

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

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

No. 26

August 2000

EDITORIAL

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

Andhra Pradesh

Plantation of exotic species in national park in Hyderabad opposed

Assam

Kakoijana to be declared a sanctuary

Medical Camp at Kaziranga

Plan for wetlands inside Kaziranga

Animal census in Manas

Move to denotify Deepor Beel

Rhino poaching continues in Orang

Bihar

Kawar Lake to be declared a Ramsar site

Timber mafia active in Valmiki TR

Railway, highway threaten Hazaribagh

MCC to the aid of wildlife in Lavalong

Gujarat

Rain washes out lion census in Gir

Lion deaths in Gir

Gir lions to be moved to Barda

HC notice to CWLW on pipeline in Marine NP

Himachal Pradesh

State to take steps to curb wildlife menace

Jammu & Kashmir

City (Salim Ali) National Park to be denotified

Karnataka

Firing range adjacent to Bannerghatta

Study on man-elephant conflict in Bannerghatta

Crow and monkey menace at Ranganthithu

Police action in Nagarhole

3 predator species at same density level in Nagarhole

Elephant poaching in Bandipur

Mining lease in Kudremukh extended

Iron ore slurry leak from KIOCL pipeline

Kerala

Elephant electrocuted in Periyar

Tourism project adjoining Idukki

ADB to fund creation of new marine park

Madhya Pradesh

NGO seeks creation of a Wildlife Security Force in state

Programme by tribal villagers in Bori to conserve trees

Butterfly survey in Kanha

State allows hunting of *neelgai*

Maharashtra

Demolitions in Sanjay Gandhi NP put off.

State launches Forest website

Orissa

Boundaries of Bhitarkanika to be redefined; eviction opposed

Plan to restore ecosystem of Chilika

Fishing in Chilika affects dolphins

Akhand shikar in Simlipal

Plea to declare Sunabeda a Tiger Reserve.

Politicians picnic inside Chandka

Poachers kill tusker in Satkosia

Punjab

Army to assist in project for Harike

Rajasthan

Cheetal deaths in Ranthambhor

Monkeys not welcome in Sariska

Tigress spotted in Keoladeo Ghana NP

Tamil Nadu

Fragmentation of forests impacts herpetofauna in Annamalai hills

Uttar Pradesh

Controlling hoplo in Rajaji

West Bengal

State government non-committal on nuclear plant in Sundarbans

Tiger attacks on humans on the rise

NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

Paramilitary force, special agency to tackle poaching, wildlife crimes

‘Wetland Protected Areas Network’

Meeting on tiger conservation in the western region held.

NEWS FROM SOUTH ASIA

Bangladesh

Threats to Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary

Bhutan

Increasing livestock depredation by wild animals

Nepal

Eco-tourism meetings in Nepal
Steps for the conservation of the Blackbuck
Conservation Area
Elephant havoc around Chitwan
Rhino population increases
Wild water buffaloes under threat in Koshi Tappu

Sri Lanka

Eco-tourism plan opposed
Rogue elephants to be relocated

UPCOMING

XXIII International Ornithological Congress
Workshop on legal issues in PAs

WHAT'S AVAILABLE ?

- *Survey of birds of Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary and formulation of management guidelines for their protection*
- *Joint Protected Area Management (JPAM): A Simple Guide. How it will benefit wildlife and people*
- *Indigenous peoples and protected areas in South and South East Asia*
- *Sharing the benefits of Biodiversity: The Kani – TBGRI deal in Kerala, India*
- *Pelicans and People: The two-tier village of Kokkare Bellur, Karnataka, India*
- *Source book on Community –Based Conservation in South Asia: People, Policies and Publications*

PA UPDATE MATTERS

Indexing of the PA Updates
Life Subscriptions
Increasing circulation
More information needed

CONSERVATION AND LIVELIHOODS NETWORK

CORRESPONDENCE

EDITORIAL

OUR CHIEF MINISTERS AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

In spite of protests and the opposition, the mining lease in Kudremukh National Park to the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd. (KIOCL) has been renewed (see KARNATAKA: Mining lease in Kudremukh extended). There was lots of opposition

and we also saw that the story was very widely covered in the press. Over the last two months we collected nearly 20 English newspaper items on matters relating to Kudremukh (This is the highest as far as any story in the *Update* is concerned). We also realised finally, that neither the protests nor the press coverage really helped.

