

PROTECTED AREA Update

(Formerly JPAM UPDATE : News on Action towards Joint Protected Area Management)

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EDITORIAL

The **WWF case on protected areas** (PAs) in the Supreme Court, about which we have been reporting in every issue, continues to take its toll (pl. see NATIONAL NEWS, below). Given the lack of guidelines for carrying out the process of settlement of people's rights in PAs, widespread problems have been reported regarding the manner in which state governments are handling the process. On the one hand, in many PAs people's rights are not being recorded or settled properly, and on the other, vested interests are taking advantage of the situation by pressing for deletion/denotification of substantial parts of the PAs. The latter step is ostensibly being taken to ease the shackles on local populations (and in several cases this is the genuine intention), but in many cases is only an excuse for industrial/commercial interests to gain entry. The example of Great Himalayan National Park (see below, pg. 6), is indicative of this.

Unfortunately, there continues to be no concerted national response to this crisis being faced by both PAs and their wildlife and human inhabitants. Most of the country's conservation agencies (including NGOs) have failed to take it seriously, or to gather together into a powerful response. Without this, decision-makers and the judiciary is likely to remain unmoved, as indicated by the Supreme Court's recent dismissal of a detailed intervention on these issues by several NGOs and community-based organisations. This intervention had presented evidence of the ground situation in the wake of the Court's order, and had asked it to direct the government to frame detailed guidelines and monitoring procedures for carrying out the settlement process. Its rejection ("we don't want the scope of the petition to be expanded", Justice Bharucha apparently told our advocate) exposes the weaknesses of a judicial system in which victims are hard-pressed to make their voice felt.

A positive move has been made by WWF-India and Kalpavriksh, by asking the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to set up a process of preparing guidelines and monitoring mechanisms. Only time will tell if this will have its intended effect.

Meanwhile, just as a couple of issues back we pointed out the unusually large number of stories relating to mining in PAs, this time we have to point readers to yet another menace: **river valley projects**. There are as many as 5 stories in this issue, of PAs affected by such projects. While the country undoubtedly needs to tap hydel energy, a national debate and policy is needed on where to site these, especially so that critical wildlife habitats are off-limits to them. In the absence of such a policy, wildlife officers and NGOs will continue to fire-fight, grappling with proposal after proposal by power-hungry state governments and central agencies.

On the positive side, the third successive National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights was held in Bhopal on May 1-3, 1999 (see NATIONAL NEWS). Over 50 participants, including social activists, villagers, forest officers, and researchers, agreed to formally set up a **Conservation and Livelihoods Network**, to work on various aspects of participatory conservation. This Network's primary challenge will be to help in resolving the conflicts that PAs and other wildlife habitats are facing.

Finally, readers would have noticed a change in the **newsletter's name**, from *JPAM Update to Protected Areas Update*. A number of you have pointed out that the news we are carrying is not restricted to joint PA management issues, but rather covers a broader array of issues relating to PAs. Hence, taking a cue from one of the favourite engagements of botanists and zoologists, this nomenclature change. Your reactions to this would be most welcome.

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Poaching on the rise in Namdapha

Poaching in the core of the Namdapha Tiger Reserve is on the rise. In February 1999 forest officials seized a number of animals including a dead *sambar* and barking deer from a camp within the park. Lisu tribals have migrated into India from Myanmar and settled in and around the core area of Namdapha. Although initially helpful to wildlife officials, they now appear to have turned to poaching under the influence and support of traffickers from across the Myanmar border.

Source: 'Poaching on the rise', *Tigerlink*, Vol.5, No.2, June 1999
'Namdapha National Park', *Nature's Beckon News*, Vol. C / No. 1, June 1999.

Contact: **Moloy Baruah**, President, Early Birds, 26 Surujmukhi, PO Silpukhuru, Guwahati, Assam.

ASSAM

Army to the rescue of Kaziranga Ecodevelopment plan for Kaziranga

An Indian army project in Kaziranga National Park is expected to help marooned animals during the floods. In less than three months after the devastating floods here last year, army engineers had constructed 10 highlands that will serve as a refuge for animals from the flood waters of the Brahmaputra. (See *Update 10 & 19*)

The entire cost of Rs. 2 crores, for constructing the highlands, was met by the army. Some of the old forest camps are being replaced by permanent concrete ones, and some educational and awareness activity is also to be undertaken under an UNESCO assistance scheme.

According to another report, the park authorities have also chalked out an ecodevelopment programme for the villages located on the fringes of the park. A plan of Rs. 73 lakhs has already been submitted to the central government for this. According to the park director, BS Bonal, development of fisheries, roads, sericulture, school buildings, and installation of tube wells are some of the activities that have been proposed. The villagers living around the park had played a major role in saving animals during the floods last season, and the park authorities had paid an amount of Rs. 100 per deer rescued as an incentive to the villagers.

The Director also said that the park area was to be increased and six extension areas would be added in phases, nearly doubling the area of the park from the present 430 sq. kms.

This year too reports of flooding of the Brahmaputra are beginning to come in, but it is yet to be seen if Kaziranga is also affected.

Source: C Shekhar Nambiar. 'Army to the rescue of 'Kaziranga', *Newstime*, 04/02/99.)
R Dutta Choudhary. 'Bid to involve villagers in wildlife conservation', *The Assam Tribune*, 17/02/99.)
Nirmalya Banerjee. 'Kaziranga animals to get flood protection', *The Times of India*, 13/04/99.

Contact: **Field Director**, Kaziranga National Park, PO Bokaghat – 783612, Assam.

Successful Pygmy hog conservation project

A project for the breeding in captivity of the endangered pygmy hog has been very successful. The number of pygmy hogs in the breeding centre on the outskirts of Guwahati has increased from six to fifty one in just three years.

The programme had been embroiled in a major controversy when the scientists involved in the project were accused of smuggling blood samples and rare bio-diversity out of the country for cloning and genetic breeding. A Public Interest Litigation was also filed in the matter before the Guwahati High Court. Recently however the court dismissed the petition, saying it found nothing wrong in the activities of the centre and additionally, it commended the good work that was being done. The centre had been set up under the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP) in 1995, after the animal, which was believed to be extinct, was sighted in the Manas National Park. According to Dr. Gautam Narayan, the director of the project, the only viable population of the species now exists in this park.

Now there are proposals to release the captive bred hogs into the wild and one of the areas suggested is the Nameri Sanctuary in the state.

Source: 'Fresh lease of life for pygmy hog', *The Hindu*, 06/03/99

Contact: **Dr. Gautam Narayan**, Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP), Barua Bhavan, 107, MC Road, Uzan Bazaar, Guwahati – 781001, Assam.

Demand for new protected areas in Assam

A NGO working in Assam, Nature's Beckon has suggested to the Forest Department of Assam to bring the reserved forests of Bherjan, Barajan, and Podumani in Upper Assam under the wildlife conservation network. These areas are home to populations of some of rare primates found in the region including the Capped langur, the Pigtailed macaque, the Stump tailed macaque and the Assamese macaque.

Nature's Beckon has also appealed to the authorities that the three contiguous reserve forests of Joypur, Upper Dihing and Dirak in the Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts be declared a wildlife sanctuary. The three reserved forests cover a vast area of nearly 500 sq. kms. and harbour good populations of wild animals, including a diverse range of primates. The population of the Golden langur in the Chakrashila WLS is also reported to have gone up and Nature's Beckon has also appealed to the Forest Department to increase the area of this sanctuary.

Source: 'Struggling to save vulnerable species', *The Sentinel*, 19/03/99.
Letter dated 15/05/99 from Soumyadeep Dutta to *JPAM Update*.
'An appeal for the conservation of the rain forests of Assam', *Nature's Beckon News*, Vol C. / No. 1, June 1999.

Contact: **Soumyadeep Dutta**, Nature's Beckon, Datta Bari, Ward No. 1, Dhubri - 783301, Assam. Tel: 03662-21067. Fax: 20076

Police withdraw from Manas Tiger Reserve

It is reported that the Superintendent of Police, Barpeta district has recently withdrawn the battalion of Assam police that had been posted in the Bansbari area of the Manas Tiger Reserve since 1989.

The presence of the police next to the Forest Range Office had been an essential help during the last years of social unrest and increased poaching. Their withdrawal now poses a threat to the park and local conservation groups are calling for their redeployment in the area.

Source: 'Police withdraw from Manas', *Tigerlink*, Vol. 5 no.2, June 1999.

Contact: **Bibhab Kumar Talukdar**, Samanway Path (Survey), PO Beltola, Guwahati - 781028, Assam. Email: bibhab@gwl.dot.net.in
Field Director, Manas National Park, Barpeta Road 781 315, Assam. Tel:03666 - 32253.

Orang Sanctuary in trouble

The population of the Great one horned rhino in Orang Sanctuary has fallen drastically. According to the latest census in March 1999 only 46 rhinos were counted here, compared to 97 in 1991.

Meanwhile in February, a few hundred villagers moved into the sanctuary, began felling trees and erecting temporary structures in the Chandanpur area. However, combined action by the administration and the police was instrumental in evicting the encroachers within four days.

Source: 'Rhinos decimated in Orang'; 'Civil administration rescues Orang', *Tigerlink*, Vol.5, No.2, June 1999.

BIHAR

Mass hunt in Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary

Defying prohibitory orders, thousands of tribals of the Singhbhum region entered the Dalma WLS for the annual mass hunt in April. According to initial reports the animals killed included barking deer, wild boar and wolf. Besides killing the animals the tribals also set ablaze large tracts of forests to 'improve visibility'.

