

# PROTECTED AREA UPDATE 100

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

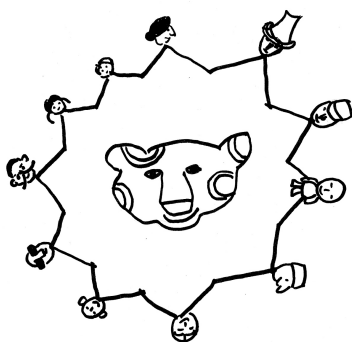
one hundred issues  
...looking back, looking ahead...

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## WHITHER PROTECTED AREAS?

Ashish Kothari\*

18 years back when some of us took the first fledgling steps towards bringing out a newsletter on protected area issues in India, little did we realize that we would one day be seeing its 100<sup>th</sup> issue! It's gratifying to see it having not only survived this long, but growing in its readership and the interest it has generated. Also encouraging is the fact that, though it has at times been a struggle, organizations and individuals have come forward to keep it financially afloat.



The immediate motivation for starting this was a national workshop in 1994 on the possibilities of joint protected area management ... hence its first name, *JPAM Update*. Several issues thereafter, responding both to the kind of news we were getting, and feedback from several

readers, we switched to the wider (and still used) name of *PA Update*. These 100 issues have therefore carried news and some analytical comments on a broad sweep of issues relating to conservation in India: threats to wildlife from human (including developmental) activities, wildlife-human conflicts, problems faced by communities due to conservation policies and programmes, wildlife tourism and finances, community-based conservation, and many others.

The *PA Update* has been a fascinating mirror to how the context and situation of PAs has changed in some ways, and remained static in others. Clearly threats to wildlife (and more specifically to PAs) have increased as India has moved into a phase of economic globalisation and rapid industrialization, demanding land and resources at a rate never before seen. PAs have perhaps not seen as massive an attack as areas outside them (an important contribution of the Wild Life Protection Act), but they too have not always been spared (witness the number of permissions given for mining, dams, etc., affecting them). And as their surrounds get increasingly carved up and they become tiny islands in a landscape of devastation, inevitably they too will suffer.

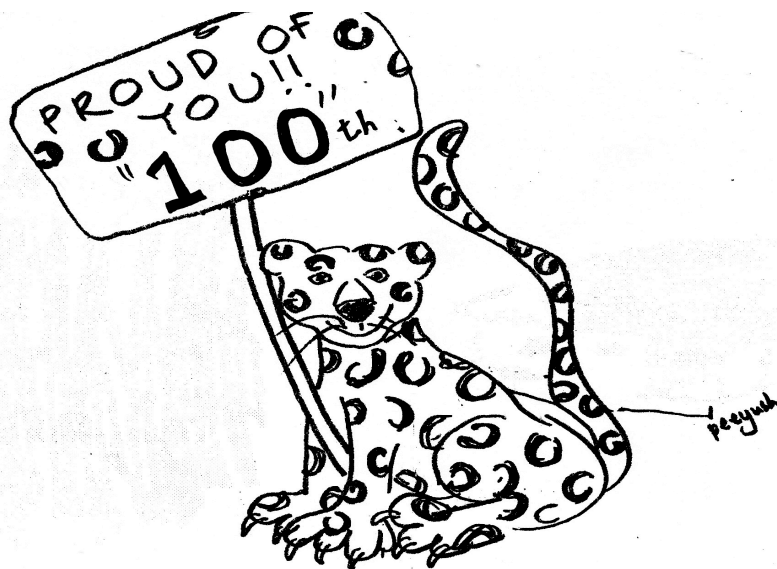
State attention to PAs has simply not kept pace with the rapidity of India's economic transformation; even the National Board for Wildlife, despite some of India's most prominent conservationists being its members, has been able to do little to stem the rot. This also brings up the question of whether it is wise to focus so much attention on PAs, rather than on trying to transform the way in which entire landscapes are governed and managed. We are seeing some change here; while strategies for some wide-ranging animals like the elephant continue to remain very PA-centric, those for others like the snow leopard are (at least on paper) are beginning to look at landscapes as a whole.

Unfortunately what has not changed much in policy or practice is the relationship of PAs to local communities. The national workshop on JPAM in 1994 was one of earliest national-level attempts to try moving conservation paradigms to more inclusive, participatory ones (as has happened across the world). Communities are more vocal today than then, several forest officials have joined in questioning exclusionary top-down strategies, and we have relatively more progressive documents like the National Wildlife Action

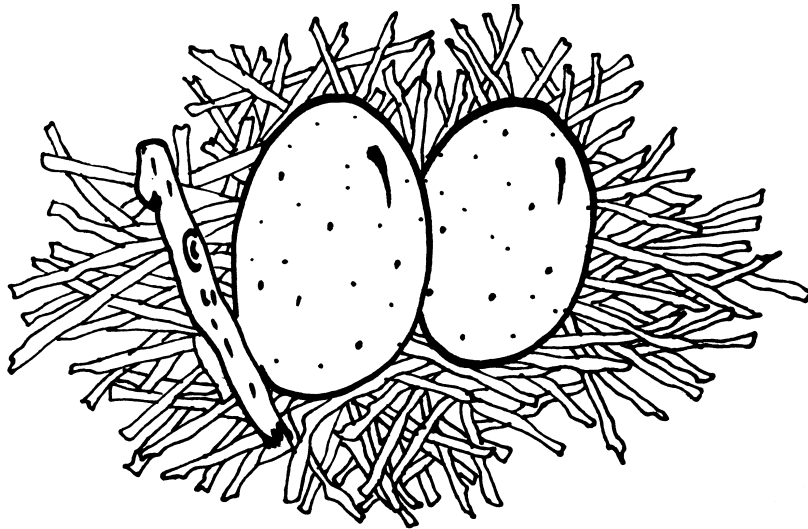
Plan 2002 and the PA Programme of Work of the Biodiversity Convention to which India is party. India's policy, however, has remained stubbornly immune to voices of reason and democracy. One development that promises to make conservation more broad based, albeit slowly, is the Forest Rights Act; noting this, the *PA Update* has begun devoting pages to how the FRA is playing out in PAs.

Despite these problems, significant wildlife populations are still holding ground in India, due, both, to some dedicated officials and communities. I am quite sure that, given some of the hopeful signs mentioned above, the 150<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Update* will be full of news on collaborative and community-based approaches achieving effective conservation across landscapes and seascapes, based on an integration of traditional and modern knowledge, and genuine partnerships respecting rights, responsibilities and roles. Maybe then we can switch back to *JPAM Update*?

\* **Ashish Kothari** is a founder member of Kalpavriksh and part of the editorial team that produced the first issue of the *J(PA)M Update* in 1994



## FROM THE 1<sup>ST</sup> FEW ISSUES...



### **JPAM UPDATE, No. 1, November 1994**

#### **Actions in specific protected areas**

- In Sariska, Tarun Bharat Sangh has taken the responsibility of helping the Forest Department to shift two villages from the core area as part of a larger process of exploring joint management possibilities

- Similarly, the Gujarat Ecology Commission (GEC) and Shankar Narayan have put proposals to IDRC for JPAM follow up in Gir  
- For Bhimashankar, at the request of Ekjoot Sanghatana, the Forest Department has agreed to organise a meeting between the officials and villagers, possibly in December.

#### **Research Projects**

BMS Rathore (WII), G Raju (VIKSAT) and Vinod Rishi (MoEF) have volunteered to help in the documentation of past experiences in JFM in their respective states. Seema Bhatt (WWF) has expressed interest in working on expanding the concept of protected areas, while BJ Krishnan (Save Nilgiris Campaign) has volunteered to look into the legal and policy changes required for JPAM. The

Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) has proposed research on institutional and policy arrangements, and to analyse the experiences from other countries.