The techno savvy Chief Minister of the State, Mr. SM Krishna gave immediate responses to protest emails sent by dozens of people saying that he was as concerned about the environment and ecology and that he would look into the matter of the extension of the lease. At the same time there was an iron ore slurry leak from a KIOCL pipeline that runs through pristine forests of the national park (see KARNATAKA : Iron ore slurry leak from KIOCL pipeline). It caused serious damage to the flora and fauna and polluted fresh water streams and rivers for many kilometers downstream, including inhabited areas. We all hoped that at least this would convince all concerned. But no! Four days after the leak, KIOCL's mining lease in Kudremukh was extended for another year.

We have another techno-savvy CM, Mr. Chandra Babu Naidu, who has just announced that 'degraded' forest lands in Andhra Pradesh are to be handed over to private industries like Reliance, BPL and Bhadrachalam Paper for plantations to meet their raw material needs. Already, it is reported, the government has approved a proposal of Bhadrachalam Paper Boards Limited for a eucalyptus plantation over 300 hectares in Khammam district. When the touted panacea for everything in the country today is privatisation, it is not really surprising that the forests too are being looked at in the same light. When communities ask for some rights and some control, the government is worried about the feasibility of this, their credibility and reliability, how much they can be trusted, whether their use of forests will be sustainable, etc. etc. Surprisingly, none of these doubts exist vis-à-vis industry, even though industry has clearly been least responsible towards the environment. Unless this mindset begins to change there can be little hope for our wildlife, wild lands and the innumerable human communities that depend on these very natural resources for their survival.

We also have another Chief Minister, Mr. Farooq Abdullah of the extremely troubled state of Jammu & Kashmir, who has all but managed to get the City (Salim Ali) National Park in Srinagar denotified. He wants a golf course for his recreation and an international conference centre here (see JAMMU & Kashmir: City (Salim Ali) National Park to be denotified). It is of no consequence that the forest is one the of most important factors for maintaining water flows into the Dal lake and in turn for the water security of the city of Srinagar.

Last but not the least we have Mr. Naveen

Patnaik of Orrisa and his band of over a thousand, who, in violation of the laws of this country, had a picnic bash in the heart of the Chandka Wildlife Sanctuary (see ORISSA: Politicians picnic inside Chandka). The last *PA Update*, readers may recollect, had reported that the situation in Chandka was so bad that the timber mafia had the guts to assault forest staff in broad daylight in the middle of a village *bazaar*.

All politicians these days talk about wildlife and conservation and now also biodiversity. But more often than not (with the exception of a few MPs and MLAs who stand up for the ecological security of the country) it is just that – empty talk. Is it really true that people always get the rulers they deserve?

We deserve better!

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

Plantation of exotic species in national park in Hyderabad opposed

A conflict has arisen over the plan of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh to plant 'colourful flowering trees' in the Kasu Brahmananda Reddy National Park that is spread over an area of 142 hectares within the city of Hyderabad. Dr. Tej Kumar, an expert on butterflies and former head of the entomology department of the NG Ranga Agricultural University, has pointed out that the forced change of the vegetation in the park is likely to spell doom for the butterflies.

The forest here is the last remaining example of the Deccan thorn scrub forest and it has been pointed out that the planting of exotic trees here is not desirable.

The forest department (FD), has not yet received a single written instruction for the plantation from the CM's office, yet an estimated 4000 saplings of flowering trees like Jacaranda, Bauhinia and other species have been planted in the park. Additionally, with the undergrowth in the national park giving way to paths and water harvesting structures, other species in the park, such as wild boar, jackal, python, porcupine, hare and birds like peacock and partridges too are losing out.

