly conducted by the Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB) and Zoological Society of Bangladesh in 2010, has found out that about 10,000 deer are killed by poachers in the Sundarbans and its adjacent Reserve Forests in five southern districts of Bangladesh every year. The study identified at least 20 local gangs which are involved in illegal hunting of deer.

The findings show that the gangs are spread across eight upazilas that include Shymnagar of Satkhira, Koira and Dakop of Khulna, Mongla, Morelganj, and Sharankhola of Bagerhat, Patharghata of Barguna, and Mothbaria of Pirojpur.

In a recent event on July 11, a Coast Guard team had seized 350 kilograms of venison and a live deer on Bishkhali river under Patharghata upazila, Barguna. The poachers, however, fled after leaving the trawler on the river bank. Earlier, on February 19, 10 kilograms of venison, a rawhide, and two traps were seized in Sharankhola and two poachers were arrested. In January too, a Coast Guard team seized two mounds of venison and arrested two poachers in the Patharghata upazila. In the same month, seven live deer were rescued from the Gyanpara area.

Source: Sohrab Hossain. ‘Ten thousand deer poached every year: Survey, *The Daily Star*, 26/07/12.

## The Forest Rights Act, Protected Areas and Wildlife Conservation



### Tiger reserve cores, buffers and ecotourism – An update

In the matter of Ajay Dubey versus NTCA and others, while the main controversy has revolved around banning of tourism in core areas, several connected matters of tiger conservation have come up, increasing the complexity of the situation.

In a press release dated August 13, the Future of Conservation Network (FoC) has stated that the 24<sup>th</sup> July interim order of the Supreme Court on the matter of tourism in core areas of tiger reserves (*PA Update* Vol. XVIII, No. 4) has created a situation of serious illegalities. The organisations that has signed the release include Vasundhara, Kalpavriksh, Sahjeevan, Natural Justice, KRAPAVIS, Oxfam India, RCDC, ARCH-Vahini, Khoj, SHODH, NFFPFW, SPWD, ATREE and some wildlife conservationists. The FCN has noted that in their rush to notify buffer areas, which the Court directs should be done within three weeks, state governments are bypassing and violating the processes laid out in the Wild Life Protection Act and the Forest Rights Act. These time frames, the press release states, make a mockery of the due legal process of consultations with Gram Sabhas and an expert committee that has to be carried out for identifying and notifying buffer areas. The release has pointed out that the assurance that traditional and livelihood activities of villagers will not be affected is hollow. Already in many areas such as the Corbett Tiger Reserve in Uttarakhand and the Tadoba Andhari TR in Maharashtra, restrictions are coming into place in the areas notified as buffers.

#### Sequence of events

3 Apr: Interim order by Supreme Court to state governments for fixation of buffers and finalisation of ecotourism guidelines in three months

9 July: the Guidelines are finalised and submitted to the Supreme Court by NTCA

24 July: Interim order by Supreme Court banning tourism in core areas of tiger reserves till final directions are issued by the court on the matter. Taking exception to the fact that some states had notified buffers of Tiger Reserves yet, the Court ordered them to carry this order out within three weeks, failing which contempt proceedings would be initiated against them, and the State Secretaries would be fined Rs. 50,000.

29 Aug: SC order allowing MoEF time for guidelines on cores, buffers and ecotourism.

29 Aug: NTCA puts in public domain a draft set of guidelines (though only related to ecotourism).

11 Sept: NTCA constitutes a committee to develop comprehensive guidelines in compliance with the SC order dated 29.08.2012 giving the deadline for this exercise as 22.09.2012.

The more recent Supreme Court Order (29 August 2012) has allowed NTCA time for finalising guidelines as the NTCA had submitted that 'a comprehensive set of Guidelines are being framed by the National Tiger Conservation Authority and Ministry of Environment & Forests with regard to fixation of core areas, buffer areas and tourism

including welfare and religious tourism as contemplated, amongst other laws in force, under Section 38-O(c) of the Wildlife Protection Act as well as with regard to the protection of the tigers in forest areas as well as non-forest areas.’ The draft guidelines titled ‘Guidelines for ecotourism in and around Protected Areas’ were put into public domain on 29 August giving one week of time for comments. Many groups and individuals have submitted comments in response.