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### **JPAM UPDATE, No. 3, March 1995**

#### **Jungle Jivan Bachao Yatra**

About 35 villagers, activists and researchers started on a unique journey, on 14 January from Sariska National Park in Rajasthan. The Jungle Jivan Bachao Yatra was aimed at initiating a dialogue between various local communities living in and around national parks and sanctuaries, as also between these communities and the Forest Department.

In its 45 days of travel, covering about 15000 km the yatra has passed through about 18 national parks and sanctuaries in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. The yatra held its final programme over two days on February 28 and March 1, in Delhi.

## **JPAM UPDATE, No. 5, July 1995**

### **Rajasthan**

- As suggested by Tarun Bharat Sangh of Sariska, Kalpavriksh has agreed to do the documentation of the innovative work going on in the Bhairodev Dhakao 'Sonchuri', a 1200 ha. patch of forest declared as protected by the inhabitants of five villages in Alwar district. Villagers have promulgated their own set of rules and regulations, and are zealously protecting the area against any outside encroachments. Violations are dealt with by village councils, which have appointed a "Sonchuri" warden. They proudly say that there are two leopards in the forest, and are going to start an annual census of wild animals. Kalpavriksh members will do a flora-fauna listing, and look at the ways in which the villagers are protecting the area. The study is scheduled for August.

- In 22 villages of Jamva Ramgarh Sanctuary, Tarun Bharat Sangh has started the work of water and soil conservation, along with some mobilisation of villagers against the mining going on inside.

- An informal meeting on the people-wildlife relationship in Kailadevi Sanctuary of Rajasthan was called by the Joint Protected Area Management Team of IIPA and hosted by WWF-I on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1995.

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## **JPAM UPDATE, No. 7, November 1995**

### **National News**

#### **Bagh Bachao Andolan**

Over 100 NGOs involved in wildlife conservation across the country have joined hands in a move to save the tiger, which is facing a grave threat from poaching for trade. The 'Bagh Bachao Andolan' was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1995, in Delhi. The Andolan's nationwide programme aims to muster political support and create public opinion favoring the conservation of wildlife and

forests in India. A delegation of senior conservationists met the Minister for Environment and Forests and presented an appeal to the Prime Minister of India. Some highlights from the appeal are as follows:

- The problem has been greatly compounded by the alienation of the several million people living in and around wildlife habitats, for whom these habitats have been sources of livelihood and life-support.

- We need a new national covenant and such a covenant must empower a Special Tiger Task Force and should be responsible across India to coordinate immediate action, before it is too late. This special Tiger Task Force must have your full support

- This Task Force must work closely with true forest dwelling communities whose trust and confidence we must win back. The first step in this direction can be taken by keeping with government policy by offering employment guarantee for one million people living in and around our protected areas and tiger habitats

The Andolan is an initiative of the Tiger Link, an informal network of conservation organisations throughout India, working to save the tiger. Medha Patkar of the Narmada Bachao Abhiyan (...) has also extended the support of the people of the Narmada valley in demanding the protection of the tiger.

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## **JPAM UPDATE, No 10, July 1996**

### **Gujarat**

#### **Lions moving out of Gir National Park/Maldharis being evicted**

According to recent reports (*Business Standard* 28 May 1996) from Gujarat, an unspecified number of Asiatic lions have been sighted in the Kodnar and Girnar forests of Junagadh district, some 40-60 km away from the Gir National Park. While the exact reasons for this movement are not immediately clear, Forest Department

officials claim it could be due to the rise in the number of lions in Gir. A census conducted by the Forest Department in 1995 reported 304 lions in Gir. However local conservationists are skeptical about the department's technique and claim there are probably no more than 200.

The reports also claimed that indiscriminate promotion of Gir as a tourist destination has taken its toll by way of unregulated numbers of visitors, vehicular pollution and plastic waste. Other pressures include public access roads, a railway line, and two temple complexes that have become major pilgrimage centres attracting over a lakh visitors every year.

Experts are also worried about the implications of the limited number of lions in Gir, which may lead to in-breeding and genetic complications in the future. There is therefore a proposal to relocate some lions from Gir to the Palpur Kuno Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh

Meanwhile, Setu-Centre for Social Knowledge and Action, an Ahmedabad based NGO, has alleged that the Forest Department is forcibly relocating Maldharis from Gir as part of a Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded eco-development project even though the project's own documents clearly state that is to be no

'involuntary displacement'. This has also been corroborated by newspaper reports on the issue (*Times of India* 28 May 1996). The allegation is further supported by another NGO based in the Gir area the Saurashtra Paryavaran Sanrakshan Samiti (SPSS). The Forest Department however claims that only three Maldharis have been served notices for carrying out illegal activities, at least one of them for claiming occupancy rights to Gir despite being from outside.

In March and April this year, demonstrations and fasts were held by a group of Maldharis supported by SPSS, to protest against the action of the authorities. A petition was also presented to the Gujarat Chief Minister by SPSS.

Currently there are an estimated 7000 Maldharis spread over 54 *nesses* (settlements) in the roughly 1400 sq km Gir National Park and Sanctuary. Between 1973 to 1983, 845 Maldhari families were relocated from the protected area and given land for agriculture in the surrounding area. However, they have been unsuccessful in adopting farming as a way of life. It is uncertain whether the remaining Maldharis will be allowed to remain inside Gir. In 1990 the Maldharis were accorded Scheduled Tribe status by the government



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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/protectedareaupdate/>

# Kaziranga in focus: 1998-2011

## An analysis of news in the *Protected Area Update*\*

Mehak Siddiqui and C Rajesh Reddi\*\*



From 1998 to 2011, a total of 516 news stories about the north-eastern region have been chronicled in the *Protected Area Update*. This works out to an average of about 39 stories per year. Assam got the maximum coverage while Tripura was the least reported upon (Table 1). 275 of these 516 stories (53%) are about only five PAs in the region – all of them national parks located in Assam (Table 2).

The news reports have broadly ranged from covering the tragic – the various problems and crises faced by the region – to the ceremonial – the occasional achievements, developments and fruitful initiatives that have benefited the environmental cause. The major national parks such as Namdapha, Manas, Orang and Kaziranga have been the primary focus area of the coverage, and of these, Kaziranga particularly stands out as a hotbed of media attention. This is, perhaps, not surprising given the attention the park has received as the main habitat of the rhino and the location of a number of other conservation initiatives.

The primary aim of this analysis is, thus, to investigate the scale and kind of attention that Kaziranga National Park receives in the media. We studied how issues related to the park are framed in the news media and what this tells us about our preoccupations in relation

to environmental issues, and to the north-east as an ecologically rich (and threatened) zone. Moreover, we also tried to identify the lessons we, as journalists, can learn from the analysis.

Table 1

| State             | Number of Stories |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Assam             | 404               |
| Manipur           | 25                |
| Meghalaya         | 21                |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 20                |
| Sikkim            | 19                |
| Mizoram           | 14                |
| Nagaland          | 8                 |
| Tripura           | 5                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>516</b>        |

Table 2

| Name of National Parks (all located in Assam) | No. of stories |
|---|----------------|
| Kaziranga                                     | 138            |
| Manas   | 76             |
| Orang   | 33             |
| Nameri  | 15             |
| Dibru-Saikhowa                                | 13             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                  | <b>275</b>     |

### **Kaziranga in focus**

As the data clearly shows, a striking majority of reports in the PAU are about the Kaziranga National Park, that is, 138 out of 516, which translates to a substantial 26.7% of the total coverage of the north-east. We found that the largest chunk of stories dealt with three major problems: that of poaching (of rhino, tiger and elephant), that of flooding of the Brahmaputra and resultant impacts on the park and its animals, and that of lack of funds available to park authorities. The major theme of positive articles was tourism development and the increasing popularity of the park as a destination for eco-tourists and wildlife enthusiasts. In addition, there was a significant amount of coverage of issues related to general upkeep of the park and problems related to staffing.