Source: P Balu. 'Naidu's 'colourful' fancy not eco-friendly', *The Times of India*, 28/06/2000.

Contact: **DFO (WL)**, KB Reddy National Park, Hyderabad – 500004, Andhra Pradesh.
PCCF (WL), Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Aranya Bhavan, Hyderabad, Andhra

Pradesh.

ASSAM

Kakoijana to be declared a sanctuary

The Chief Minister of Assam has announced that the Kakoijana reserve forest is to be immediately declared a wildlife sanctuary. Various people and NGOs, particularly the Appropriate Technology Mission, Assam (ATMA) have been demanding for a long time for the declaration of the forests as a sanctuary (see *Updates* 25 and 20). The forest is home to a large number of rare species including the highly endangered Golden langur. However, according to conservation experts the Golden langurs here are in a bad condition and the habitat too is under threat of destruction due to increased human habitation and inconsistent and inadequate protection.

Source: 'Kakoijana reserve to get sanctuary status : CM', *Assam Tribune*, 08/06/2000.

Contact: **ATMA**, Swaheed Path, Main Road, Bongaigaon – 783380, Assam. Tel: 03664 – 20879 / 22320. Fax: 20206.

Medical Camp at Kaziranga

Early Birds, an NGO working in the North East conducted a four day human and veterinary medical camp in and around Kaziranga National Park in the first half of May 2000. Financial assistance for the camp was offered by WWF – I, Tiger Conservation Programme (TCP). Elephants of the Forest Department (FD) and cattle from surrounding villages were vaccinated during the camp. Villagers and FD staff from various parts of the park were also checked on the occasion. Early Birds has been working in the protected areas of Assam for the last eight years and the Kaziranga camp was organised for the seventh consecutive year.

Contact: **Moloy Baruah**, Early Birds, 26, Surujmukhi, PO Silpukhri, Guwahati – 781003, Assam. Fax: 0361 – 550158.
Email: baruahm@iocl.co.in

Director, Kaziranga National Park, PO Bokakhat, Dist Golaghat – 785612, Assam.

Plan for wetlands inside Kaziranga

The authorities of the Kaziranga National Park have prepared a project for the preservation of the 200 odd wetland areas inside the park. The Park Director pointed out that the depth of the wetlands here is gradually reducing due to the flood silt that gets deposited every year. There is a need now to go in for massive desilting, but the park authorities are

presently not equipped to do it.

The project proposal has been submitted to the Central Government for funding and equipment (like a dredger) to carry out the desilting work on regular basis.

According to another report, the park is faced with a severe financial crunch because the State Government has not yet released the funds for the year 1999 –2000. The Park Director has said that the reconstruction and development work has been severely hampered because of this.

Source: 'Plan to protect wetland areas', *The Assam Tribune*, 14/04/2000.

'Financial crunch hits Kaziranga park', *The Hindu*, 04/07/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Kaziranga NP, (see above)

Animal census in Manas

A recent animal census carried out in the Manas National Park has estimated the tiger population here to be around 70. This is a decrease from the estimates of 1988 (92 tigers) and 1993 (81 tigers). The tiger census was carried out through the pug-mark method. 250 departmental staff, 50 members from the NGO, Manas Bandhu and 18 elephants were engaged in the exercise. The census also indicated that the population of the wild dog and the pygmy hog in the park had increased but that of the hog deer had fallen drastically.

Source: 'Tiger population in Manas declining', *The Assam Tribune*, 13/04/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Manas National Park, PO Barpeta Road, Dist. Barpeta – 781315, Assam.

Move to denotify Deepor Beel

The earlier reported move to denotify the Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary (see *Update* 25) has been temporarily stopped. However, new arguments are being made to press for the denotification; the latest being that Deepor Beel is close to the Guwahati airport and migratory birds might become a problem. Dr. Rathin Barman of Gauhati University, who has been opposing the denotification move has requested for information on bird airport conflict, with a focus on migratory birds.