Forest officials who tried to confiscate the weapons were resisted by the tribals and altercations were also reported. This year however the turnout of the tribals was much less than previous years, because the Forest Department was successful in persuading the Dalma Shikar Samiti (DSS) not to invite tribals from Orissa and West Bengal for the festivities.

Earlier in the month of March there were reports of large scale destruction of the forests here due to fires. Many of the fires are set by tribals to clear the forest floor of the leaf litter to facilitate the gathering of *mahua* flowers and to ensure the sprouting of fresh green grass for their cattle to graze on.

Earlier the Dalma Mukti Vahini (DMV) had urged the tribals in the area not to use modern weapons in the annual mass hunt. The DMV also demanded that the barking deer 'starving' in the deer breeding centre of the Dalma Sanctuary should be allowed to return to the wild. At least three animals

here are supposed to have died in the last few years. Since 1996-97 no funds have been allocated for the deer breeding centre, the local authorities have been forced to seek funds from charitable institutions and agencies that supply materials to the Forest Department.

Source: Rana S. Gautam. 'Defiant tribals feast on endangered species'. *The Times of India*, 29/04/99
Manoj Prasad. 'Annual fire rages in Bihar Sanctuary, officials look on.' *Indian Express*, 16/03/99.
'Barking deer starving at Dalma sanctuary'. *The Times of India*, 20/04/99

Contact: **Chief wildlife warden**, Bihar, PO Hinoo, Ranchi - 500237, Bihar.
Dalma Mukti Vahini, Chakulia, PO Bhadudih, via Chandil, W. Singhbhum, Jharkhand - 832401, Bihar.

GOA

Two new PAs created

Two new protected areas, the 208 sq.kms. Madei Sanctuary and the 211 sq. kms. Netravali Sanctuary have been created in Goa. As a result the entire stretch of the western ghats in the state are protected as sanctuaries and / or national parks. The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), has hailed the move which has made Goa the state with the highest percentage of its land under protected area - 20.58%

Source: Gunvanthi Balaram. 'BNHS hails Goa's creation of two new wildlife sanctuaries', *The Times of India*, 14/07/99

Contact: **Durgesh Kasbekar / Vishweshwar Madhav**, 1, Matruchaya, off Gulmohar Cross Road No. 6, JVPD Scheme, Mumbai - 400049, Maharashtra. Tel: 022 - 6250262. Email: wishoo@hotmail.com; vishum@bom3.vsnl.net.in

GUJARAT

Involve industry in saving marine park

Eminent naturalist, Lavkumar Khachar has advocated that the very industries that pose a threat to the Marine National Park near Jamnagar, should be wooed towards its conservation. The park was recently in the news when two contractors and an Essar Oil executive were arrested for constructing a jetty without environmental clearance.

He pointed out that even today the forest authorities are unable to exactly demarcate the

boundaries of the park and that 'all kinds of activities' are going on unchecked inside the park.

He also cited examples of the sensitivity shown towards the environment by some of the industries in the region like the Gujarat State Fertilizer Corporation (GSFC) and Reliance Industries.

In a related development a division bench of the Gujarat High Court dismissed two petitions challenging the validity of the permission granted to Reliance Petroleum Ltd. (RPL) to construct the pipeline. The HC said that in deciding the alignment of the pipeline, several experts had been consulted and it had been aligned through an area which was barren, had no significant biota and no live corals or mangroves.

Source: Shyam Parekh. 'Involve industry in saving marine park, says veteran', *The Times of India*, 16/04/99.
'Gujarat HC scraps suits against RPL project', *Business Standard*, 18/05/99.

Contact: **Lavkumar Khachar**, 646, Vasturima, Gandhinagar - 382022, Gujarat.
Chief Wildlife Warden, Gujarat, Block 14, Dr. Jivraj Mehta Bhavan, Old Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Tel: 02712-30007. Fax: 21097.

Salt farms in Dhrangadhra Wild Ass Sanctuary

The Gujarat government is likely to allow salt farms on nearly 10% of the 4,953 sq.kms. Dhrangadhra Wild Ass Sanctuary in the Little Rann of Kachch.

A report by the Gujarat Environment Education and Research (GEER) Foundation, Gandhinagar submitted to the state government has identified seven different patches of land within the sanctuary on which the pans could be established.

The report was prepared as a result of a High Court order to find a solution to the tangled problem of saving the habitat of highly endangered wild ass. The report suggests that the salt pans themselves do not cause as much problem as the trucks carrying the 28.6 lakh tons of salt produced every year, between March and May. Nearly 1000 trucks move about daily in a haphazard direction in the sanctuary during this peak period.

Source: Rajiv Shah. 'Salt farms likely on part of Wild Ass Sanctuary', *The Times of India*, 14/03/99.

Contact: **GEER**, G1, 194/3, Sector 30, Gandhinagar - 382030, Gujarat.

Chief Wildlife Warden (see 'Salt farms in Dhrangadhra Wild Ass Sanctuary')

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Part of the Great Himalayan N P deleted

1060 hectares of the Jiwanal valley in the north of the GHNP has been denotified (deleted) as part of the Settlement of Rights process in May 1999. The reason cited by the authorities is that there are rights of the people of the villages Kundar and Manjhan in the area and that the concerned area is of no ecological significance.

The real reason for the denotification is to make way for the Parbati Hydrel Electric Project that is proposed in the area. Researchers of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), which has an ongoing research project in the park, recently conducted a survey of the deleted area. Their findings indicate that the deodhar dominated forests here are very important habitat for endangered species like the Western Tragopan, besides various species of flora of medicinal value.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was slated to lay the foundation of the project on June 5, 1999, but this was postponed because of the crisis in Kargil. Later July 14 was fixed as the date, but had to be out off again as the Election code of conduct came into operation.

Local environmental groups such as INTACH, Dhauladhar Public Education Society, the Chipko Soochana Kendra and SINEW, along with Kalpavriksh have strongly protested against the move. Subsequently, many other groups and individuals too joined the protest. There are proposals to file a case against the deletion.

Sources: SP Sharma. 'Projects eating up forests' *The Tribune*, 20/01/99.

SP Sharma. 'National park areas denotified', *The Tribune*, 30/05/99.

Ashwani Sharma, 'Two villages excluded from National Park', *Indian Express*, 31/05/99.

'Environmentalists protest to PM', *The Tribune*, 04/06/99.

Shishu Patiyal, '*Great Himalayan National Park ki jamin parvati pariyojana ko saunpne par vivad*', *Jansatta*, 05/06/99.

Contact: **Premila Condillac**, Shimla Initiative for Nature Environment and Wildlife (SINEW), Shimla – 171002, Himachal Pradesh.
Pankaj Sekhsaria, (at the editorial address)

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

City National Park cleared for golf course

Thousands of trees in the City Forests National Park in Srinagar, which were chopped down to make way for a golf course, have been secretly sold off to private contractors. This has happened despite the claim of the state government that no trees had been cleared for the controversial Sher-e-Kashmir International Golf Course (SKIGC) (see *Update* 19). According to a local contractor 1252 quintals of rubinia trees were auctioned to another private contractor. According to an official working on the project, the trees should have been legally handed over to the State Forest Corporation (SFC), but it would mean admitting that thousands of trees were slashed for the golf course.

The State Wildlife department has also asserted that the course is illegal as the SKIGC had encroached upon the national park. The golf course, described as Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's dream project, was discussed in the Rajya Sabha last November and is also the subject of a PIL in the Supreme Court.

Source: Vikram Jit Singh. 'Srinagar National Park stripped brown to clear the way for golf greens', *Indian Express*, 01/02/99.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden - J&K**, T.R.C., Srinagar – 190001, Jammu & Kashmir. Tel: 0191-5445750, 0194-452469.
Neelu Sharma, 31 B/D Gandhinagar, Jammu (Tawi) – 180004, Jammu & Kashmir.

KARNATAKA

Threats to Kudremukh National Park

The petition filed in the Karnataka High court against the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd. (KIOCL) by the Environment Support Group (see *Update* 20) last year was dismissed in November without prosecution, as the advocate was not present to attend to some technical procedure. The ESG is trying to get the petition re- admitted.

On the 14th of May a public hearing was held by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) on the Kachige Hole dam at the Kalasa village, in the Chickmagalur district. The dam is to be constructed by KIOCL across the Kachige Hole, a tributary of the river Bhadra. The dam is linked to the expansion of the mining activities of the KIOCL in Kudremukh and is located inside the national park.

The KSPCB had circulated the executive summary of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), but according to the local groups involved

with the issue, it has no information of substance and is mainly an adulatory document, praising the KIOCL for its environmental sensitivity. It was also demanded that the entire EIA report should be made available to the public and that the hearing should be postponed to enable study and review of the documents. The hearing has now been postponed to August 23, 1999.

Meanwhile it is reported that on the expiry of KIOCL's mining lease on July 24, the MoEF has agreed to give a 'temporary' extension of one year. The change of heart of the Karnataka government (which was initially opposing the extension of the lease) was brought about by a commitment by KIOCL, to pay Rs. 2 crore each year for the next 10 years to the state exchequer for the maintenance of the national park. This will now allow KIOCL to continue mining till a full EIA is conducted and a decision taken on whether the lease should be extended for a longer period. Environment Support Group (ESG) and Kalpavriksh have sent a protest letter to the MoEF, citing violations of the Wildlife (Protection) and Forest Conservation Acts, and the general implications of the extension, and have asked for the immediate revocation of the extension. Legal action is being contemplated.