### **The focus of media (in)attention**

An analysis of newspaper-wise coverage of Kaziranga (Table 3) shows that proximity as a news value is privileged. *The Assam Tribune*, for instance has more than a third of the Kaziranga stories. Although Kaziranga may, on the face of it, be seen as part of our “national” natural heritage, journalistic coverage is apparently fuelled by more everyday values such as localness—hence the significantly higher level of coverage in the regional newspaper. It is significant at the same time that newspapers with a much wider and a pan-India coverage such as *The Times of India* and *The Hindu* also give this park substantial coverage.

Table 3

| Newspaper          | No. of Stories |
|--------------------|----------------|
| The Assam Tribune  | 48             |
| The Sentinel       | 18             |
| The Hindu          | 12             |
| The Times of India | 11             |
| The Statesman      | 4              |
| The Indian Express | 3              |

On the whole, the content analysis has revealed that Kaziranga, being one of the country’s main national parks, while receiving disproportionately high media attention in terms

of numbers of stories, suffers from the same lack of sustained and detailed coverage that plagues many other environmental issues. The stories that do make it to the pages of the dailies are in the nature of breaking news, focusing on moments of crisis which then lead nowhere in terms of finding solutions or bringing sustained attention to the underlying issues.

The issues related to Kaziranga are framed in the media, including in the *Protected Area Update*, according to whether they are negative or positive in nature. In case of the former, a disaster frame is utilized, with every negative occurrence being projected as a problem that is eating away at the region and needs urgent alleviation. Positive issues, on the other hand, such as acquisition of funds from international agencies and an increase in tourism, are framed as achievements, which have the potential to enhance the future of both the park and the region as a whole.

Further, the analysis seems to point at a preoccupation with numbers – whether it is increasing the number of tourists, procuring more funds, or keeping a count on how many endangered animals reside in the park. As many as 23 stories out of the 138 about Kaziranga are related to numbers. This constant quantification perhaps bars us from viewing problems from multiple dimensions and working to alleviate them from their crux. However, the only way to overcome this would involve challenging traditional journalistic practice that largely involves talking in numbers and statistics so as to substantiate reporting. This is of course easier said than done, but certainly merits thought.

\*Extracted from **Siddiqui and Reddi (2012)** ‘The Print Media’s Kaziranga Obsession: An Analysis’ in **Sekhsaria (Ed)** - *The State of Wildlife in North-East India – 1996-2011*, Foundation for Ecological Security, Anand

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# PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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In whose hands we entrust our forests...

**Protected Area Update**

**Vol. XVIII, No. 6, December 2012 (No. 100)**

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## NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

### ARUNACHAL PRADESH

#### Bill to protect tigers in Arunachal Pradesh



The Arunachal Pradesh government recently introduced 'The Arunachal Pradesh Forest and Special Tiger Protection Forces Bill 2012', in the assembly. It provides scope for the constitution and regulation

of a Arunachal Pradesh Forest Protection Force (FPF) and a Arunachal Pradesh Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF), for effective protection and security of forests, forest-produce, forest infrastructure besides tigers and other wildlife.

112 personnel will soon be recruited for a company of the STPF, which will be first deployed in the Pakke Tiger Reserve in East Kameng district. The STPF would comprise 90 special tiger guards, 18 foresters, three forest range officers and three sub-inspectors of police headed by an assistant conservator of forest or assistant commandant besides other official staff.

All the expenditure for raising the company will be borne by the National Tiger Conservation Authority. A similar STPF company has also been proposed for the Namdapha Tiger Reserve in Changlang district. The state government has also already created 288 posts under the Forest Protection Force (FPF) for the entire state and the recruitment process is expected to start soon.

Source: 'Bill to protect tiger introduced', *The Sentinel*, 28/09/12.

'Tuki serious about tiger protection', *The Sentinel*, 29/09/12.

Contact: **CWLW**, Forest Department, Itanagar – 719111. Arunachal Pradesh. Tel: 0360 – 222310 (o)/ 224370 ®. Fax: 0360 – 222351/223556

### ASSAM

#### Translocated rhino's first offspring in Manas

In an important first, a rhino translocated to Manas National Park gave birth to a female calf in September, earlier this year. The mother rhino had been released into Manas in January when she was about half way through her 15-16 month long gestation period. Her translocation was part of the Indian Rhino Vision 2020 project, a partnership between the Indian government, World Wide Fund for Nature – India (WWF), International Rhino Foundation and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

The programme is working to increase the population of the one-horned rhino in Assam to 3,000 by 2020 by translocating rhinos to encourage breeding in new locations (*PA Updates* Vol. XVIII, No. 2; Vol. XIV, Nos. 6 & 5 and Vol. XIII, Nos. 5 & 2). Although rhino numbers in the state have grown from 2000 in 2005 to over 2700 in 2011, more than 90% of the animals still live in just one place, the Kaziranga National Park.

Source: 'First calf born to newly established rhino population as poaching threat looms', [www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org), 30/09/12.

Contact: **Director**, Manas NP, PO Barpeta Rd. Dist. Barpeta – 781315, Assam. Tel: 03666 – 261413. Fax: 232253 / 260253

#### Kaziranga National Park loses 39 rhinos in first nine months of 2012

39 rhinos have been killed in and around the Kaziranga National Park in the first nine months of 2012. 28 of these were washed away in the two waves of floods (*PA Update* Vol. XVIII, No. 4) that hit the region since June and the other 11 were killed by poachers.

The recovery of AK47 bullets from the bodies of the killed animals points towards the involvement of militants in the poaching



incidents. Six of the 11 rhinos killed by poachers were shot within the park and five outside the park's perimeter. Four of these were killed in the neighbouring Karbi Anglong district. Forest guards were also reported to have killed three poachers and arrested 14 others till early October. Six 303 rifles were also recovered. The state government has asked the Central Board of Investigation (CBI) for a probe into the matter and has also dispatched additional forces to protect the rhinos here.

Source: Prabin Kalita, 'Kaziranga loses 39 rhinos in 10 months', *The Times of India*, 03/10/12, '39 rhinos lost this year, says Assam minister', *The Statesman*, 03/10/12.

Contact: **Director**, Kaziranga NP, PO Bokakhat, Dist. Golaghat – 785612, Assam. Tel: 03776-268095(O), 268086(R)

### **Hi-tech measures to protect Kaziranga rhinos**

Kaziranga National Park (KNP) is all set to get an un-manned remote-controlled aircraft and an electronic surveillance system for protecting the rhino and other wildlife in the park. The announcement was made by the Union Minister for Environment and Forests, Ms. Jayanthi Natarajan during her maiden visit to Kaziranga recently. She has also announced a grant of Rs. one crore for taking immediate measures to repair the damages caused to the park by floods (see *PA Update* Vol. XVIII, No. 4).

The electronic surveillance system would include a series of towers with remote-controlled electronic cameras, including night-vision and thermal imaging devices in and around the 850-sq km KNP. It will help get real-time images of any suspicious movement inside the park, which will further help in checking poaching.