A submission by Campaign for Survival and Dignity (CSD) on the guidelines states that at present the fixation of buffers can not be done as there is lack of clarity on what a buffer zone would mean in terms of rights, land use and regulation, and that an exercise of gram sabha consultations for delineation of buffers will also only make sense only after a set of guidelines has been prepared (after a due set of consultations) for buffer zones, coexistence, protection of local livelihoods and land use within them. The submission urges MoEF to put on hold all further notifications of Tiger Reserves (cores and buffers) until scientific and objective criteria are developed for the same and also revoke all buffer notifications as no meaningful process of consultation could have taken occurred. The CSD submission also asks MoEF to revoke notifications of Critical Tiger Habitats that are not accompanied with scientific studies showing irreversible human impact and proofs of local consultations and consent.

Separately, a few members of the Future of Conservation Network have also submitted comments on the guidelines. The submission states that there needs to be an extension of time for formulation of guidelines on tiger conservation as these need to go beyond just ecotourism and need to take into account the critical issues of recognition and settlement of rights, co-existence, development and livelihoods needs of the local people, conservation and management by the local people, and relocation, as prescribed in these laws. Also it is impossible for one of the most important stakeholders, the local communities, to provide their inputs *within a week*. The submission also requested MoEF to use the ‘Proposed guidelines on identification of Critical Tiger Habitats, Coexistence and

relocation related to Tiger Reserves’ prepared by FoC in 2007 as a base document for preparing draft guidelines/protocol on all the above matters.

NTCA has formed a committee for finalising the guidelines, with a deadline of 22 September.

The next hearing on the issue will be on 27 September 2012.

Contact **Tushar Dash**, Vasundhara, Tel: 09439542176, Email: [tushardash01@gmail.com](mailto:tushardash01@gmail.com)  
**Shiba Desor**, Tel: 09971989698. Email: [desor.shiba@gmail.com](mailto:desor.shiba@gmail.com)

## GUJARAT

### Consultation in Kachch on the FRA

A two-day consultation on ‘Community Forest Rights under Forest Rights Act: Challenges and Opportunities for Biodiversity Conservation in Kachchh District’ was organized by the Kachchh based NGO Sahjeevan on 6th and 7th September, 2012. Member representatives of various pastoralist communities from Banni and other parts of the district, who are keepers of cattle, camels, sheep and goat, fisher folk and salt pan workers of the district participated in this consultation along with experts from different sectors from across the country.

Four key issues and recommendations emerged from the consultation. These included a demand for the immediate implementation of the FRA in the district and for the constitution of the SDLC/DLC; a demand for the withdrawal of all clearances for forest land diversion granted in violation of the FRA and MoEF guidelines; for halting of government processes such as settlement of rights in disputed areas and sanctuaries, working plans operations, and others on the common lands on which FRA recognizes rights and on which communities are in the process of making claims; and for the allowing of traditional rights in protected areas.

Communities at the consultation resolved to constitute Forest Rights Committees and initiate the process of making claims under the FRA. They also resolved to sustainably manage all the ecosystems on

which they have rights, including for the conservation of biodiversity and wildlife.

Source: 'Communities Demand Implementation of Forest Rights Act in Kachhh

District' Note on the consultation organized in Bhuj.

Contact: **Sabyasachi Das**, Sahjeevan.

Email: [sabyasachidasindia@gmail.com](mailto:sabyasachidasindia@gmail.com)

**'The Forest Rights Act, Protected Areas and Wildlife Conservation' special section is being revived with support from ActionAid. We invite readers to send us news and information about developments that link the FRA and various aspects of wildlife conservation in general and the protected area network in particular.**



Coming Soon

## **The State of Wildlife in North-East India 1996-2011**

**A compilation of news from the *Protected Area Update***

---

Edited by **Pankaj Sekhsaria**

Published by the **Foundation for Ecological Security**

---

- 'first of its kind' publication based on the information in the *Protected Area Update*; over 200 pages
- 15 years of news and information on the protected areas in the north-east
- information organized chronologically and PA wise, creating a 'media-history' of conservation and protected areas in the region
- essays and expert analysis of conservation issues in the north-east

**Write to the Editor, *PA Update*, Email: [psekhsaria@gmail.com](mailto:psekhsaria@gmail.com) for details of how to get a copy**

## Important Bird Areas Update

### NATIONAL NEWS

#### Concern over threat to vultures from veterinary painkiller Aceclofenac



A new research paper has found out that Aceclofenac, a new veterinary painkiller widely used for treating cattle and dogs, can be potentially dangerous to vultures that feed on cattle carcasses. In the paper titled 'Aceclofenac as a potential threat to the critically endangered vultures in India', published in the Journal of Raptor Research, author Pradeep Sharma has noted that like Diclofenac, Aceclofenac is equally dangerous to vultures as it gets metabolised into Diclofenac.