Source: Leo Saldanha on email dated 21/04/99.
Leo Saldanha. 'Public Hearing regarding Kachige Hole Dam in Kudremukh National Park held / postponed', email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 22.05/99.
'Centre may extend KIOCL mining licence temporarily', *The Times of India*, 17/07/99.
Minna Kumar. 'Kudremukh gets nod to mine iron ore for a year', *The Times of India*, 27/07/99.
Letter to the Mr. Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister for Environment and Forests by ESG and Kalpavriksh, dated 24/07/99.

Contact: **Leo Saldanha**, Environment Support Group (ESG), Reservoir Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore - 560004, Karnataka. Telefax: 080-6657995. Email: esg@bgl.vsnl.net.in; Website: <http://www.cfar.umd.edu/~venu>

Controversies in Nagarhole Ecodevelopment plan in Nagarhole

The Karnataka State Forest Minister blamed NGOs working in the Nagarhole area for setting fire to the forests there. He made the allegations in early April, after there were reports that fires had destroyed large parts of the park. He also denied that the damage caused had been extensive. NGOs, including the National Front for Tribal Self-Rule and DEED refuted the charges made by the minister and

demanded that the state government hold an inquiry into the fire.

There was another major controversy recently over the issue of proper rehabilitation of over 3000 tribal families, who had been displaced, mainly by the Kabini dam roughly 20 years ago. Recently, however, under a Central Government scheme some other tribal families are being moved out of the park and being rehabilitated by the Forest Department on land that has been earmarked for them. This angered the earlier displaced people who justifiably felt that their rehabilitation should be given a priority. In June 1999, some of them are reported to have forcibly occupied the area earmarked for the new oustees. This resulted in physical confrontation of these people with administrative, forest and police officials. The tribals (earlier oustees) were reportedly beaten up and their huts were set fire to. Many local NGOs have protested at the way the issue has been handled, and have demanded that an independent investigation to identify and punish the guilty. In addition, suggestions have been made that a long term plan is made for the Park, with the involvement of local people, and the issue of voluntary rehabilitation is dealt with urgency and sensitivity by all relevant departments involved.

According to another report which quoted the Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Mr. C Dyvaiah, the ecodevelopment plan for the national park has been making good progress. The project is being funded by the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and has an outlay of Rs. 390 million for a period of five years. The report says that the project has helped in creating better forest roads, elephant proof trenches and for solar fencing for a stretch of nearly 25 kms. encompassing the periphery of the park.

Source: 'To move out or to stay is their dilemma', *The Hindu*, 31/03/99.
'NGOs' hand suspected in Nagarhole fire', *The Hindu*, 09/04/99.
'NGOs refute charges about forest fire', *The Hindu*, 18/04/99.
Roy David on emails dated 22/06/99; 24/06/99
S Bharath Kumar. 'Eco-development plan making good progress', *The Hindu*, 27/04/99.
(see *Update 17*)

Contact: **JL Subramani** Nagarhole Budakattu Janara Hakkustapana Samithi, Nagarhole, Virajpet Taluk, Kodagu District, Karnataka. Tel: 08276-74 487. Fax: 74 091.
Roy David, CORD V.S. Roy David, Coorg Organisation for Rural Development (CORD), 119/ 1, 4th Block, Kushalnagar

571234, Karnataka.. Tel: 08276 74487 /
73287. Fax: 74091
Email: david@giasbg01.vsnl.net.in

Villagers set fire to Dandeli forests

The non-availability of the vaccine to treat the monkeys affected by the Kyasnoor Forest Disease (KFD), created a peculiar problem in the forests of Dandeli WLS this summer. Fearing that the disease will affect them, the villagers in the region set fire to large tracts of forest to drive away the monkeys.

The disease first appears in monkeys and can be transmitted to cattle and humans via ticks that are the carrier of the virus. The vaccine was not available this season because the laboratory which produces the vaccine had been closed due to staff and building problems. It is expected that the vaccine will now be available only next season, when the lab is reopened.

Source: 'Villagers set forests on fire to contain disease', *The Hindu*, 11/04/99

KERALA

Land for Sabrimala pilgrims

The Central Government is reported to have taken up the demand of the Travancore Devasom board for the allotment of at least 20 hectares of reserve forestland to provide amenities to Sabrimala pilgrims.

The land has been demanded at Saramkuthi, Marakottom, Triveni, Cheriyanavattom, and Valiyanavattom. 15 of these 20 hectares comes under the Periyar Tiger Reserve.

An alternate route has also been suggested for the pilgrims, which will also pass through the tiger reserve (see *Update* 20).

However, according to information received from groups in Kerala, the area suggested for denotification is much greater (100 sq. kms.).

Source: 'Central Govt. may consider Dewasom Board's demand', *The Times of India*, 15/04/99.

Letter from Mr. Kunhikrishnan to Ashok Kumar, WPSI.

Contact: **Field Director**, Aranya Bhavan, Forest Complex, S.H. Mount, P.O. Kottayam - 686006, Kerala. Tel/fax: 0481-565940; Email: root@trperiy.ren.nic.in.

Thiruvankulam Nature Lover's Movement, Thiruvankulam PO, Dist. Ernakulam, Kerala.

MADHYA PRADESH

Pachmari designated as Biosphere Reserve

Following efforts of the Environmental Planning and Co-ordination Organisation (EPCO), an advisory body to the Madhya Pradesh state government, the Pachmari area has been designated as the first biosphere reserve (BR) in MP, with effect from March 3, 1999. The total area of the reserve is 4926 sq. kms, and includes the Satpura National Park, the Bori and Pachmari sanctuaries and some surrounding areas. The 524 sq. kms. Satpura National Park has been designated as the core zone and the rest is the buffer area.

According to an official release, the designation of the BR will not replace the existing sanctuaries or national park, but would support and supplement them along with enhancing their values for conservation at the national and international level.

The declaration of the BR has been done under UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme. This is the 10th BR in the country and it has also been proposed to declare the 3600 sq. kms. area of Amarkantak as the 2nd BR in MP.

BRs have no legal status under the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WLPA) - 1972 or any other law in India.

Source: 'Pachmari designated as Biosphere Reserve in Madhya Pradesh', *Madhya Pradesh Chronicle*, 08/04/99

'Pachmarhi declared biosphere reserve', *Indian Express*, 04/07/99.

'Pachmari Biosphere Reserve', *Enviro News*, MoEF, Vol. 3, No.5, May 1999.

Contact: **Field Director**, Satpura National Park, Pachmari - 461881, MP. Tel: 07578 - 52130.

Editor, *ENVIRO NEWS*, MoEF, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi - 110003. Tel: 011 4364678. Fax: 4360740. Email: envis@envfor.delhi.nic.in; harjit@envis.ernet.in Website: <http://www.nic.in/envfor/envis>

Sal borer plague dies out in Kanha

The *sal* (*Shorea robusta*) borer plague that had affected vast tracts of forests in Madhya Pradesh is dying a natural death in large parts, including Kanha Tiger Reserve. (see *Update* 20). It has been reported that healthy growth has been seen on most of the trees that had earlier been marked as diseased and threatened by felling.

It may be recalled that in November 1997,

MP forest officials had estimated that an area of 1,50,000 hectares of forest in the districts of Rajnandgaon, Shahdol, Mandla, Balaghat, and Sarguja was affected, and the then state forest minister had announced that nearly a million *sal* trees would have to be felled 'to save the healthy forests'. Consequently 300,000 trees were cut down in 1997, before the central government asked the state to freeze the felling in January 1998. These recent developments in Kanha suggest that the environmentalists opposing the felling may have been justified.

Source: Belinda Wright on email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 17/04/99

Contact: **Belinda Wright**, Wildlife Protection Society of India, Thapar House, 124 Janpath, New Delhi - 110001 Tel: 011 - 6213864 / 6238710. Fax: 6464918. Email: blue@vsnl.com.
Field Director, Mandla - 481661, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 07642-50760/61. Email: root@trkanha.ren.nic.in.

Part of Madhav NP given away for dam

The court of the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), Revenue, in Shivpuri district has passed an order excluding 2,062 hectares of land from the Madhav NP falling on the western bank of the Sindh river. This has been done to facilitate the Mohini Sagar dam which is part of the Sindh River Project Phase II.

Source: 'Part of Madhav NP given away for dam', *Tigerlink*, Vol.5, No.2, June 1999.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Madhya Pradesh, Van Bhavan, Tulsi Nagar, Bhopal - 462003, MP. Tel: 0755-57371 / 550942. Fax: 573762

Illegal mining in PAs in MP

According to the report of the Chief Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), the Wildlife (Protection) Act- 1972, is being violated in Madhya Pradesh as illegal mining continues in many of the protected areas. The report has discussed in length the mining that is going on in Ken Gharial Sanctuary, Panna NP, and Shivpuri NP. (see *Update* 18)

Source: 'CAG report on illegal mining', *Tigerlink*, Vol.5, No.2, June 1999.

MADHYA PRADESH / RAJASTHAN

Chambal water - sharing treaty signed

Rajasthan and MP have just finalised the inter-state Chambal sharing treaty. As a result of this several irrigation and hydel schemes on the Chambal and Betwa rivers that had been held up for decades are likely to be revived. It is expected that this will affect the hydrology and riverine ecology of the National Chambal Sanctuary in MP and Rajasthan. The sanctuary has the largest breeding population of the gharial, besides many species of turtles and a viable population of the Gangetic dolphin too. More details are however not known.

Source Jagdish Krishnaswamy <jug@duke.edu> on email to nathistory-lists@india.princeton.edu dated 05/06/99.