Source: Bijay Sankar Bora, 'Unmanned aircraft to keep tabs on Assam rhinos', *The Tribune*, 11/10/12.

## **GOA**

### **Mining company challenges MoEF's orders for suspension of mining near Mahaveer WLS**

Timblo Brothers Pvt Ltd has approached the High Court of Bombay at Goa challenging the orders of

the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) suspending their mining operations near the Mahaveer WLS in Sanguem.

The company has alleged that the MoEF has misinterpreted the Supreme Court order of 2006 that gave directions regarding buffer zones around wildlife sanctuaries. The MoEF, had in September earlier this year, issued the suspension order under Section 5 of the Environment Protection Act 1986, directing the company to shut down operations for failing to get clearances from the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) to operate within 10 km of the boundary of the sanctuary. It had sought a reply within 15 days as to why the firm's environmental clearances should not be revoked.

During the hearing of the plea, the company argued that the ministry had issued the order without giving a proper hearing to them. Stating that orders of the SC have been treated by the MoEF as a ban on mining within a 10 km-buffer zone, the company argued that the buffer zone is just 500 m according to an Expert Committee Report. It was further pointed out that an application by the petitioner for renewal of the environmental clearance was pending before the MoEF. The final decision in the matter is pending.

Source: 'Mining company takes Ministry of Environment and Forests to court', *The Times of India*, 02/10/12.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Wildlife Wing Junta House, Panaji 403001, Goa. Tel: 0832 – 224747 / 223508 / 278891. Fax: 224747

## **GUJARAT**

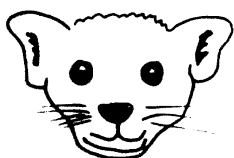
### **Lab for genetic mapping of lions, other wildlife in Gujarat**

The Gujarat Forest Department along with the Gujarat State Bio-Technology Mission (GSBTM) will soon be setting up a lab for genetic mapping of lions in state. The lab, which was to earlier come up in Junagadh, may now come up in Gandhinagar or at GEER Foundation.

The proposal for the genetic mapping of lions was part of a 2008 lion conservation programme, but had not taken off. The lab will entail an initial investment of Rs 5-6 crore and is likely to cost about Rs 22 crore over a period of five to six years. It will eventually also study other wildlife in the state.

Source: Smitha R. 'Now, a lab to study genetic mapping of lions', *DNA*, 02/10/12.

## Baby boom in Gir



An estimated 90 cubs have been added to the lion population of Gir this season. This is about 20% higher than the average number of 75 cubs born each year. The higher number this time is attributed to the fact of increasing number of lionesses in the area. The female to male lion ratio in Gir has consistently improved - from 76 lions and 100 lionesses a few years ago to 97 males and 162 female animals now.

The sanctuary was also opened for tourism in October and a little more than 900 people visited on the first day.

Source: Himanshu Kaushik. 'Baby boom in Gir', <http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/17/10/12>.

Contact: **CF (Wildlife)** Junagadh, Sardar Bag, Junagadh, Gujarat. Tel: 0285 - 631678/630051. Fax: 631211. Email: [cfwildlife\\_ad1@sancharnet.in](mailto:cfwildlife_ad1@sancharnet.in)

## JHARKHAND

### Rise in human-Sloth bear conflict in Jharkhand

Officials from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and representatives of the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) have expressed concern over the increasing number of human-sloth bear conflict in parts of Jharkhand.

A recent report has said that 14 human deaths have taken place in over 250 incidents of human-bear conflict in the past six years. The highest number of incidents were reported from the Ranchi East forest division (65) followed by

Gumla forest division (56), Simdega forest division (45), Chaibasa South forest division (29), Buffer Area Daltonganj (28) and Khunti forest division (19).

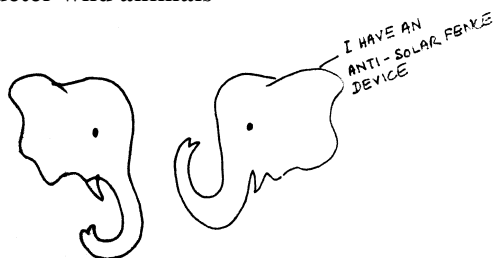
The bear population in the state too is reported to be declining, partly on account of ritual hunting by the tribal communities and also because of poaching. The Forest Department (FD) records don't suggest any sloth bear poaching in the state but this has been refuted by two recent seizures of sloth bear meat in the Gumla forest division and the wildlife division in Hazaribag.

Source: Alok K N Mishra, 'Rise in man-animal conflicts put sloth bears in danger', *The Times of India*, 03/10/12.

Contact: **PCCF**, Jharkhand, At- Doranda, P.O. Doranda, Ranchi. Tel: 0651-2500455(O), 2500413(R) Fax: 0651-500413

## KERALA

### Solar fences around Wayanad WLS fail to deter wild animals



The forest department's (FD) solar-powered fencing project to stop wild animals from straying into agriculture fields and farmlands bordering forests of the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) has met with limited success.

The department has erected 45 km of solar fencing in several stretches around the Wayanad sanctuary to prevent wild animals from entering paddy fields, coffee estates, coconut groves and tribal settlements near the forest. It had been envisaged that wild animals, coming into contact with the fence, would get a shock generated through high-voltage pulses, deterring them from entering the settlements and farmlands.

The fences were reported to have been effective initially but were eventually found to have been snapped at several places, allowing elephants and other animals a passage into the farm areas again. Lack of maintenance was the main cause with the fences having been short circuited in a number of places due to the growth of wild creepers, for instance.

Source: 'Forest depts solar fences fail to deter wild animals', *The Times of India*, 23/10/12.

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

## MAHARASHTRA

### Honorary wildlife wardens appointed in Vidarbha districts

Following is the list of Honorary wildlife wardens that have been announced for the districts of the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra: Nagpur - Rohit Karoo of the NGO Wildlife Conservation and Development Centre (WCDC) and Kundan Hate; Chandrapur - Bandu Dhotre of the NGO Eco Pro and trustee of Tiger Research and Conservation Trust (TRACT) Poonam Dhanwatey; Akola - Prashant Gahale and Devendra Thelkar; Amravati - Jayant Wadkar and Vishal Bansod of Satpuda Foundation for Amravati.

The honorary wardens for some of the other districts in the state are as follows: Gondia - Jagdish Bahekar; Aurangabad - Dilip Yardi; Satara - Rohan Bhate; Nanded - Vasant Mayya; Nashik - Amit Khare; Navi Mumbai - Sunjoy Monga; and Raigad - Ulhas Thakur (Raigad).

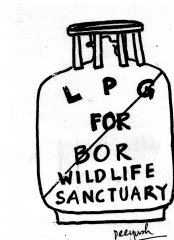
Source: '4 Vidarbha dists get more wildlife wardens', *The Times of India*, 04/10/12.

### LPG for village near Bor WLS under village eco-development programme

As a part of the village eco-development (VED) programme, the Forest Department (FD) has introduced LPG in Salai Pevat village near Bor Wildlife Sanctuary. 75% of the total cost of the development project is being borne by the FD, while the villagers have to put in the rest of the

amount. An amount of Rs. 10 lakh has been given to a VED committee formed in the village.

In the case of Salai Pevat, cattle grazing and collection of firewood was putting pressure on the forest. A survey suggested that giving liquid petroleum gas (LPG) sets to the villagers was the best way to wean them away from using firewood. They are also going to be provided free cylinders for one year by which time, it is hoped, that the villagers will get used to LPG and thus won't go back to the *chulhas*.