Contact: **Dr. Rathin Barman**, Dept. of Zoology, Gauhati University, Guwahati – 781014, Assam. Tel: 0361-636768. Fax: 570133. Email: rathimbarman@satyam.net.in

Rhino poaching continues in Orang

Five rhinos have been poached in the Rajiv Gandhi

(Orang) National Park, in the first half of 2000. Additionally there is continued large scale poaching of other wildlife like deer and migratory birds as well. On the 24th of May the DFO (Wildlife) Mangaldoi Division, in association with the police apprehended three individuals who admitted to be associated with a number of rhino poaching incidents in Orang. The rhino population in the park has fallen drastically from 97 in 1991 to only 46 in 1999 (see *Update* 21). At this rate, experts believe that rhinos will be wiped out from Orang like has happened earlier in Manas and Laokhowa.

There are also reports of large scale encroachments into the park by foreign immigrants, some allegedly with political backing. It is estimated that of the 80 sq. kms of the park 28 sq. kms have been encroached upon in this manner.

One of the problems here continues to be the shortage of humanpower. According to wildlife officials 30 posts have been lying vacant in Orang, and these need to be filled up immediately to ensure the effective patrolling and protection of the park. This is also important considering Orang's proximity to the porous Bhutan border. Poachers are known to sell animal products like rhino horn, tiger teeth and bones and hides to insurgent outfits camped across the border. These are then resold to procure arms for secessionist activities.

Source: Dr. Rathin Barman. Email dated 28/05/2000.

'Orang wildlife sanctuary in grip of encroachers', *Assam Tribune*, 09/06/2000. Rahul Karmarkar. 'Poachers enjoying free run', *Hindustan Times*, 15/06/2000.

Bibhab Talukdar. Email dated 17/07/2000.

Contact: **Bibhab Talukdar**, Aaranyak Nature Club, Samanwoy Path, PO Beltola, Guwahati – 781028, Assam. Tel / Fax: 0361 – 566087. Email: bibhab@gw1.vsnl.net.in; bibhab@hotmail.com

Dr. Rathin Barman, see above.

Chief Wildlife Warden – Assam, Rehabari, Guwahati – 781008, Assam.

BIHAR

Kawar Lake to be declared a Ramsar site

The 63.11 sq. kms Kawar lake in the Begusarai district is to be declared a 'Ramsar site'. Ramsar sites are those wetlands that are designated to be of global importance under an international agreement on wetlands of international importance that was signed in Ramsar, Iran.

However, a status report on the lake done by the Bhagalpur based Mandar Nature Club does not paint a very good picture for the lake. It is

polluted and choked with weeds, poaching is rampant and vested interests (some with powerful political backing) are trying to convert parts of the lake into agricultural land. Additionally, several lakhs of rupees that have been sanctioned by the Union Government for the management of the lake have remain unutilised largely because of political interference.

Source: Abhay Singh. 'Kawar bird sanctuary gets international status', *The Times of India*, 01/06/2000.

Contact: **Arvind Mishra**, Mandar Nature Club, Bhagalpur, Anand Chikitsalaya Road, Bhagalpur – 812002, Bihar. Tel: 0641-23479

Timber mafia active in Valmiki TR

There are reports of large scale smuggling of timber from the Valmiki Tiger Reserve by the timber mafia here. Large-scale felling of trees like *khair*, *sheesham*, teak and *sal* has been reported from various forest sectors within the reserve.

It is alleged that a lot of the smuggling is going on with the connivance of the forest department and that the smugglers pay Rs. 600 to the police station and Rs. 200 to the *Gram Raksha Dal* of the area for every truckload of timber taken out.

Source: 'Timber mafiosi play havoc with tiger reserve', *Hindustan Times*, 04/05/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Valmiki TR, Champaran Forest Circle, PO Betiah, Dist. West Champaran, Bihar. Tel: 06254-32548.