Sharma works in the Rajasthan University of Veterinary and Animal Science, Bikaner. His research found that practitioners considered Aceclofenac a cost-effective and clinically effective substitute for Diclofenac and that its market share of Aceclofenac had increased in the past two years. The paper highlights the presence and involvement of Diclofenac and its metabolites in monkeys, rats, humans and dogs suggested qualitative similarities in Aceclofenac metabolism.

Source: 'Aceclofenac: the new drug dangerous for vultures', *Hindustan Times*, 23/08/12.

### ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

#### Coast Guard radar project on Narcondam Island rejected

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has rejected the application of the Coast Guard to install a radar on Narcondam Island in light of

the impacts this could have on the endemic and endangered Narcondam Hornbill (*PA Update* Vol. XVIII, No. 4). The decision was announced recently by the Minister, Ms Jayanti Natarajan. She said that the decision had been taken in light of the serious concern expressed within the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) in the matter.

In October 2011 the NBWL had prescribed a site inspection team including Dr Asad Rahmani, Director of the Bombay Natural History Society; K.B. Singh, Conservator of Forests, Andaman and Nicobar Forest Department; and others to look into the matter. The field report rejected the Coast Guard's proposal, but it was up to the minister to take the final decision.

The memorandum of the MoEF rejecting the radars proposal states that while the Indian Coast Guard has an option of setting up the radar on some other island, "there is no such option available for the hornbill whose survival may get seriously threatened." For the full order see <http://moef.nic.in/assets/wl-04092012.pdf>

Source: Neha Sethi. 'Wildlife board denies approval to coast guard project in Narcondam', *Mint*, 07/09/12.

Contact: **CWLW** – A&N Islands, Haddo, Port Blair – 744102. A&N Islands

### GUJARAT

#### Vultures to get two 'safe zones' in state

In an attempt to help arrest the decline in the population of vultures in the state and the country, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), in collaboration with the Bird Conservation Society of Gujarat (BCSG) plans to create Vulture Safe Zones (VSZ) in Gujarat.

Two VSZs, spread over 30,000 sq km, will be created in Gujarat. Of this, one will be in Ahmedabad district and cover areas like Mehsana, Kadi, Virpur and Daslana. The other will be created in Mahuva and include Mahuva, Nageshri, Aasrana and surrounding areas. The areas have been chosen on the basis

of the stability in vulture populations seen here over the last four-five years.

Vultures bred in captivity will be released in these VSZs. However, before these zones are formally declared as such, the BNHS will create a provisional VSZ where those associated with the programme will assess the presence of various factors necessary for the survival of vultures.

This will include looking for the presence of Diclofenac in the area and random sampling of about 800 animal carcasses found over a large area will also be done to see if they are Diclofenac-free. Nesting data, details about whether medical shops sell Diclofenac for veterinary use, and intense awareness programmes to ensure zero presence of the banned drug will be carried out to ensure that the provisional zones are 100% safe.

Source: 'Vultures to get two safe zones in state', *DNA*, 18/08/12.

### **Gujarat has the highest number of Lesser floricans**

A recently published study by the Wildlife Institute of India reveals that Gujarat has the highest number of Lesser floricans in the country. The birds were sighted only in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh with the numbers being 54, 18 and 12 respectively. These figures are for the year 2010 when the counting was done in the breeding season of the bird. It is 65 per cent lower than the figure reported a little more than a decade ago in 1999. That year there were 141 Lesser floricans in Gujarat, 63 in Madhya Pradesh, and 34 in Rajasthan.