Apart from this, 840 acres of non-forest barren land will be developed into pastures for cattle grazing. Other initiatives like solar street lights, sewing machines and jhunka bhakar set ups for the women's self help group are also being planned.

Source: Aparna Nair, 'Village Eco Development a boon to Bor wildlife sanctuary' *The Times of India*, 05/10/12.

Contact: **DCF, Pench National Park**, I/c, Bor WLS Near Govt. Press, Civil Lines, Nagpur-440001, Maharashtra. Tel: 0712 - 2524727(O), 2227282(R). Fax: 2539226

**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 -

## MIZORAM

### Mizoram opposes construction of fencing in Dampa TR

Mizoram has opposed the National Board for Wildlife's (NBWL) recommendation to erect fencing inside the Dampa Tiger Reserve (TR), as it will restrict the movement of

wildlife to and from Bangladesh. The Dampa TR shares an international boundary with Bangladesh for around 127 km in the southern part.

The fencing idea was first mooted in the year 2007 by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) which proposed the construction of a three-line wire fencing and seven border outposts on the grounds that this was important to stop infiltration from Bangladesh. The matter had been referred to the NBWL following which the NBWL Standing Committee had asked for a new proposal with new alignments in 2011. The BSF had, in compliance with this decision, submitted a revised proposal with a revised land requirement of 1,520 hectares, whereas the original proposal had only needed about 70 hectares. BSF officials said the construction of the road and border outposts outside the fence would violate international regulations.

The matter was recently referred to the Mizoram State Wildlife Board by the NBWL and in a recent meeting held in Aizawl, the state board resolved to object to the construction as it would disturb the sanctity of the lone tiger reserve of the state. The board noted that there were no concrete and reliable reports of the movement of insurgents/illegal immigrants from Bangladesh through the TR. It was further noted that construction of the seven border outposts with nearly 33 personnel each will significantly undermine the security and habitat of wild animals.

A team of experts, constituted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority had also opposed this construction in the TR.

Source: 'Mizoram opposes Dampa fencing', *The Telegraph*, 08/10/12.

Contact: **Field Director**, Dampa Tiger Reserve, P.O. West Phaileng, Dist. Mamit – 796431, Mizoram  
**Chief Wildlife Warden** Forest Department  
Government of Mizoram Aizwal- 796 001  
Mizoram. Telephone 0364-227762(O)  
0389-325371(O), 323439(R). Fax 0364-  
228334 0389-322733. Email:  
cwlwmizoram@hotmail.com

## ORISSA

### Fishing ban in, around Gahirmatha from November 1

A ban has been imposed on fishing in and around the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary from November 1 to May 31 next year. It has been imposed in light of the ensuing mass nesting season of the Olive Ridley sea turtles. The ban order will be enforced under the Orissa Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1982 and the Orissa Marine Fishing Rules, 1983.

The forest personnel will seek the cooperation of the coast guard, marine police and DRDO (Defence Research & Development Organisation) personnel to step up surveillance in and around Wheeler Island during the period. Wildlife officials will also be organizing an awareness campaign among the fisherfolk community to curb the mortality of the turtles.

Source: 'Fishing ban inside Gahirmatha from Nov 1' [www.orissadiary.com](http://www.orissadiary.com), 11/10/12.

Contact: **DFO**, Bhitarkanika NP, At/PO Rajnagar, Dist. Kendrapada – 755225. Orissa. Tel: 06729-72460/64. Fax: 06727-20775

## UTTAR PRADESH

### Rise in population of Gangetic River Dolphin in Uttar Pradesh

According to the latest census report, the number of Gangetic River Dolphins in Uttar Pradesh has risen to 671 from 600 in 2005. The first single census of the dolphins was conducted recently by the state Forest Department, the World Wide Fund for Nature – India, and 18 other NGOs and was supported by HSBC. The report was released by the Chief Minister Mr. Akhilesh Yadav, who said that the efforts to create awareness about the need to conserve the dolphins were 'praiseworthy'. Mr. Sandeep Behera of WWF-India, said that the census had provided the first baseline data on the

dolphins as counts done in the past were more or less fragmented.

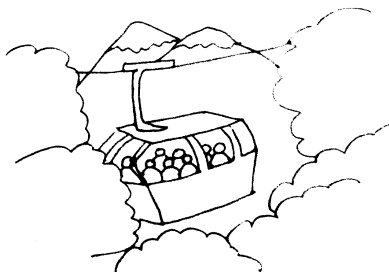
The census shows that stretches like the Upper Ganga have a good population of the dolphins and it shows that if similar efforts are taken up at other places, it will further push up their numbers. In India, the population of dolphins in 1982 was estimated to be around 5,000 but now it is below 2000 with an estimated annual mortality of 130-160 animals.

Source: Amita Verma, 'Census shows increase in Ganga dolphin population', *The Asian Age*, 09/10/12.

Contact: **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

## UTTARAKHAND

### Centre approves Hemkund Sahib ropeway project



The Central Government has given its approval for a ropeway connecting Gurdwara Gobind Dham to Hemkund Sahib. The project will cost around Rs 75 crore and is expected to be completed in 2014 before the commencement of the Hemkund Sahib yatra in summer.

In the first phase of the project, the ropeway will be operational till Gurdwara Gobind Dham and will be later extended to Gobind Ghat. At present, the pilgrims can also commute from Gobind Ghat to Gobind Dham through chopper services which cost Rs 3,500 per person. Hemkund Sahib is one of the most revered places in Sikhism and it can be visited between June 1 and October 5 every year.

It is not known what the impact of this ropeway would be on the Valley of Flowers National Park which is located in this area and

what issues, if any, related to the park and the environment were considered in the grant of the approval.

Source: 'Centre approves Hemkund Sahib ropeway project', <http://www.punjabnewslines.com>, 21/09/12.

Contact: **DFO**, Valley of Flowers NP, Joshimath, Dist. Chamoli, Uttaranchal, Tel: 01389-222179

## WEST BENGAL

### Protection funds diverted for construction of temples in Sunderbans TR

Information provided in response to a Right to Information (RTI) application has revealed that Rs. Three lakh that were meant for protection activities were recently diverted for the construction of Banabibi temples in the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve.

One such temple was built in Kendo inside the core area in March 2011 at a cost of Rs. 1.30 lakh and another Rs. 1.70 lakh were used for the temple that was built in February 2012 in Harikhali in the buffer area.

The information had been sought by Hyderabad based activist, Diya Banerjee.

Source: Krishnendu Mukherjee. 'Centre Seeks State's Clarification On 'Diverting' Protection Funds For Setting Up Banabibi Temples', *The Times of India*, 04/10/12

Contact: **Director**, Sunderbans Biosphere Reserve, Bikash Bhavan, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, North Block, Salt Lake City, Kolkata - 700091, West Bengal. Tel: 033-3211750. Fax: 3211529.

## NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

### Paryavaran Mitra Puraskar 2012

Paryavaran Mitra Puraskar, the annual award given to students, schools, and districts of India for excellent efforts in environment

education and education for sustainable development through curricular classroom activities and action projects were given away on the occasion of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) Conference of Parties (COP) held recently in Hyderabad.