MANIPUR

Loktak lake threatened

The commissioning of the Loktak hydro-electric project by the National Hydel Power Corporation (NHPC) at the Loktak lake, the biggest natural lake in Eastern India, has adversely affected the wildlife here.

Most parts of the Loktak lake fall within the Keibul Lamjao National Park which is the only home in the world of the highly endangered Brow antlered deer. Migratory birds using this lake too have suffered after the start of the generation of the 105 MW of power because the water level in the lake has gone down.

Source: 'Dwindling wildlife in Manipur causes concern', *The Hindu*, 09/02/99.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Govt. of Manipur, PO Sanjenthong, Imphal - 795001, Manipur. Tel: 03852 - 223662. Fax: 222504

Three new PAs in Manipur soon

The Government of Manipur has announced that three new protected areas will be declared in the state soon. The proposed sanctuaries include the Zeliad lake and Buning valley in Tamenglong district and the Keilam range in Churachandpur district.

Source: 'Manipur govt. to declare 3 more wildlife sanctuaries soon', *Natures's Beckon News*, Vol. C / No.1, June 1999.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, (see item above)

MAHARASHTRA

Nisarg Vihar in Sanjay Gandhi NP opposed

The World Wide Fund for Nature – India (WWF-I) has filed a petition in the Mumbai High court against the construction of 'Nisarg Vihar', a nature centre proposed on a 50 acre area within the Mulund side buffer zone of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park.

Earlier a new entry had been opened to the park at Mulund to reduce the pressure of visitors at the main entry in Borivili. (see *Update 20*)

According to the petition, the creation of such an area was violative of the Wildlife (Protection) Act – 1972 and the Forest (Conservation) Act – 1980. The petition also noted that the project was more like an amusement park, not for the purpose of forest conservation, and that the project is aimed more at securing political mileage in the forthcoming elections.

Source: 'Plea filed against building nature centre in national park', *The Times of India*, 22/06/99

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Sanjay Gandhi Rashtriya Udyan, Borivili (E), Mumbai - 400066, Maharashtra.
WWF- I, Maharashtra State Office, 204, National Insurance Building, 2nd Floor, Dadabhoy Naoroji Road, Fort, Mumbai – 400001, Maharashtra. Tel: 022-2048105.

Developmental threats to Melghat

The River Valley Expert Committee of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests made a visit to the site of the Chikhaldhara pumped storage project in March, earlier this year. A meeting which was held to discuss the impact of the proposed project, was attended by forest officials, researchers and officials of the irrigation department.

Bittu Sahgal, a member of the committee has circulated a detailed note explaining the reasons why this particular project should not be granted permission.

In another development, various NGOs in the region have also voiced their opposition to the Upper Tapi Irrigation project which is expected to affect Melghat adversely. Environmentalists have expressed the apprehension that the motive behind denotifying part of the sanctuary in the Project Tiger area may have been to make the necessary land available for the project.

The state forest department has opened a new wildlife circle at Amravati. This will be under the administrative control of the Field Director of Melghat Tiger Reserve. There will be two wildlife

divisions for Melghat, with headquarters at Paratwada, while a separate wildlife division for the sanctuaries of Ambabarwa, Wan, and is being established at Akot in Akola district.

In another development the Tiger Conservation Action Force (TCAF) of the Amravati based Nature Conservation Society (NCS) arrested three wildlife traders in Akola on the 20th of May. The operation was aided by the Delhi based Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI). Subsequently the Forest Department too succeeded in arresting three more people and confiscating some wild animal skins from them.

Source: Bittu Sahgal on email dated 17/04/99.

'Greens object to big projects in Melghat', *Indian Express*, 10/05/99.

Jawahar Dubey msconst@bom3.vsnl.net.in on email dated 11/05/99.

'Reserve status for tiger habitat', *Business Standard*, 04/05/99.

Sunil S Deshmukh

<psdwin@bom5.vsnl.net.in> on email dated 28/05/99

Contact: **Bittu Sahgal**, Sanctuary Asia, 602, Maker Chamber V, Nariman Point, Mumbai – 400021, Maharashtra. Tel: 022 - 2830061 /81. Fax: 2874380.
Email: bittusahgal@vsnl.com
Kishore Rithe, Nature Conservation Society, Pratishtha, Bharat Nagar, Akoli Road, Near Sai Nagar, Amravati, Maharashtra. Tel: 0721 – 672359. Fax: 670308. Email: ncs@bom3.vsnl.net.in.
Field Director, P.O. Paratwada, Amravati, Maharashtra. Tel: 0721-662792 / 62493.

ORISSA

Trouble in Chilka

A number of significant events have happened in Chilka in the last couple of months.

With the failure of the government to fulfill its promise of removing all the prawn farming from the lake area, fisherfolk and their organisations decided to take matters into their own hands. In April they launched a massive operation, as a part of which nearly 5000 acres of prawn *gheries* (farms) were destroyed.

About a month later, on 30th of May, three traditional fishermen were killed in police firing at village Sorona, when they opposed the arrest of their leaders who had been in the forefront of the demolition of the aquaculture farms.

Describing the killings as a 'black chapter in the history of Orissa', noted environmentalist Banka Behary Das asked for a total ban on prawn culture in the lake and for the formulation of a new fishing policy to guarantee the livelihood of the local fishing community. The National Fisherfolk Forum also called for similar measures.

Later there was a call for a state wide *bandh* on June 5, World Environment Day, in protest against the police firing at Sorona. In the first week of July too there was big rally in Bhubaneswar, where 25,000 fisherfolk blockaded the main approach road to the state assembly house, under the auspices of the Chilka Matsyajibi Mahasangh. The delegation that met the Chief Minister was assured that all kinds of aquaculture will be banned in the state, and a bill will be introduced in the monsoon session of the Orissa assembly.

It was also suggested by many concerned that in spite of promises, the authorities would not start the demolitions till the end of June, because this is when the prawn crop matures. The latest information on this is still awaited.

According to official estimates, the annual catch of fish from the Chilka lake has fallen drastically in the last few years. Additionally the prawn farms have also become a threat to the native and migratory birds that throng this wetland.

Source: 'Fishermen launch 'mafia hatao, Chilka bachao' drive', *The Times of India*, 26/04/99.

Biswajit Mohanty on email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 31/05/99. 'Ban sought on Chilka prawn culture', *Business Standard*, 03/06/99. 'Chilka fishermen take to streets', *Indian Express*, 06/06/99.

Bijay Chaki. 'Delay in eviction of prawn ghettos raises eyebrows', *Indian Express*, 19/06/99

'An appeal for urgent action: NFF on Chilka struggle' *UPDATE*, 20/06/99.

'Ban soon on prawn culture in Chilka lake', *The Hindu*, 27/06/99.

World Forum of Fish-harvesters and Fishworkers on email dated 03/07/99.

Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty**, Wildlife Society of Orissa, Shantikunj, Link Road, Cuttack – 753012, Orissa. Tel: 0671 – 611513 / 610980. Fax: 610980. Email: biswajit@cal.vsnl.net.in

Banka Behary Das Orissa Krushak Mahasangh, 14, Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar – 751009, Orissa. *Update Collective*, F-10/12, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi - 110017. Tel: 011 6426783.

Fax: 6237724. Email: delforum@unv.ernet.in; delhi_forum@hotmail.com

Thomas Kocherry, WFF, Velankanny Junction, Valaithura, Thiruvananthapuram – 695008, Kerala. Telefax: 0471 501376. Email : nff@md2.vsnl.net.in; Website: <http://www.south-asian-initiative.org/wff>

Olive Ridley nesting at Gahirmata

Following the initial reports of mass nesting by turtles off the Orissa coast (see *Update* 20), there have been further reports of nesting at different sites including a new one 27 kms. south of Gahirmata.

There have also been reports of large scale destruction of eggs, as they have been washed away by wave action. It was estimated in April that atleast 25% of the eggs laid in Nasi – II were destroyed in this fashion.

Source: Belinda Wright blue@vsnl.com on email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 26/04/99

'Olive Riddleys' eggs facing threat', *The Hindu*, 16/04/99

Contact: **Kartik Shankar**, A1/4/4, 3rd Main Rd, Besant Nagar, Chennai - 600090, Tamil Nadu. Tel: + 91 44 4952655 Fax: 4934862 email: kachhapa@vsnl.com; cg.shankar@vsnl.com
Belinda Wright, (WPSI) (see 'Sal borer plague dies out in Kanha')

Satkosia WLS to be transferred

Orders have been issued to transfer the Satkosia-Gorge WLS from the territorial wing of the Forest Department to the DFO Wildlife, Satkosia. An NGO working in the area, Wild Orissa, has also said that the ill equipped forest staff has been unable to control the pressure of timber smuggling and poaching. It suggests that the forest personnel need to be supplied arms and ammunitions and that the area should be immediately placed under Project Tiger.

On 24th April 1999, Forest guard Bhagwan Majhi in the Angul division of the sanctuary was assaulted and killed by group of professional timber smugglers, who are also involved in elephant poaching. The Wildlife Society of Orissa reports that this is the second case of the murder of forest personnel this year in Satkosia.

In another incident a tiger was poisoned to death in the Lebangi village in the sanctuary. The skin, teeth and nails of the tiger were found removed.

Source: 'Satkosia WLS'; 'Tiger Poisoned', *Tigerlink* Vol.5 No. 1999.