The team surveyed 91 grasslands for the present study, which also included the grasslands studied in 1999. Lesser floricans were found in only 24 grasslands in 2010 as against 37 in 1999. The study states that most of the grasslands belonging to state forest departments were either pure grasslands or mosaic grasslands. The latter are saline patches. The study revealed that over 68 per cent of the birds were seen in the grasslands - 35 per cent in pure grasslands and the rest in mosaic grasslands. It was noted that several

grasslands have either degraded due to grazing or have been planted with tree species that make them unfit for Lesser floricans.

Source: Himanshu Kaushik. 'Gujarat is India's lesser florican capital', *The Times of India*, 02/08/12.

## **MAHARASHTRA**

### **Six wetlands proposed as Ramsar sites**

The Maharashtra State Government has proposed the inclusion of six wetlands in the state as Ramsar sites. These are the Sewri Creek (Mumbai), Jayakwadi (Aurangabad), Ujni (Solapur), Navegaon Bandh (Gondia), Nandur Madhmeshwar (Nashik), and Lonar (Buldhana). The Itiadh lake in Gondia district is to be listed under the National Wetland Conservation Program (NWCP).

The proposals have been made in response to a request by the Ministry of Environment and Forests for a list of wetlands for notification under the new Wetland Regulatory Rules 2010, for inclusion on the Ramsar list and also high altitude wetlands for protection and conservation.

Source: Vijay Pinjarkar. 'Navegaon, Itiadh wetlands to get state, national recognition', *The Times of India*, 27/08/12.

### **New IBAs being identified in Maharashtra**

The Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) and Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) are trying to identify new or potential Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Maharashtra.

Birdwatchers and ornithologists are being invited to send suggestions and up-to-date information for this keeping in mind the global criteria for IBA with a justification for their qualification. Check [www.ibcn.in](http://www.ibcn.in) for more information.

Contact: **Raju Kasambe**, BNHS,  
Email: [ibabnhs@gmail.com](mailto:ibabnhs@gmail.com)

## PUNJAB

### Fishing contractors raid range office at Harike WLS

In an attempt to intimidate wildlife staff and wildlife researchers at the Harike Wildlife Sanctuary, a group of fishing contractors and their henchmen raided the range office and forcibly took away two motorcycles after the arrest of a poacher and seizure of a pick-up truck with 50 kg of fish and six nets in August.



A number of assaults on wildlife staff have been reported in Harike in recent months (*PA Update* Vol. XVIII, No. 4) On February 2, 2011, a posse of the wildlife staff impounded a boat and motorcycle of the land mafia at Kot Kemp Khan on the Satluj, but they were waylaid and the bike snatched away. Three wildlife officials were seriously injured and three others, including a police constable suffered minor injuries in another attack on the forest staff in June.

Source: Vikram Jit Singh, 'Fishing mafia strikes at Harike wildlife office', *The Times of India*, 14/08/12.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Harike Lake WLS, Near Police Station, Harike, Dist. Firozpur, Punjab. Tel: 0181 - 248409  
**Chief Wildlife Warden**, Punjab, SC No. 2463-64, Sector 22-C, Chandigarh - 160022. Tel: 0172-2705828(O), 2675661(R). Fax: 2705828

## TAMIL NADU

### No new construction work within 5 km radius around bird sanctuaries near Chennai

The Tamil Nadu Forest Department (FD) has declared areas around three bird sanctuaries — Vedanthangal, Karikili and Pulicat — as no-go zones for real estate developers and banned any kind of real estate ventures there. A team

of forest officials recently explained the restrictions on new constructions and repair of existing structures within a 5 km radius of the three sanctuaries to residents, elected representatives including panchayat presidents and village administrative officials of 20 villages. The meeting had been organized by the FD in the Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary.

The restrictions are meant to ensure that there will be no change in the land use pattern around the sanctuaries. Apart from real estate ventures, restrictions have also been placed on construction of factories, industrial units and mining in the three sanctuaries. The restrictions are based on a Supreme Court order and instructions from the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) prohibiting any non-forest activities in areas around all sanctuaries. Residents of these areas have, however, been given permission to repair their houses and also to construct new houses if they meet stipulated standards for height and width.