The selection of the award winners was done by a panel that included Mr Harshad Prabhudas Shah, Vice Chancellor, Children's University, Gandhinagar; Ms Sheela Ghoghari, Education Manager, Save the Children, Gujarat India; Mr Raju P. Purohit, Managing Trustee – Jivantirth, President – Khadi Gramodyog Kamdar Sangh and Convener – Child Rights Collective, Gujarat; and Mr Divyesh Vyas, Senior Sub-Editor with Sandesh, a leading Gujarati Newspaper. Following are the award categories and the awardees:

**Best Paryavaran Mitra Schools:** Dhablat Lakshman Parabesh High (H.S) School; Podavoor Aided UP School, Kasargod, Kerala; and the North Guwahati Girls English High School, Assam.

**Best Paryavaran Mitra Districts:** Patan district, Gujarat; West Champaran, Bihar; Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh; and Kozhikode District, Kerala.

**Best Student Awards to Young Leader for Change:** Ms. Shreya Srinivas, Delhi, for her action project on home composting involving her housing society; Mr. Chetan Duggirala, Andhra Pradesh, for his action project on exploring carpooling options with the employees at a corporate organization; Mr. Aditya Raj Srivastava, Bihar, for his action project on encouraging farmers in his village to opt for organic farming instead of farming using chemical fertilizers; Ms. Indulakshmi Swaminathan, Kerala, for working on the action project to create a museum in the school of 400+ varieties of traditional paddy varieties of the tribes of Wayanad, Kerala; Mr. Salil Tripathy, Andhra Pradesh, for inspiring his school to be a Paryavaran Mitra school by taking up action in energy conservation, waste management and biodiversity and greening; Mr. Umesh Sharma, Rajasthan, for working to create awareness on the social evil called Aida in his region, Beawar, Ajmer; Mr. Sagar Vidhani, Chattisgarh, for his action project on waste segregation and composting in his housing society; Mr. Akshay Vinayak, Jharkhand, for working with his school n various themes to make it a Paryavaran Mitra School.

Source: Paryavaran Mitra Newsletter. Vol. 18, 16<sup>th</sup> Sept – 31<sup>st</sup> Oct, 2012, [www.paryavaranmitra.in](http://www.paryavaranmitra.in)

Contact: Email: [paryavaranmitra@ceeindia.org](mailto:paryavaranmitra@ceeindia.org)

### **Lion-Tailed Macaque not one of 'World's 25 Most Endangered Primates'**



The Lion-tailed macaque, one of India's endangered primate species, is no longer on 'The World's 25 Most

Endangered Primates' list released by a group of specialist agencies — the Primate Specialist Group of the IUCN/Species Survival Commission; the International Primatological Society; Conservation International (CI); and the Bristol Conservation and Science Foundation. The list was released during the recent conference of parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Hyderabad.

A new assessment is under way to determine how the world's primates are faring. It will build on the 2008 assessment that 303 primates are critically endangered or endangered. The latest top 25 endangered primates comprise a range of ape, monkey and lemur species from Tanzania, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, and South America.

Six of these live on the island nation of Madagascar, five are from mainland Africa, five from South America and nine species in Asia are among those listed as most threatened.

Source: 'Lion Tailed Macaque is taken off the top 25 endangered list', [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com), 15/10/12. '25 primate species on the brink of extinction', [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com), 15/10/12.



## Important Bird Areas Update



### ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

#### MoEF rejects missile testing plan for Tillangchong WLS

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has rejected the proposal of the Indian Navy for the setting up of a temporary missile testing site at the Tillangchong Wildlife Sanctuary (*PA Update* No. XVII, No. 6) in the Nicobar Islands. The order dated 12 October 2012 (No. F. No. 6-1S/2011/WL-I) was issued by the Inspector General of Forests, Dr. SK Khanduri.

The navy proposal had sought the use of a 2m x 2m area within Tillangchong Wild Life Sanctuary for erection of a structure as target for practice firing missiles from submarines, for seven to 10 days in a year. It was to be used for firing of the practice versions of the missiles to be conducted (no explosives) as a part of acceptance trials of upgraded systems of Indian Navy and would have had an area of impact of less than 50 hectares and a circular error of probability of 50 meters. The alternatives that had been considered and rejected included the Isles of Man Island because it did not meet the trials firing parameters, and the Little Nicobar Island because it was inhabited and the local administration was not in favour of it.

The navy proposal was first considered in the 23rd meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) held on 14th October 2011 wherein a site inspection was prescribed and entrusted to Dr Asad Rahmani, along with the Chief Wildlife Warden, A&N Islands. The inspection was carried out in February 2012 following which an opinion was expressed against the proposal.

This was then discussed in the 25th meeting of the Standing Committee on 13 June 2012 and it was generally felt that the area, being among the last remaining habitats of the endemic Nicobari Megapode, must be preserved.

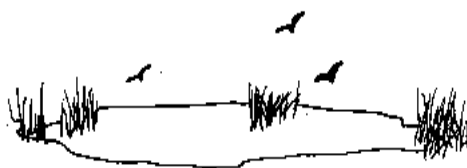
In light of the ecological impact and the fact that the island is important culturally and traditionally for the Nicobari community, the permission was denied and the Navy has been asked to look for alternative sites.

Source: Office Memorandum - F. No. 6-1S/2011/WL-I, MoEF, (Wildlife Division), 12/10/12.

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

### ANDHRA PRADESH

#### FD opposes de-notification of land from the Kolleru WLS



Officials of the Wildlife Division of the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department (FD) have opposed the proposed exclusion of nearly 7600 acres of land from the Kolleru Wildlife Sanctuary. The land in question is not in the possession of farmers, but it has been alleged that vested interests are bringing pressure on elected representatives and government officials for the exemption and for the distribution of the same to landless poor living there.

The FD Officials are considering

invoking Article 51-A (g) of the Constitution which imposes the fundamental duty to protect and improve wildlife in the country. Environmental activists have also pointed out that if the 7600 acres was not saved, the tough decisions taken by the state government such as the demolition of the illegal fish tanks and the conservation efforts made by the Central Empowered Committee as per the directions of the Supreme Court will be futile.

Source: G. Venkataramana Rao, 'Forest Department to oppose de-notification of 7,600 acres', *The Hindu*, 02/10/12.  
Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, I/c Kolleru WLS, Eluru. West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 08812-232356.

## ASSAM

### Rise in number of Greater adjutant storks

The latest count of the Greater adjutant stork, which has shown a declining trend over the past one decade, has yielded a total population of 258 this year. The population of the bird in the world is estimated to be around 900-1,000 with the Brahmaputra Valley alone accounting for over 750. A majority of the nests of the bird are located on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra, especially in areas like Mandakata and Suptaguri in North Guwahati and Dadara and Singimari on the Hajo Road.

The population of the bird was 288 (2002), 207 (2003), 233 (2004), 247 (2005), 167 (2006), 118 (2007), 149 in (2008), 147 (2009), 113 (2010) and 127 (2011). The latest count covered 11 areas known as the stork's roosting spots, while sighting results came from four places.

The census was conducted by the organization, Early Birds. According to them, one reason for the rise in numbers is the increased awareness efforts taken by many



conservation organisations and the other could be the timing of the census. The breeding season of the stork starts from October and, hence, the birds do not come to the roosting spots earlier; thus keeping the figures lower.

Wildlife experts have pointed out that the wetlands in and around the city, that are critical for the storks, are being rapidly encroached upon and are also being filled up for construction. A case in point is the Dabaka Beel at Bangara, adjacent to the airport on the outskirts of Guwahati. It was injudiciously handed over to a paramilitary force to raise its headquarters. Similarly, the roosting ground behind the Ulubari market complex has been almost completely filled up by the Assam State Transport Corporation which had also allowed a few former employees to settle there. Local people from Ulubari area had earlier demanded through a signature campaign to evict the encroachers and to make it a garden with tall trees.