Contact: **Surjit Bhujabal**, Chairman, Wild Orissa, 5R-1, OUAT Colony, Gopalbandhu Chowk, Bhubaneswar -751001, Orissa. Tel: 0675 - 458784, 419272

Biswajit Mohanty, (see 'Trouble in Chilka')
Niladri Bihari Mishra, Central Hospital Colony, Banikala – 758038, Keonjhar, Orissa.

Akhand Shikar in Simlipal

Three people were arrested in connection with the killing of a *sambar* and a giant squirrel *during akhand shikar* at Sarua in the Barhakamura range in the core area of the Simlipal National Park. The incident happened in the first week of April.

Reportedly 200 tribals armed with traditional weapons entered the park, set up camp and even feasted on *sambar* meat after cooking it there.

Another attempt of *akhand shikar* was foiled in the Bhanjabasa range of the core area of the park when the tribals were chased away by police and forest personnel. (see *Update* 17)

Source: 'Tribals massacre wild animals during mass hunt'. *The Times of India*, 03/04/99.

Contact: **Field Director**, Baripada - 757002, Orissa. Tel: 06792-52773.

RAJASTHAN

Plastic bags banned in Keoladeo Ghana NP

Entry of plastic bags has been banned in Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur. This followed the

recent decision of the Rajasthan government to ban the entry of plastic bags in all sanctuaries and national parks in the state.

Rajasthan is the first state in the country to have introduced a restriction of this kind.

According to another report released by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on the occasion of World Environment day on June 5, the tremendous increase in human population around the park has led to intense competition for natural resources – the water of the two rivers that feed the sanctuary, the forest produce and the use of uplands as grazing grounds. The report also pointed out that the park had emerged as a bone of contention between the residents of the surrounding villages and the state forest department.

Source: '*Keoladeo Rashtriya Pakshi Vihar me plastic ki theliyan le jane par rok*', *Nayi Dunia*, 10/02/99.

'Human population threatens Keoladeo National Park', *The Times of India*, 05/06/99, quoted on email dated 05/06/99 by Nalin M on nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Rajasthan, Van Bhavan, Vaniki Path, Deorali, Jaipur - 302005, Rajasthan. Tel: 0141-380832. Fax: 380496.

Controversy in Ranthambore

The tiger's most frequented habitat around Raj Bagh and Padam Talao, in the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve was closed to visitors for over two months to facilitate a crew from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to shoot a film without any hindrance.

This decision of the park administration caused a lot of resentment among travel agents, hoteliers, photographers, park guides and others, who complained that the permission given for the shoot in the lake region was at the cost of tourism.

The BBC crew was being assisted by Valmik Thapar of the Ranthambore foundation and former Director of the park, Fateh Singh Rathore.

Sawai Madhopur based sources also alleged that the film crew had used methods which violated the Wildlife (Protection) Act. This included the transportation of a dead blue bull from one area of the park to the lake region to use it as 'bait' to get better shots.

In another development, serious conflict has arisen between the state forest minister on one hand and the forest secretary and some forest officials on the other. It relates to reports that the Field Director of the park has signed an agreement with a private

party, an NGO named Tiger Watch, to hand over the management of Ranthambore to it, leaving only a supervisory role for the Forest Department. Tiger Watch is a group registered in Mumbai, with former police chief Julio Ribeiro as its chairperson and Fateh Singh Rathore as the vice-chairman. The memorandum of understanding, which entitles Tiger Watch to provide funds for schemes in the park and to formulate and implement projects here, (and not to take over the park's management, as suggested in some media reports) was signed between the Field Director of the park, Rajiv Tyagi and the vice-chairman of Tiger Watch Fateh Singh Rathore. The contention of the forest minister is that he was neither consulted nor informed about this. However the forest secretary and the other officials have said this was not necessary.

Source: Prakash Bhandari. 'Ranthambore partly closed for film shoot', *The Times of India*, 07/04/99.
 'Van Vibhag ke bade afsaron ko bataye bina hi karar', *Rajasthan Patrika*, 19/04/99.
 Rajesh Sinha. 'Minister, babus lock horns over tiger park', *Indian Express*, 08/06/99, quoted by Environment Support Group on email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 10/06/9

Contact: **Field Director**, Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, Sawai Madhopur - 322001, Rajasthan. Tel: 07462 20223.
Tiger Watch, 16&17 Hansraj Damodar Bldg., 12/14 Goa Street, Ballard Estate Mumbai - 400001, Maharashtra.
Valmik Thapar, Ranthambore Foundation, 19, Kautilya Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110021. Tel: 011- 3016261. Fax: 3019457. Email: tiger@vsnl.com
Chief Wildlife Warden, (see 'Plastic bags banned in Keoladeo Ghana NP')

Cattle compensation scheme for Ranthambore

The WWF- Tiger Conservation Program (WWF-TCP) has been extended to Ranthambore TR and its two adjoining protected areas Sawai Mansingh and Kailadevi Sanctuaries. The TCP will provide funds for information on cattle/ buffalo killed by carnivores, 50% of the assessed cost of the animal (the other 50% is to be paid by the park authorities), cost of guarding the kill and the cost of transportation incurred by the nominated NGO partner. While no compensation will be paid for cattle killed inside the national park (since grazing is not allowed inside), it will be provided for livestock killed in its buffer and inside the two sanctuaries.

This scheme of WWF-TCP has been

successfully operational in protected areas in UP, AP and Bihar (see *Update* 19).

Source: 'Cattle compensation for RNP', *Tigerlink*, Vol.5 No.2, June 1999

Contact: WWF- TCP, World Wide Fund for Nature-India, 172 B, Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003. Tel: 011-4616532; Fax: 4626837.

Sambhar lake under threat

Large scale extraction of salt coupled with lack of adequate flow of water into the Sambhar lake, is adversely affecting the ecosystem of this renowned wetland.

Several dams and bunds on the various tributaries of the rivers like Roopgarh and Khandel have reduced the flow of water into the lake. In 1983 the lake had 9 ft of water, in 1995 this had fallen to 2.5 ft. and presently it is only about a foot.

Simultaneously, various private salt manufacturers have set up operations here since the mid 80s. The salt manufacturers too construct bunds to retain water for their salt extraction works, further affecting the flow of water to the lake.

This has had a direct affect on the avifauna, as is evident in the reduction of the numbers of flamingoes that can be seen here.

Meanwhile the threats are growing as private salt manufacturers are asking for rights to produce salt in the lake itself.

Source: Rohit Parihar. 'Dry Horizons', *India Today*, 08/03/99

SIKKIM

Large scale tree felling affecting protected areas

Recent disagreements between the army and the state forest department have brought to light large scale deforestation in many parts of Sikkim, particularly the twin valleys of Lachen and Lachung. Whereas the local villagers blame the army, that was deployed here after the war with China in 1962, the army blames the Bhutiyas villagers living in the two valleys.

Influential local politicians had also illegally transferred thousands of acres of forest land into private hands in 1993. Questions were recently raised in the Indian Parliament about these transfers and the construction by a former state forest minister of a private, three hectare tourist complex adjoining the Rhododendron Sanctuary.

Last year the Forest Department stopped and penalised an army truck carrying timber because it could be proved that the felled timber was from the Shingba Wildlife Sanctuary in Lachung.

Army trucks usually do not heed stop signs

at civilian checkposts and there have been many cases of forest guards having narrowly escaped from being run over by army trucks carrying timber. The forest officials do not deny that the local people are involved in the illegal felling, but are firm that the timber cannot move out of Sikkim without army complicity.

Source: Ranjit Dev Raj. 'Where have Sikkim's pine forests gone?', *Inter Press Service*, quoted by Nirmal Ghosh (tigerfire@yahoo.com) on nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 28/05/99.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Govt. of Sikkim, Forest Department, Wildlife Circle, Sikkim – 737102. Tel: 03592 – 22285 / 22978. Fax: 22978

TAMIL NADU

***Chital* population goes up in Mudumalai; threat from dam**

A census conducted recently by the Forest Department, along with the Nilgiris Wildlife and Environment Association (NWEA), the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has revealed that population of *chital* here has increased by leaps and bounds.

The density of the large herbivores estimated was: *chital* 30.45 per sq. kms., *sambar*: 5.7; gaur: 6.81; elephant: 2.46; common langur: 14.44; giant squirrel: 5.56.

The encouraging trend has been attributed to measures like anti-poaching camps, strict fire control, regulated tourism, highway patrolling and ban on film shootings. During the last 18 months, 34 special watchers belonging to the Kurumbar, Irular and Kaatunaikar tribal communities had been appointed.

According to another report, the Tamil Nadu government is pushing hard to revive the Pandiyar-Punnampuzha Hydro-Electric project in the Gudalur taluk of Nilgiri district. If the project is permitted it is feared that prime forests in Mudumalai would also be submerged. This would affect elephant corridors and increase the already high levels of animal-human conflicts here besides uprooting at least 2,500 tribals. From latest available reports the proposal has yet to reach the central government for environmental clearance.

The Nilgiri Wildlife and Environment Association (NWEA) has been actively opposing the dam.

Source: '*Chital* population goes up by leaps and bounds in Mudumalai sanctuary'. *The*

Hindu. 22/06/99, quoted by Nalin M; (nalinm@aol.com) on nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu 'Dam threatening', *Tigerlink*, Vol.5 No.2, June 1999.