Thandarai, Karunkulazhi, Mangalam, Nellavai Kutt Road, Rettamangalam, Vaiyyur, Perumbakkam and Vellaputhur are among the villages where the restrictions will come into place. The state's department of town and country planning (DTCP) had in August 2011 issued a notice to a developer for not obtaining prior permission to construct a farmland resort less than half a kilometre from the Vedanthangal bird sanctuary. The DTCP also sent a notice to Vedanthangal village panchayat president Vasanthi Lakshmi for approving the plot.

Source: D Madhavan. 'No-go for realty near Chennai bird reserves', *The Times of India*, 06/08/12.

**The Important Bird Areas Update is a new section that is being brought out in collaboration with and support from the *Bombay Natural History Society* (BNHS), the *Indian Bird Conservation Network* (IBCN) and the *Royal Society for the Protection of Birds* (RSPB), UK**

## Quick NEWS

"Protecting **Bustards** in India" Special issue of **PANDA** from WWF-India.  
<http://www.wwfindia.org/wwf/publications/panda/?7680/Panda-Special-Issue>

"Investigating the Role of Bats in Emerging Zoonoses: Balancing Ecology, Conservation and Public Health Interest"  
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2407e/i2407e00.pdf>

- A hands-on reference to bat history, biology, monitoring, handling, and disease screening -

### LOOKING for FUNDING?

Asian Waterbirds Conservation Fund supports the conservation of migratory **waterbirds** and their **wetland habitats** in the East Asian Australasian flyway, as well as projects which bring socio-economic benefits to local communities. Deadline: **31 October**.  
<http://www.wwf.org.hk/eng/maipo/awcf/info.php>

THE Birdfair/RSPB Research Fund for Endangered Birds provides small grants for research on birds listed by IUCN as endangered, critically endangered, or data deficient. Priority is for researchers working in their own countries, particularly in

collaboration with BirdLife's partners. The maximum grant is US\$ 2000.

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/projects/details/198251-the-birdfairrspb-research-fund-for-endangered-birds>  
Closing date 31 October

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
<http://www.fws.gov/international/grants-and-reporting/how-to-apply.html> Marine Turtle Conservation Fund (October 1 and April 1), Asian Elephant Conservation Fund (November 1), Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund (November 1 and April 1), Critically Endangered Animals Fund (April 1), Amphibians in Decline Fund (May 1).

**Cleveland Metroparks Zoo**  
Africa Seed Grants and Asia Seed Grants - Grants for wildlife conservation for projects focusing on wildlife and habitat protection, human-wildlife conflict, sustainable environmental practices, capacity building, and conservation biology.  
<http://www.clemetzoo.com/conservation/grants/>  
The *deadline* for pre-proposals is **05 November 2012**.

**Rolex Awards** -- Young Laureates 2014. The Rolex Awards for Enterprise support pioneering work in five areas: applied technology; *cultural heritage*; environment;

exploration and discovery; and *science and health*. The 2014 series of Awards will be devoted to Young Laureates, ages 18 to 30, of all nationalities and backgrounds.  
<http://www.rolexaward.com/about/apply>

*National Geographic Conservation Trust* will fund projects that contribute significantly to the preservation and **sustainable use** of the Earth's biological, cultural, and historical resources. SEND proposals at least 10 months before the project is to begin.  
<<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/explorers/grants-programs/conservation-trust-application/>>

### WHITLEY AWARDS

**£35,000 GBP** in conservation funding to be spent on projects over a period of one year. [www.whitleyaward.org](http://www.whitleyaward.org)

Up to seven awards to be given  
Deadline: **October 31, 2012**.

MINISTRY OF  
ENVIRONMENT AND  
FORESTS, GOVT OF INDIA  
call for proposals on  
environment research. Deadline  
December 31, 2012.  
<http://www.envfor.nic.in/assets/re-advert-28082012.pdf>

## Readers Respond

### to the editorial in the August 2012 issue of the *PA Update*

#### Misleading, inaccurate and mischievous

The editorial 'The tiger tourism debate is on fire' (*PA Update* Vol. XVIII, No. 4; August 2012) has made some sweeping generalizations about wildlife conservationists that are misleading, inaccurate and mischievous. It makes the startling allegation that "It is noteworthy that wildlife conservation and tourism are implicated in an interesting and important overlap of interests. Those wanting conservation of wildlife are increasingly benefitting from it as tourism operators or then as consumers of a wild experience". These statements are irresponsible. There are hundreds of conservationists and dozens of conservation NGOs in the country — who are fighting lonely and often thankless battles to save India's wildlife and wild habitats — who have absolutely no stake in wildlife tourism, financial or otherwise.