Source: 'Stork numbers rise after campaign', *The Telegraph*, 01/10/12,  
'Storks struggling to survive in shrinking habitat', *The Assam Tribune*, 03/10/12.

## GUJARAT

### Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary designated a Ramsar site

The Government of India has designated the Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary as a Ramsar 'Wetland of International Importance'. The area is home to 210 species of birds, with nearly 175,000 birds being recorded there during the winter and 50,000 in the summer.

It is an important stopover site within the Central Asia Flyway, with globally threatened species such as the critically endangered Sociable lapwing and the vulnerable Marbled teal stopping over during migration. Other bird species like the Sarus Crane takes refuge there during summer when other water bodies are dry.

The wetland is also a lifeline for a satellite population of the endangered Indian Wild Ass which uses this area in the dry

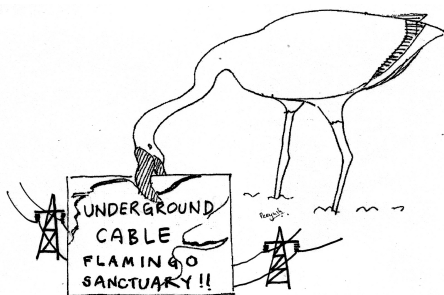
season. Local communities heavily rely on the lake as it provides them with a source of drinking water and water for irrigation, as well as an important source of income from fishing for Catla fish and Rohu. An average of 75,000 tourists visit the wetland annually.

India presently has 26 Ramsar Sites covering a total area of 689,131 hectares.

Source: 'India names important bird sanctuary in Gujarat state' <http://www.ramsar.org/>, 28/09/12

Contact: ACF, Nal Sarovar WLS, At & P.O. Vekaria, Tehsil Viramgam, Dist. Ahmadabad, Gujarat. Tel: 079-2122430. Fax: 2122430

### **Proposal to move transmission lines underground in Khadir, Kutch**



The Gujarat Energy Transmission Corporation (GETCO) has formulated a proposal for laying underground high powered transmission lines in the Khadir region in Kutch. Nearly 400 birds, mainly flamingoes had been electrocuted after coming in contact with the overhead lines here (*PA Update* Vol. XVIII, No. 1). Following the incident, the then principal secretary of forest and environment had asked GETCO to immediately take up a proposal to lay underground cables or replace the exposed high tension wires with insulated lines.

The proposal has now been sent for approval to the State Wildlife Board and once cleared will be sent to the National Wildlife Board for final approval. A survey has estimated a cost of Rs 8-10 crore for laying of the underground cables. Surveyors have already decided the exact point from where the

lines will go underground. The transmission agency will take at least 12 months to complete the underground cable work from the day the work order is issued.

Source: Himanshu Kaushik, 'Killer cables in Kutch set to go underground', *The Times of India*, 03/10/12.

## **MANIPUR**

### **Meet on Loktak Lake calls for investigation into project for phumdi clearance**

A state level convention held in the month of October has demanded an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the contract awarded for ongoing clearance work of phumdi (floating biomass) from the Loktak Lake. The contract was awarded to K-Pro Infra Works Private Limited in 2009 and the convention demanded that the role of the Progressive Construction Limited and the Government of Manipur should also be investigated.

It has been alleged that there was massive corruption in the process of awarding the Rs. 224 crores contract for "Management of Phumdis in the Loktak Lake" to K-Pro Infra Works Limited that existed only on paper and had as paid up capital of only Rs. 10 lakhs. Despite being the lone bidder, K-pro was reportedly awarded the contract which is in violation of the Central Public Works Department norms that require at least three bidders for such tenders.

A resolution by the convention demanded that the Loktak Development Authority (LDS) furnish all details on the controversial contract, especially the details of the earnest money submitted by K-Pro along with the financial bid and details of bank guarantee for mobilization of advance; the mode of payment of mobilization advance (number of installments) and details of shareholders of K-Pro. An investigation has also been demanded on the relation between the phumdi clearance and arsoning of floating huts, forced eviction and displacement of several thousand members of fishing

communities in November 2011.

The convention organised by All Loktak Lake Fishermen Union and Committee on the Protection of Natural Resources in Manipur also adopted various other resolutions related to protecting Loktak lake and other wetlands of Manipur. These include among others a call to repeal the Manipur Loktak Lake Protection Act 2006; a revision of the Loktak Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project for its impacts on Loktak wetlands, including the proliferation of Phumdis in Loktak Lake and impact on the Keibul Lamjao National Park, and appropriate steps to decommission the Ithai Barrage of Loktak Project as per recommendations of World Commission on Dams, 2000.

It was also decided to chalk out a comprehensive Wetlands Management Policy for Manipur with community participation as per guidelines of Ramsar Convention for Community participation and to form a 'Joint Committee on the Preservation of Loktak Wetlands.

Source: 'Meet on Loktak Lake conservation calls for probe on K-Pro deal', *The Sangai Express*, 22/10/2012.

Contact: **DCF**, Keibul Lamjao NP, Sanjenthong, Imphal - 795 001

**Chief Wildlife Warden** - Manipur, Sanjenthong, Imphal - 795001, Manipur. Tel: 03852 - 220854 / 285385

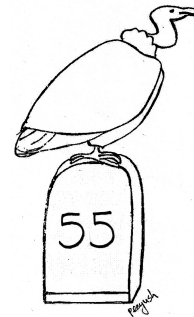
## TRIPURA

### Only 55 vultures in Tripura

Only 55 vultures are left in Tripura. The statistic was revealed through a survey conducted by a 10-member team of experts, formed by the Tripura Forest Department, in 2008. The team submitted its report last year.

Of the 55 birds, 27 vultures were sighted in different parts of Khowai district, two in South Tripura's Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary, 24 in Belonia subdivision and only two in Sipahijala Wildlife Sanctuary.

Tripura chief wildlife warden Ajit Kumar Bhowmik has attributed the rapid decline in the number of vultures to loss of habitat like tall and leafy trees in the forests and to the use of diclofenac.



Source: Sekhar Datta, 'Tripura vulture population dwindles', *The Telegraph*, 28/09/12.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Tripura, Aranya Bhawan, Nehru Complex, Agartala - 799001, Tripura. Tel: 0381-225223. Fax: 0381-225253/224013, 2422249



**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**

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

### Learning Workshop on Community Forest Rights held in Bhubaneswar

Vasundhara and Kalpavriksh, in partnership with Oxfam India organised a three day Learning Workshop on Community Forest Rights (CFRs) under the Forest Rights Act, in Bhubaneswar, on 2-4<sup>th</sup> November 2012. The workshop dealt with all aspects of CFRs, including the current status of implementation of CFRs in protected areas.

It was noted that in general there has been abysmal progress in CFR recognition in PAs across the country. Exceptions to this are the recent granting of titles to 25 podus (hamlets) of Soliga adivasis in Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Sanctuary and Tiger Reserve (Karnataka), and a small area recognized for the rights of adivasis in Simlipal Tiger Reserve (Odisha). In many PAs, CFRs have not even been claimed, either due to lack of knowledge and capacity amongst communities, or because they have been misled into thinking that the FRA is not applicable within PAs. Where CFRs have been claimed, they have been pending for a long time. Additionally, relocation is taking place (especially from tiger reserves) without having completed the rights recognition process under the FRA, which is illegal.

The workshop discussed ways to overcome these hurdles, as also possibilities of CFR governance within PAs once titles are granted. Vasundhara and Kalpavriksh are preparing a report that will be ready and uploaded on their websites soon.