'Possible impact of the proposed Pandiar – Punnampuzha Hydroelectric Project on elephant population', *DC Despatch*, Supplement No. 1, September 1998, Indian Social Institute

Contact: **AC Soundarajan**, NWEA, C/o Dist. Forest Office (North division), Mount Stewart Hill, Udhagamandalam - 643001, Tamil Nadu.
V Jayarajan, Action Committee against Pandiar-Punnampuzha dam, Parisarakshavedi, Elambachi PO, Kasaragod Dist. – 671311, Kerala.
Documentation Centre, Indian Social Institute, 10, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi - 110003

TAMIL NADU / KARNATAKA

Threats to Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary

The Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary which is located along the Cauvery river is seriously threatened by two major dams for power and irrigation that are coming up near the Hogenakal falls (Tamil Nadu border in Dharmapuri district) and Mekedatu (Bangalore district).

With the successful implementation of the interim award of the Cauvery tribunal, it is now certain that the above mentioned projects will be completed.

The area has rich wildlife value and is the home of the highly endangered Grizzled Giant Squirrel *Ratufa macroura*. It also lies on the elephant migration route and is an excellent birding area.

Source: JN Prasad on email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 30/05/99

Contact: **JN Prasad**, Merlin Nature Club, 13, 8th cross, 30th main, Sarakki, ITI Layout, JP Nagar phase I Bangalore – 560078, Karnataka. Tel: 080 - 6644682 / 6653350. Fax: 6695226. Pager: 9612-412774 Email: jnprasad@usa.net

UTTAR PRADESH

Forest fires, weeds affect Corbett National Park

Wide spread forest fires affected large areas of Uttar Pradesh this summer. It is estimated that over 60,000 hectares of forest in Kumaon and Garhwal were destroyed.

The Corbett National Park too was badly affected by the fire. Exact estimates of the damage caused here are however not available.

The weed menace too is reaching serious proportions in the park. According to the UP Forest Department about 50 exotic weeds are threatening the indigenous flora in Corbett and Rajaji. The Department has sought funds of Rs. 9 crores to fight the weed menace which is supposed to cover an area of over 600 sq. kms. According to experts from the National Botanical Research Institute, biological and silvicultural operations are needed.

Also the villages of Dhikuli, Ringora, Dhela, and Savaldeo, on the south and south eastern edge of the park are facing the problem of elephant raids on crops. Two people were killed recently and in February two elephants were found poached for their ivory. The reason for the increased conflict is because of the loss of bamboo in the fires of 1995, and the floods that disrupted the migratory routes of the elephants last year.

Source: RP Nailwal. 'Wild forest fires rage in Uttar Pradesh hills', *The Times of India*, 23/04/99.
'Kumaon ke jungalon ki aag ki chapet me Corbett park bhi', *Navbharat Times*, 18/04/99
'Weed menace in Corbett'; Corbett man-elephant conflict, *Tigerlink*, Vol.5 No.2, June 1999.

Contact: **Field Director**, Corbett Tiger Reserve, Ramnagar –244715, Nainital, Uttar Pradesh.

Pesticides threaten Corbett ecosystem

According to a study by raptor expert, Rishad Naoroji, pesticide poisoning is posing a major threat to wildlife in Corbett, including aquatic life, and birds of prey like the Peregrine falcon and the Grey headed fishing eagle.

The pesticide pollution is caused mainly by run-offs into the river Ramganga of the agro-chemicals that are used in the nearby farms. It has also been reported that traces of corroded metals like steel that were used in the construction of the Kalagarh dam and were later submerged in the reservoir have been found in the aquatic animals and animals who drink water from the reservoir.

Naoroji says a series of tests of eggshell fragments from an abandoned nest of a fishing eagle revealed the presence of organochlorine pesticides such as DDT, Dieldrin and Polychlorinated Biphenyls. He is also confident that this could be a major factor in the sharp decline in the numbers of these birds.

Source: 'Pesticides threaten Corbett's eco-system', *The Times of India*, 03/05/99.

Contact: **Rishad Naoroji**, Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co., Godrej Bhavan, 4A Home St., Fort, Mumbai 400001.

Field Director, Corbett National Park (see 'Forest fires, weeds affect Corbett NP')

Protest against train deaths of elephants in Rajaji

On May 28, 1999 a joint petition with 80 signatories representing over 300000 people was presented to the Railway Minister and other authorities, urging action by the Indian railways to avoid killing of endangered wild elephants on the 16 kms. Motichur –Kansrao section of the Delhi-Dehradun railway track (see *Update 20*)

Since 1987, 15 elephants, two leopards, and many other animals have been run over by the trains in this section. The measures suggested to avoid the killing of the elephants include the slowing down of trains while running in this section, the flattening/widening out the narrow *nallah* like areas through which the track passes, and as a long term measure the rerouting of the track that runs via Doiwala-Kansrao-Motichur-Raiwala to run from Doiwala to Raiwala through Rishikesh.

In response the Minister of Environment and Forests has written directly to the Railways Minister supporting the demands made in the petition.

Source: Nirmal Ghosh on email to india-
ej@unv.ernet.in dated 28/05/99
Letter on email from Sanjay Bhatia, Private Secretary to Minister of Environment and Forests <mef@envfor.delhi.nic.in> dated 01/07/99

Contact: **Nirmal Ghosh** tigerfire@yahoo.com
A William Christy, Wildlife Institute of India (WII), PB 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun - 248001, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0135 - 640111 - 15. Fax: 640117. Email: acwill69@hotmail.com.
Sushil Kumar Dubey, Director, Rajaji National Park, Shivalik House, Dehradun - 248001, Uttar Pradesh.
Sanjay Bhatia, MoEF, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodi Estate, New Delhi

110003. Tel: 011 – 4361748 / 4629133. Fax: 4362222.

WEST BENGAL

Large scale timber smuggling from Buxa

A sizeable quantity of timber has been smuggled out of Buxa Tiger Reserve in connivance with forest officials. The incident happened in the area of a teak plantation at Godumdabri within the reserve.

Whereas the Director of the park, Dr. S. Patel says that the quantity of smuggled timber is about 2000 cu.m., other sources put this figure at around 15,000 cu.m. The value of the of timber is placed at Rs. 25 crores.

Three range officers and an equal number of beat guards were suspended for dereliction of duty. It was reported that the entire record in respect to the transit pass (TP) books was in a mess and that many transit pass books were missing.

The West Bengal Forest Minister too has admitted the lapse and assured that the entire administration of the reserve would be overhauled.

Source: Anil Maheshwari. 'Mafia destroying forest wealth'. *Hindustan Times*, 27/04/99, Subrata Nagchoudhary. 'State stumbles on timber scam'. *Telegraph*, 07/02/99. 'Timber gangs spread reach in tiger reserve'. *Telegraph*, 16/03/99

Contact: **Field Director**, Alipurduar - 736122, West Bengal. Tel: 03564-55129. Fax: 55577 / 79.

Poachers, illegal settlers threaten Sundarbans

Illegal settlers are causing widescale destruction of mangroves of the Sundarbans, particularly on Jambu Dweep, the furthestmost of the cluster of islands here. The Supreme Court has banned human habitation on this island, but over 20,000 people reside here, mostly in a place called Charso Bees. The fishing business here, run mostly by Bangladeshis from Chittagong records a turnover of about Rs. 1.5 billion annually.

Many settlers on the island are unaware that fishing in the protected area is prohibited. It has repeatedly been pointed out by experts that the destruction of the mangroves is one of the major causes of devastation caused by the cyclones and floods every year.

While the West Bengal police has admitted that vigilance along the border has been lax, the problem of migration is rooted in social factors. For instance, many of the Bangladeshis have relatives in the South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal. They come to visit and often stay on.

According to another report, poaching in the Sundarbans has increased. This has prompted the state wildlife authorities to step up vigil and redeploy its field staff in the tiger reserve. In the last few months, at least two tigers have been poisoned in the Basirhat range of the reserve. In April about 200 string traps used to snare both, deer and tiger were found in the Sajnekhali area and deer meat is easily available in the surrounding areas.

Source: Kritivas Mukherjee. 'Illegal settlers denude mangrove forests', *Madhya Pradesh Chronicle*, 04/04/99.

'Poachers hold sway in Sundarbans', *Telegraph*, 16/04/99.

Contact: **Field Director**, Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, P.O. Canning Town, Dist. 24 Parganas - 743329, West Bengal. Tel: 03218-55280 / 721683.

NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

3rd National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights

The 3rd National consultation, organised by Kalpavriksh and Ekta Parishad, was held in Bhopal on May 1-3, 1999. It was attended by over 50 people, including forest officers, wildlife researchers, social activists, villagers, and NGO representatives.

The various subjects discussed included the commercial and developmental threats to wildlife habitats (mining, tourism, railways, highways and poaching), the settlement of rights process in the WWF Supreme Court case (see EDITORIAL and NATIONAL NEWS below), displacement of people from protected areas, state forestry projects (particularly the Madhya Pradesh Forestry Project), and laws and policies related to conservation.

In a joint statement issued later, the participants were unanimous that "There is an urgent need for a new model of conservation which involves local people in the planning and implementation of the management of protected areas and other wildlife habitats. This will ensure the livelihood security of the local communities and the conservation of natural resources and wildlife."

Two joint letters were also issued, expressing concern about mining in protected areas, and the death of elephants in the Rajaji NP due to speeding trains.

A decision was taken to formally set up the *Conservation and Livelihoods Network*, and other follow-up action was agreed upon. These include: local level studies and a national assessment of mining in PAs, national collation of studies on tourism impact and crop damage by wildlife, documentation of the settlement of rights process, state and PA-level dialogues, and others. The joint statement also expressed serious concern about the increasing trend to delete/denotify PAs by many state governments.

Contact: **Kalpavriksh**, at the editorial address below (full copy of Joint Statement, and of other documents, are available on request).