I personally know dozens of conservationists who volunteer an enormous amount of their time to conservation every year. Not only do they not expect or receive any rewards or accolades, they are often targeted by the people they take on, and suffer for their efforts. In fact, the majority of conservationists in India don't have any stake in tourism. The editorial has done them all a great disservice. As for being "consumers of a wild experience", it is sheer perversity to label the enjoyment of nature as some kind of guilty pleasure. Indeed, I would suggest that the editor of the *PA Update* himself is a prolific consumer of wild experiences, as evidenced from his writings over the years.

- **Shekar Dattatri** on [nathistory-india@Princeton.EDU](mailto:nathistory-india@Princeton.EDU), 03/08/12.
- Email: [shekar.dattatri@gmail.com](mailto:shekar.dattatri@gmail.com)

#### Not a crime

Scientists too "benefit" (i.e. they have a job) from and get a great deal of enjoyment out of nature. And wildlife photographers and filmmakers. Some conservationists make a career out of their interests, others follow their interests as volunteers or - dare I say it - as wildlife tourists.

And I know a huge number of resort wallahs, where wildlife conservation comes first and business second; people who have chosen this way of life because they get a great deal of joy out of nature and NOT because this was the most lucrative thing they could do, by any means. Personally, I would much rather that wildlife tourism was in the hands of diehard conservationist, than hardheaded business interests. But the fact is that sustainable, responsible wildlife tourism is in all their interests, and that it is the responsibility of the authorities to ensure that effective regulations and land use policies are strictly implemented.

So many people are "consumers" (which is a strange way of putting it) "of a wild experience" - thank god for that, and that it is not yet a crime !

- **Belinda Wright** on [nathistory-india@Princeton.EDU](mailto:nathistory-india@Princeton.EDU), 03/08/12. Email: [belinda@wpsi-india.org](mailto:belinda@wpsi-india.org)

#### No commercial interest

A large number of wildlife NGOs and persons managing them do not have any commercial interest in wildlife tourism. WWF is one example, the Wildlife Trust of India is another. There are numerous more. The managing personnel specially trustees do not take a salary. Some of us have devoted half a lifetime to conservation of nature and wildlife. And not just the tiger, a whole range of species and habitats from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Eastern India as well as Bhutan.

I have seen excesses in wildlife tourism, scores of gypsies surrounding and chasing a tiger. Besides, this debate is futile. Those who have cogent views are welcome to put in an intervention petition in Supreme Court of India.

- **Ashok Kumar** on [nathistory-india@Princeton.EDU](mailto:nathistory-india@Princeton.EDU), 06/08/12. Email: [ashok@wti.org.in](mailto:ashok@wti.org.in)

## A DECADE AGO

*Protected Area Update 39, December 2002*

### **Blackbuck threat to Bustard in Rolapadu**

The increasing population of the blackbuck in the grasslands of the Rolapadu WLS is threatening the Great Indian Bustards that are found here.

When the area was first declared a sanctuary in the 1980s, particularly for the conservation of the bustards, the population of the blackbuck was very small. Over the years this population has multiplied rapidly and the figure today is estimated to be around 700 animals.

Further details are not known of the exact impact that they are having on the bustard populations or the ecology of the park, but senior forest officials have expressed the opinion that the only way to deal with the situation is for the culling of some of the blackbuck.

Source: Mir Ayoob Ali Khan. 'Blackbuck threat to bustard', *Deccan Chronicle*, 11/07/02

### **State pursuing denotification of Madei WLS**

The Goa Chief Minister, Mr. Manohar Parrikar has said the state government was strongly pursuing the denotification of the Madei Wildlife Sanctuary. A cabinet decision had been taken and the state had also moved the Supreme Court in the matter. The CM in the state legislature while replying to an opposition query regarding the recent 'agreement in principle' by the MoEF to the proposal for declaration of the Sahyadri Ecologically Sensitive Area (SESA) over 7350 sq. kms of the Western Ghats spread across Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa.