Source: Report by Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh

Contact: **Tushar Dash**, Vasundhara. Email:

[tushardash01@gmail.com](mailto:tushardash01@gmail.com)

### PA governance and Forest Rights Act: Side-event at CoP-11

Over the past fifteen years or so, there have been many changes in the policy framework (international and national) which have influenced or have the potential to influence the PA governance structure and functioning in India. These include the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA), the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Recognition of Rights Act (also called the Forest Rights Act) and the Aichi targets for biodiversity conservation.

In this context, Kalpavriksh organised a side event during COP-11 on Convention of Biological Diversity on *Protected Area governance in India and the role of Forest Rights Act* on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2012. Through a panel discussion with policy makers, researchers, NGO members and community representatives, the objective was to look at over-all changes and seek clarity on the following:

- Status of implementing PoWPA, particularly that which relates to the governance of PAs
- Current trends related to governance of PAs in India, particularly issues of tenure, relocation, and coexistence
- Role of Forest Rights Act of India (applicability, implementation and potential) in improving forest governance

Contact: **Shiba Desor**, C/o Kalpavriksh. Email: [desor.shiba@gmail.com](mailto:desor.shiba@gmail.com)

**‘The Forest Rights Act, Protected Areas and Wildlife Conservation’ special section is being revived with support from Action Aid India. 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.**

## Quick NEWS

**77** human beings have been killed in Coimbatore Forest Division from 2000 to 2012.

**17** persons were killed in 2011 alone. Source: <http://blog.crjayaprakash.com/?p=963> human-elephant conflict

From December 27 to 30, the 1<sup>st</sup> **National Biodiversity Congress** in Kerala's capital. Organised by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board and the National Biodiversity Authority

New website of the **Valmiki Tiger Reserve** <http://valmikitigerreserve.com>

**BirdLife International** Launches the E-Atlas of **Marine IBAs** (Important Bird Areas) as part of their Seabird programme. SEE <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/country/india/marine> for **INDIA**

Tens of thousands of Amur falcons are being trapped and slaughtered **\*everyday\*** in **Nagaland** during their migration from Siberia to South Africa.

**Read a report** and watch a video at this link: <http://www.conservationindia.org/campaigns/amur-massacre>

Find **free** scientific articles in **PDF** Format [www.freefullpdf.com](http://www.freefullpdf.com) <<http://www.freefullpdf.com>>

National Conference on Environment, Natural Resources and Indian Economy 2013 JANUARY 18-19, 2013

Organised By: Department of Analytical and Applied Economics, Centre of Advanced Study, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India  
Further Details:

<https://sites.google.com/site/aaecouu>

**Masters programme** in Cambridge for building capacity of conservation leaders from tropical countries:  
Deadline for applications – 28 March 2013. For more details: <http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/graduate/mphil/conservation>

**6th International Hornbill Conference; April 24-26, 2013 at the National Museum of the Philippines, Rizal Park, Manila, Philippines**  
<http://www.facebook.com/hornbill2013>

**An interactive website** [www.geese.org](http://www.geese.org) <<http://www.geese.org>> now provides a very handy tool to report re-sightings of marked **Bar-headed Geese**. Once you log as a user to report a re-sighting, it allows you to instantly learn about the marking location and time of "your bird"

To subscribe to the **International Collective in Support of Fishworkers' (ICSF)** weekly newsletter on issues of fresh water and marine fisheries write to [icsfdnews@gmail.com](mailto:icsfdnews@gmail.com)

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Opportunities with the Wildlife Research and Conservation Society (WRCS):  
Ecology of the **Forest Owlet** *Heteroglaux blewitti* & **Elephant** Conservation in North Kanara Landscape  
Write to [mail.wrscs@gmail.com](mailto:mail.wrscs@gmail.com)

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The Conservation Research Group (Kerala) invites applications Interns, Volunteers and Research fellows to assess populations and threats to herpetofauna and avifauna in south India.  
[workwithcrg@gmail.com](mailto:workwithcrg@gmail.com).

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**Green Clearance Watch**  
Centre of Science and Environment's new website <http://www.greenclearancewatch.org/>  
- a public information system that tracks all environment clearances granted or pending with the ministry of environment and forests from 2007 onwards.

## Readers Respond

### Biodiversity cannot be quantified

I am against quantifying biodiversity, but then such terrible and absolute 'rape' of our resources ('The real costs of 'Coalgate'', Editorial, *PA Update*, October 2012), leaves one with no exception but to quantify it. Ecological goods and processes: over 70% of the world's portable water is filtered through forests, and India as a whole depends on this FOREST service. Oxygen: Brazil's Amazon forests provides 20% of the world's oxygen, wonder how much our forests do? So, if we take only the portable water being filtered, then what is its cost? It would be interesting to see how much carbon our forests sink, how much Oxygen is produced, and how much of Nitrogen is fixed? And these

have nothing to do with Royal Bengal Tigers and Leopards and Elephants, but with our very survival.

- **Mathen Rajeev Mathew** on the *PA Update* facebook group  
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/protectedareaupdate/>

### A valuable publication

Your *PA Update* is a valuable publication. We learn a great deal in a short time.

- **Zafar Futehally**  
Email: zafar123blr@dataone.in

Coming Soon

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

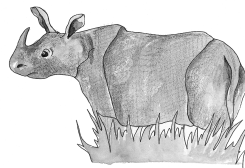
### **A compilation of news from the *Protected Area Update***

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Edited by **Pankaj Sekhsaria**

Published by the **Foundation for Ecological Security**

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- '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**

## PERSPECTIVE

### **In whose hands we entrust our forests ...**

Some months ago, a large area of a reserve forest within the southern Western Ghats was extensively burned by a so-called 'controlled' fire. Initially, forest personnel had no clue of what had happened. Later, one of them explained that visitors sighted an elephant and started the fire in fear. He casually added that nothing was done to stop the fire, nor were the visitors fined. Similar instances have been noted by researchers nationwide and make us question whether the decay setting in is dependent on structure, policy or implementation.

Rather than penalizing such acts, maybe we need to question why individuals apply for these posts and sketch intervention strategies that encourage a more active role in forest conservation.

The Forest Department (FD) essentially functions as a forest police force. However, it is imperative to question this idea and definition. The forest staff's constant contact with the forest results in understandings of the environment that often impact their work. Besides job security, many are interested in the environment prior to being recruited. If majority find value in the forests they work in and for, would it be effective to enhance these meanings and integrate them into their work (and future policies) rather than have them police these lands?

Forest personnel are recruited through tests in physical strength, logic, reasoning, and local language skills. Skills related to knowledge and interest in the natural environment are not assessed. Their work thus focuses on policing the forest, not on forest

conservation stemming from an inherent interest. Yet, if their jobs do not sustain their families' needs, the possibility of them being concerned with environmental welfare and justice is low. However, if integrative methods of motivation are developed based on common meanings held among the staff, conservation might become a collective priority.

Many forest personnel have opined that the FD could better promote interest levels in the environment through appropriate training, increased awareness on tribal issues, and awareness campaigns and workshops for the public run by personnel.

If the FD integrated its staff's understandings of the environment into its definitions, it could enhance the meaning they find in their daily activities. This bottom-up approach with a focus on meaning systems needs to be further explored, not only to develop new approaches to environmental conservation and justice, but also to improve the staff's means of livelihood and local forest conservation.

After all, it is in the hands of these men and women that we entrust our forests and all they hold.

- **Ruth Pinto** is a writer who has previously researched the role of forest guards in forest conservation in Maharashtra. The above piece was written while working as Outreach Manager for the Nilgiri Natural History Society.  
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