New siting rules for industries near PAs

The new siting rules under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act – 1986 are to be notified by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. (see *Update 19*).

The eco-sensitive areas around which industrial units will be prohibited include thickly populated cities, wetlands, national parks and sanctuaries, bio-reserves, archeological monuments, highways and railway lines. The restrictions also apply to modernisation and expansion activities of existing units.

A 7 km. belt has been established around notified wetlands, national parks, sanctuaries and core zones of bio-reserves where the new siting rules will apply.

Source: SP Sagar. 'Eco-friendly siting rules on the cards'. *Business Standard*, 31/03/99.

Contact: **Additional Secretary** (IA), MoEF, (see 'Pachmari designated as Biosphere Reserve')

Project Tiger being strengthened

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has recently approved a proposal of the Union Environment and Forests Ministry for continued implementation of Project Tiger during the 9th Plan at an estimated cost of Rs. 75 crores.

Activities cleared for strengthening Project Tiger include establishing six new tiger reserves during the plan period (see *Update 19*), deploying armed guards in disturbed tiger reserve areas like the North East, rationalising and enhancing the amount of project allowances for all categories of employees and continuous monitoring of tiger populations and research in non - tiger reserves.

Source: 'Project Tiger being strengthened', *The Hindu*, 02/06/99.

Contact: **PK Sen**, Director Project Tiger, Annexe No. 5, Bikaner House, Shah Jahan Road, New Delhi – 110001. Tel/fax: 91-11-3389645, 3384428; Email: dirpt@envfor.delhi.nic.in.

Fund for children of parents killed by wild animals

A new fund by the name 'Orphaned by wild animals fund' has been established to assist the minor children of people killed by wild animals in project tiger areas and national parks in the country. The fund is working closely with the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), and other conservation organisations to assist the families of forest guards and villagers around the protected areas.

The fund hopes to provide assistance to four new tiger reserves every six months, with the ultimate goal of covering all Project Tiger areas. The first four parks identified for 1999 are Corbett, Dudhwa, Sariska and Manas. The fund has already operated for approximately five years on a very limited scale in the Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Source: Nirmal Ghosh tigerfire@yahoo.com on email.

Contact: **Atul Kumar** at atulkumar@prodigy.net
Belinda Wright, (WPSI) (see 'Sal borer plague dies out in Kanha')

Turtle sensitive areas to be identified

An expert committee on marine turtle conservation has decided to conduct a nation wide survey to identify marine turtle sensitive areas. Official sources said that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has agreed to give Rs. 3 crore for 'Project Sea Turtle' planned on the lines of 'Project Tiger. The Chief Wildlife Warden of all coastal states will be involved in the project, and the Gulf of Mannar and the Andaman and Nicobar islands have been identified as the most sensitive areas.

The committee expressed concern on the illumination used in turtle sensitive areas which results in preventing turtles from coming on to the beaches to nest.

Source: 'Turtle sensitive areas to be identified', *The Hindu*, 26/02/99.

Contact: **Kartik Shankar** (see 'Olive Ridley nesting at Gahirmata')

Forest staff insurance scheme

A number of NGOs have financed insurance schemes for forest personnel. The Nilgiri Wildlife and Environment Association (NWEA) has the Janata Insurance Scheme of the New India Assurance Co. Ltd. for tribal watchers in Mudumalai and Mukurthi NPs. The Karnataka Tiger Conservation Project has covered 253 temporary forest watchers in the protected areas of Nagarhole, Bandipur, Kudremukh, and Bhadra through the Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd. Tiger Watch too is financing a scheme under the Janata Personal Accident Policy of New India Assurance that covers the 196 permanent staff of Ranthambore TR.

Source: 'Forest staff insurance schemes' *Tigerlink*, Vol.5, No.2, June 1999

Contact: **NWEA** (see 'Chital population goes up in Mudumalai')
Wildlife First!, 248, 4th Main Road,
Chanaraypet, Bangalore - 560018,
Karnataka.
Tiger Watch (see 'Controversy in Ranthambore')

Ecodevelopment: World Bank Meet; WWF Study

The GEF-sponsored project for eco-development in 7 of India's PAs, was the subject of a one-day meeting organised by the World Bank in New Delhi on May 26, 1999. The meeting had two major objectives: identify generic people-park issues which need to be addressed in the implementation of the project, and identify processes and institutional arrangements by which conflicts between conservation and people's rights to livelihoods can be overcome.

Meanwhile, a critical assessment is being conducted by World Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF - I), to recommend measures for the proposed second phase of the eco-development project. WWF-I plans to organise two meetings as a follow-up to this assessment.

Contact: **Lars Lund**, Task Manager,
Ecodevelopment Project, The World Bank,
70 Lodi Estate, New Delhi - 110003. Tel:
011 - 4617241; 4619491; Fax: 4619393.

S.S. Rizvi, Consultant, World Wide Fund
for Nature-India, (see 'Cattle compensation
scheme for Ranthambore')

WWF Case in Supreme Court

The ramifications of the WWF-India case in the Supreme Court, which has been reported about in various issues of *JPAM Update*, continue to be serious. As is evident from what is happening in Himachal Pradesh and other states (see NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES), some state governments are using the opportunity presented to them by the Court's order regarding settlement of rights, to delete/denotify areas from national parks and sanctuaries. This is happening in the name of the local people (and in some cases genuinely so), but is also being used by vested interests to gain entry into ecologically and culturally sensitive areas. What has happened in Great Himalayan National Park (see above, pg. 6), is an example of this. Meanwhile, reports of inadequate recording of people's rights are also coming in, though unfortunately detailed documentation of this aspect is still lacking from most areas.

In an interesting turn of events in March 1999, the Supreme Court admonished the central government for 'throwing up its hands' on various matters relating to the lack of implementation of the Wild Life (Protection) Act by state governments. The SC stated that... 'If there is a Central legislation, we think that it is for the Centre to implement it. It cannot be that such legislations have to be implemented only by recourse to Article 32 before this court. We now expect on the next occasion to hear that some scheme has been evolved in this behalf.'

Taking this as a cue, Kalpavriksh members who had coordinated a series of responses from community-based groups from various PAs in India, worked out an agreed strategy with WWF-India. They presented a joint letter to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, urging it to set up a national committee which could (a) draft guidelines for the process of settlement of rights and other aspects of implementation of the Wild Life Act, such that both conservation and livelihood needs could be met; and (b) monitor the fulfillment of these guidelines by state governments.

Deletions/denotifications threatened?

A preliminary list of PAs where deletions are proposed or carried out, as a part of the settlement of rights process, includes the following:

- Himachal Pradesh: Great Himalayan National Park, and Lippa Asrang, Sangla, Shikari Devi, and Rupi Bhaba Sanctuaries.
- Gujarat: Balaram Ambajee, Dhrangadhra Wild Ass, and Kachch Desert Sanctuaries, and Marine, and Gir National Parks.

- Madhya Pradesh: Semarsot and Son Ghariyal Sanctuaries.
- Maharashtra: Koyna and Radhanagari Sanctuaries.

Not all of these are confirmed. Forest officials have denied any such move for Gir, for instance. On the other hand, this list is based on very preliminary investigations, and is therefore likely to be an underestimate.

Unfortunately, an intervention filed by over a dozen groups, bringing to the notice of the Court the serious impacts of the order on settlement of rights, has been dismissed by the Court. Justice Bharucha stated that they were not interested in 'expanding the scope of the case'; when advocate Prashant Bhushan tried to argue that this was not the intention, he was told that the intervention could not be admitted. This is a rather cruel blow to attempts by all these groups to bring to light the ground situation.

Given this rejection by the Court, the ball is now in the MoEF's court to set up a mechanism to properly guide the settlement of rights process, and in WWF-India's court to appraise the Court of these issues.

(**Note:** For a more detailed account of the impacts of the WWF case, pl. see Ashish Kothari's 'To Save the Sanctuaries', in *Frontline*, July 30, 1999).

Contact: **Ashish Kothari** (see editorial address below)

SOUTH ASIA

BANGLADESH

'World Heritage Site' status for Sundarbans

In February 1999, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh formally declared Sundarbans as a World Heritage Site. 1,400 sq. kms. of the 6,017 sq. kms. of the Bangladesh Sundarbans was listed by UNESCO as a Heritage site in 1997.

The PM Sheikh Hasina announced that a US\$ 82 million project for the conservation of the biodiversity of the Sundarbans had been approved, financed partly by a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and also from grants by donor agencies like the Global Environment Facility (GEF). (The Indian Sundarbans was included as a World Heritage site in 1985) (see *Update* 20.)

Source: 'World Heritage Site 'unveiled'', *Tigerlink*, Vol.5, No.2, June 1999.

NEPAL

Wild buffaloes cause terror near Koshi Tappu

Six Village Development Committees (VDCs) near the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve have been affected by the wild buffaloes that have been protected in the reserve. The buffaloes are straying outside the reserve, rampaging crops and attacking human beings too. The terror created by the buffaloes even became an election issue. Residents of the affected villages are demanding that the reserve must pay compensation for the damage caused by the wild buffaloes.

Source: 'Wild buffaloes create terror near Koshi Tappu reserve', *Kathmandu Post*, 20/04/99

PAKISTAN

Suggestion for national park in Indus delta region

A three day seminar 'Mangrove Ecosystems – Dynamics of the Indus Delta', organised jointly by the Marine Reference, Collection and Resource Centre of the Karachi University, the World Bank and the Forest Department of the Sindh province has urged the Pakistan government to stop the degradation of the mangrove forests in the Indus delta by declaring the Arabian sea coastal areas a national park.