Railway, highway threaten Hazaribagh

The Hazaribagh Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the Hazaribagh district of Bihar, is under the twin threats of a highway and a railway project. First declared a protected area in 1954, these sal-dominated forests are home to a variety of wildlife and form a part of vital elephant and tiger corridors. The Hazaribagh – Barhi stretch of NH - 33 runs through the sanctuary, and is proposed for 4-laning. Parallel to this highway, a railway line forming part of the Koderma – Hazaribagh link, is proposed. These projects will effectively cut the sanctuary into two separate sections, making animal movements between these hazardous.

Recently, the Railway Minister, Ms. Mamta Banerjee was in Hazaribagh to review the progress of the railway project. She, alongwith the Finance Minister, Shri Yeshwant Sinha, held discussions with senior forest, railway and state government officials, with a prime focus on the ecological damage envisaged due to the railway

line. The Forest Department has expressed grave reservations about this project, on ecological grounds. Ms Banerjee, said that a joint monitoring committee will be set up under the leadership of Shri Sinha, and including representatives of the MOEF, railways, state govt., to look at every aspect of the issue and come up with a mutually agreeable solution within three months. But, a cause for concern is that she also gave an assurance that the work on the railway line will begin by mid-October.

Source: Neeraj Vaghlikar. Personal communication, based on field visit in June 2000.

'Hazaribagh- Koderma railway line – Work likely to begin in October', *Hindustan Times*, 15/06/ 2000

Contact: **SHE Kazmi**, DFO (WL), West, Van Bhavan, Hazaribagh, Bihar.

MCC to the aid of wildlife in Lavalong

Alarmed by the rampant poaching of wild animals in the Lavalong Wildlife Sanctuary, the ultra left wing group, the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) has taken up cudgels on behalf of the wildlife here. They have come down heavily on the wildlife mafia and have adopted a three pronged strategy to deal with the matter.

The first time the offenders are caught they are brought before an MCC *jan adalat*, where they are severely thrashed. They are released after the signing of a bond and a payment of a hefty fine. The 2nd time the offenders are not shown any mercy and are shot dead.

The MCC is planning to impose this ruling in other areas of their influence as well. This includes the Betla National Park, Mahuadarn Wolf Sanctuary and the Hazaribagh Wildlife Sanctuary.

Source: Anil Panicker. 'Now MCC becomes saviour of wildlife', *Hindustan Times*, 15/06/2000.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden** – Bihar, PO Hinoo, Ranchi – 500327, Bihar.

GUJARAT

Rain washes out lion census in Gir

Heavy unseasonal rains over a period of two days washed out the lion census to be conducted in Gir from May 17–21 (see *Update* 25). The rains measuring over 50 mm created innumerable water holes in the park, making it impossible for the census work to be done. The rains however eased the water situation in the area which had been facing a severe water problem for the last few months.

Subsequent reports however say that the

FD conducted a beat survey from June 21-23 to get a rough estimate of the lions in the park. For this the forests were divided into more than 60 beats of 500 square yards each. Each area had one beat guard and three other people for conducting the count. The beat survey has estimated that there are 320-330 lions in Gir. This is a little more than the 304 lions that were counted here in census in 1995.

Source: 'Rain disrupts lion census', *The Hindu*, 21/05/2000.

Arun Agnihotri. Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 13/07/2000.

Contact: **DCF (Wildlife)**, Sasan, Junagadh – 363125, Gujarat.

Lion deaths in Gir

Five lions are reported to have died in the Gir National Park in the period of the last two months, three of these being in the last 2 weeks in July. Media reports have said that the reason for the deaths is some mysterious illness, but the Forest Department (FD) is denying this.

Initially the deaths had been ascribed to rabies, but the post-mortem report of the first death ruled out this possibility. The FD has in the meanwhile sent out animal husbandary teams to the maldhari settlements inside the park to investigate if domestic livestock have any infection. Also half eaten carcasses are being cleared away and the place is being disinfected, to protect the lions.