The opposition leader, Mr. Pratapsingh Rane said that this proposal (for SESA), if accepted, will make matters worse for those who had been already adversely affected by the notification of the Madei Sanctuary. Political parties in the state are unanimous in their opposition to the Netravali and Madei WLSs that were declared a couple of years ago. The stand has been that the process of notification of the sanctuaries had been faulty and irrational and a number of villages will be affected because of this. The CM has further elaborated that no public

notice was issued for the notification and neither were objections sought from the public as in mandated by the law.

Meanwhile, the *Sattari Nagrik Suraksha Manch* too has taken up the matter of the SESA with the CM. They have expressed their apprehension that the declaration of the SESA would complicate the matter of the denotification of the Madei WLS and would directly affect the growth and development of the taluka.

Source: 'Govt. pursuing denotification of Madei sanctuary areas: CM', *Herald*, 21/08/02.

### **Conflict over Krusadai island in GoM**

The dispute between the Forest and Fisheries Departments of the state government has intensified over the ownership of the Krusadai island in the Gulf of Mannar (GoM). This island is one of the 21 that forms the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve. All 20 islands, except Krusadai were handed over to the Forest Department when the park was established in 1992. The conflict took an ugly turn recently when the Forest Department, reportedly destroyed cages, floating rafts and pearls worth Rs. 10 lakhs in a private pearl oyster farm set up at the island.

Pearl oyster culture is the monopoly of the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Development Corporation Ltd (TNFDCL) and it can lease the rights to pearl oysters. A private firm had established the farm after a lease agreement with the TNFDCL for a period of five years starting December 2001. The lease deed covered the pearl culture project at Mandapam and Tuticorin, the pearl oyster hatchery at Mandapam and the farming areas at Krusadai.

Source: PS Suresh Kumar. 'Forest, Fisheries departments fight over Krusadai island', *The Hindu*, 16/09/02

## PERSPECTIVE

### **Thoughts from a conservation gathering: SCB Asia 2012**

At the outset I must emphasise that this piece does not intend to make a comment either on the Society for Conservation Biology that organized Biodiversity Asia 2012, nor wildlife scientists; both have enabled me to learn in no small measure. My attempt is merely to share questions which confronted me during the event, left me puzzled and at times, even disturbed.

One of the panel speakers, in his otherwise amazing talk, referred to social scientists' (*I don't quite agree with the term*) role being that of raising 'questions' and not of providing 'answers'. This was somewhat difficult to comprehend: On the one hand we talk of a multi-disciplinary approach to conservation being the need of the hour and on the other we freeze our boundaries. Is this tantamount to throwing the ball into someone else's court? Who then answers these questions put up by social scientists?

During a dinner conversation I shared with a well-known wildlife scientist details of a project involving wolves in Rajasthan that I was a small part of. He talked of his visit to the place and said he was stunned to listen to drivers and guides talk at length of tiger behavior and their identification of individual tigers and added that even scientists were not aware to this degree! This was a little difficult for me to digest and I recalled reading a piece by a friend which questioned the practice in vogue; that of information being data if seen by a scientist and

anecdotal if seen by others! These drivers and guides accompany tourists on the jeeps (*and canters*) inside the national park on a regular basis throughout the year excepting when the park is closed. Wasn't it natural, I thought, given the situation that they would have far more sightings of and time with tigers than many wildlife scientists?

I attended many presentations where a lot of what was said was fresh for me and some of it quite invigorating. However, I kept wondering why people put up formulae and references to their own academic papers in the power-points that accompanied their talks. Many, if not all, of these people would have had unique experiences and I would have been happy to listen to their stories and to see a small part of their world. These made me recall an email on a discussion group which questioned the practice of using references to one's own publications as also an interesting article in *The Telegraph* which said while we refer to them as 'power-point presentations' they at times end up without making any point!

- **Nimesh Ved** presented a paper at  
Biodiversity Asia 2012 on his  
experiences on conservation education in  
Mizoram.  
Email: [nimesh.ved@gmail.com](mailto:nimesh.ved@gmail.com)

---

For Private Circulation/Printed Matter

To

From

**Kalpavriksh**

Apt. 5, Sri Dutta Krupa  
908 Deccan Gymkhana  
Pune 411004