The mangroves are threatened by the reduction in the flow of silt-laden sweet water from the river Indus and from camel, buffalo and sheep grazing, cutting of trees for fuel and pressures of increasing population.

Presently it is estimated that 1,20,000 people are dependant on these forests for their livelihoods – 70% fishermen, 10 % livestock owners and 20% wood cutters.

The reduced flow in the Indus, after the construction of Kotri barrage in 1955 has resulted in sea water intrusion upto 30 kms. in the coastal towns of Thatta and Badin, playing havoc with agriculture by increasing the salinity of the sub soil water.

Source: Lori Pottingerby (lori@irn.org) on email to irn-wcd@igc.org dated 20/06/99

SRI LANKA

Illegal mining threatens nature park

Illegal mining for precious stones is threatening the Horton Plains National Park, situated about 190 kms.

from Colombo. The 36 sq. kms. reserve was declared a sanctuary in 1969 and was upgraded to a national park in 1988. Forest officials say that there is little they can do to stop this illegal activity with the limited resources that they have for patrolling the area.

Source: 'Illegal mining threatens nature park in Lanka', *Indian Express, Inter Press Service*, 01/05/99.

First mangrove park to be set up in Sri Lanka

A 10 hectares mangrove park encompassing one of the country's richest mangroves systems is to be created in Negomo. It is being promoted by the National Aquatic Resources and Development Agency (NARA).

Source: Tharika Goonathilake. 'Plans to set up first mangrove park in Sri Lanka', *Daily News*, 03/02/99.

Protected area adversely affects Veddah tribals

The Madura Oya National Park that was created in 1977 has seriously threatened the survival of the Veddah tribals, who had been using the area as their traditional home grounds for centuries.

In spite of a recent proclamation by the President of Sri Lanka, that the tribals would be allowed to continue their traditional way of life, the Veddahs continue to be driven out of their habitat, prohibited from hunting and foraging, arrested, shot at and prosecuted for poaching and trespassing.

The Gal Oya irrigation project of the 1950s and the Mahewali project of the 1970s had led to the loss of 11,000 hectares of land, and later 51,468 hectares were turned into the Madura Oya NP as a compensatory measure. This area was in fact the last of the habitats of the Veddahs, who had earlier been driven out of several other places in Sri Lanka. This tribe is supposed to be the only pure indigenous group in Sri Lanka.

Source: PK Balachandran. 'World's oldest tribal community faces extinction', *Hindustan Times*, 09/03/99.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Global Tiger Forum conference

A conference of the Global Tiger Forum, comprising 14 countries will be held in Dhaka in November

1999. This decision was made at an inter-ministerial meeting held in Dhaka in April earlier this year.

Source: 'Global tiger conference in Nov.'
Bangladesh Observer, 17/04/99.

Rhino / Tiger Fund invites proposals

The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund has recently sent out a request for funding proposals for the year 2000. The programme 'supports projects which develop local ability to manage, conserve and research the rhinoceros and tiger through provision of funding, training and equipment.'

Funding is available for one year or less and preference will be given to those requesting \$ 30,000 or less, though higher amounts can also be requested.

Source: 'Rhino / Tiger Fund Invite proposals',
Tigerlink, Vol.5, No.2, June 1999.

Contact: **Chief, Office of International Affairs**, US Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, ARLSQ 730, Arlington, VA 22203 -1622, USA. Tel: 703-358-1754; Fax: 703-358-2849; Email: fred_bagley@mail.fws.gov

New Conservation Sub-Committee at the BNHS

At a recently held meeting of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), a new Conservation Sub-committee was set up with a mandate to stimulate the 5000 strong membership of the society into taking more pro-active conservation actions.

A key aspect of the functioning of the Committee will be to promote scientific investigation and consultation with a view to introduce rationality and weight into natural resource utilisation debate.

Source: Bittu Sahgal (bittusahgal@vsnl.com) on email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 10/06/99 from

Contact: **Dr. Asad Akhtar**, Bombay Natural History, Hornbill House, Shahid Bhagat Singh Marg, Mumbai - 400023, Maharashtra. Tel: 022 - 2821811. Fax: 2837615.

New organisation to support conservation work

A new organisation, Association for species Conservation in India (ASCI) has been set up to promote biodiversity conservation in India using a scientific approach and relying on rapid information

transfer. The organisation will raise financial, material and technical resources from mainly the professional and IT sectors in the US and India for direct field based conservation in protected areas and habitats in India. More information can be had from the ASCI web site at <http://www.ee.duke.edu/~achandra/asci.html>

Source: Email dated 20/04/99 from Jagdish Krishnaswamy (jug@duke.edu) to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu

WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

- Gosian, Anjana. A Compilation of Judgements decided under Indian Wildlife Act 1972. Tiger Trust, New Delhi.

A useful booklet, which also has various definitions and sections, used in decisions given under the WL(P)A. A Hindi version of the same is also available.

Contact: **Sucheta Tiwari**, Tiger Trust, 206, Rakesh Deep, 11, Commercial Complex, Gulmohar Enclave, New Delhi – 110049. Tel.: 011-6516770 / 6853760. Fax: 6865212.

- *Royal Chitwan National Park, Park Management Planning Workshop.*
- *Guidelines for Forestry Outside the BufferZone.*
- *Guidelines for the preparation of Buffer Zone Users Group Plan.*
- *Implementation guidelines for Area conservation Facility*
- *Community-Based Biodiversity Conservation.*

These documents provide a view of the Parks and People Programme of Nepal, with a special thrust to the involvement of communities living adjacent to protected areas. It advocates the conservation of PA resources by forging partnerships between village-based user groups and government agencies.

Contact: **Dr. TM Maskey**. Park People Programme, PO Box 15113. Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 977-1-222245 / 220850; Fax: 247056 / 227675; Email: pppktm@mos.com.np.

- World Bank Inspection Panel. The Inspection Panel Report and Recommendation on Request for Inspection: India Ecodevelopment Project, Rajiv Gandhi (Nagarhole) National Park. October 21, 1998.

A strong critique of the GEF-sponsored Ecodevelopment Project being carried out at Nagarhole National Park, Karnataka. The World Bank has an independent process of evaluating its funded projects, called the Inspection Panel. On a request from local NGOs active in Nagarhole, the Bank sent Panel members to investigate whether a full-fledged Inspection process was warranted. The members have noted that there were fundamental faults in the planning process for the project (especially a failure to carry out adequate consultation), problematic assumptions concerning the rights of adivasis in the Park, and implementational problems stemming from differing orientations of the Bank management and local forest officials. It strongly recommended a full investigation. Unfortunately, as far as is known, the Bank has not yet authorised such an investigation. But this report is still worth reading.

Contact: **Lars Lund** (see NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA).

- *Indian Journal of Biodiversity*. Ed: Kumar Ghorpade.

One of the first of its kind in India, this journal aims to "bring back to readers the fun and excitement of Natural History studies", encourage scientifically accurate studies and documentation, and stimulate cooperation and coordination amongst people working on biodiversity issues. The first issue covers diverse topics like the philosophy of wildlife conservation, bird diversity and butterflies of the Western Ghats, flora of Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, insect diversity in India, and bibliographies of botany and biogeography relevant to India. Possibly due to lack of contributions for this inaugural issue, many of the articles are by the editor (an accomplished entomologist) himself, which will hopefully get balanced out in forthcoming issues.

Contact: **Kumar Ghorpade**, P.O. Box 8439, 1861 Bethel Street, St. Thomas Town, Bangalore 560084, India. Tel: 91-80-5473836; Fax: 5472280; Email: ghorpadek@hotmail.com.

- *Environ*. Ed. in Chief: Prasun Mukherjee

A not-so-well-known magazine, which covers various wildlife and environmental issues in an attractive colour-filled format. The latest issue, Vol. VI No.4, carries topics such as Amarkantak, Nilgiri flowers, Chilka, climate change, Kanha National Park, and Earth News.

Contact: **Nature Environment and Wildlife Society**, 117 Karnani Mansion, 25A Park

Street, Calcutta 700016. Tel: 91-33-2290429; Fax: 290429; Email: vispub@giasc101.vsnl.net.in.

- Pandya, TM. and Oza, GM. 1998. Bioregion Common Property Resource Management Studies. International Society of Naturalists, Vadodara.

One of the few detailed studies of a single PA, this book focuses on both biological and socio-economic aspects of the Jambughoda Wildlife Sanctuary in Gujarat, western India. It advocates the joint management of the sanctuary by forest officials and local tribal communities.

Contact: **G.M. Oza**. International Society of Naturalists, Oza Building, Salatwada, Vadodara – 391001, Gujarat. Tel: 0265 428703. Fax: 421009.

- *Ecocodevelopment – spearhead team prashikshan*. Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Interesting material that was used in training of the 'spearhead teams' that are initiating ecocodevelopment around the Corbett Tiger Reserve. In Hindi.

Contact: **Field Director**, Corbett Tiger Reserve (see 'Forest fires, weeds, affect Corbett')

PROTECTED AREAS Update is produced every two months, as a follow-up to the workshop on Exploring the Possibilities of Joint Protected Area Management (JPAM), organised at the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi, in September 1994.

PA Update 21 was prepared by **Pankaj Sekhsaria** and **Ashish Kothari**, Kalpavriksh.
Illustrations by **Peeyush Sekhsaria**

Several news items were accessed from Centre for Science and Environment's *Green File*, but have been credited to their original sources.

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