There are also reports of the deaths of lions due to poisoning and electrocution. Three have been killed in this manner in the last six months alone. The latest death occurred on June 28, when a lion was electrocuted and burnt to death by a live wire of 440 volts in Bhuchil village of Talala taluka on the periphery of the park. The owner of the field has been arrested. A pair of lions was similarly electrocuted in Una taluka six months ago.

Source: Janyala Sreenivas. 'Mystery illness in Gir, 3 lions die in 2 weeks', *Indian Express*, 24/07/2000.

Shyam Parekh. '5 lions die in 2 months', *The Times of India*, 25/07/2000.

Email from Arun Agnihotri to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 13/07/2000.

Contact: **DCF Gir**, (see above)

Gir lions to be moved to Barda

Jolted by the death of 12 tigers in Nandankanan in Orissa recently, the Gujarat State Forest Department (FD) has made a plan for the relocation of around 300 lions to the Barda Wildlife Sanctuary in

Gujarat. The move of the FD is also being seen as an attempt to scuttle an ongoing project of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), to transfer some lions to the Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh. The WII had worked out this relocation plan five years ago to insulate lions against an outbreak of an epidemic, enemy attack or natural calamity, which it feared, could wipe out the entire population of the lions. The state of Gujarat had opposed the relocation plan claiming that the lions were an exclusive heritage of the state.

The controversy had also assumed political dimensions with Gujarat opposing the proposed transfer of lions, citing the adamant stand taken by the neighbouring state of Madhya Pradesh on the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP). The CM of MP Mr. Digvijay Singh is reportedly taking a personal interest in the lion relocation project and has commented that it would be wrong to equate the lions with the Narmada. (Also see *Updates 22* and *20*)

Source: 'Gir lions to be shifted to adjoining forest', *The Times of India*, 13/07/2000.

Vanita Srivastava. 'Gujarat reluctant to shift Gir lions to MP', *The Times of India*, 23/07/2000.

HC notice to CWLW on pipeline in Marine NP

A Division bench of the Gujarat High Court has issued notices to the State Government and the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) of Gujarat in a petition challenging the permission to Bharat Oman Refinery Limited (BORL) to lay a crude oil pipeline through the Marine National Park in the Gulf of Kutch (see *Updates 25, 24, 23, and 21*)

The petition was filed by Mohan Bundela of the Jan Sangharsh Manch on the ground that the CWLW has no authority whatsoever under any provision, particularly Section 29 of the Wildlife Protection Act to grant the permission for the pipeline. The petitioner has also contended that once the government notified and specified the boundary of the Marine NP, the government has itself acknowledged the ecological sensitivity of the area and was duty bound to protect it rather than destroy it by permitting industrial activity.

Source: 'HC notice to Chief Wildlife Warden', *Indian Express*, 16/06/2000.

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

HIMACHAL PRADESH

State to take steps to curb wildlife menace

The State Forest Minister has said that the HP government was considering empowering forest rangers to give permission to villagers to deal with monkeys, wild boar and other wild animals that were destroying crops. He also pointed out this was already being done in states like Rajasthan and Haryana where animals like wild boar and neelgai were becoming a problem.

Replying to a discussion in the state assembly recently, the minister said that a decision on this would be taken shortly.

Source: 'HP will take steps to curb wild animal menace', *The Times of India*, 01/04/2000.

Contact: **Roop Singh Thakur**, State Forest Minister, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.
Chief Wildlife Warden – HP,
Mistchamber, Khalini, Shimla – 171002,
Himachal Pradesh. Tel: 0177-201660 /
223030.

JAMMU & KASHMIR

City (Salim Ali) National Park to be denotified

The City (now known as the Salim Ali) National Park in Srinagar is to be denotified for the purpose of the golf course and international conference centre that is coming up there. This has been a pet project of the Chief Minister of the state, Mr. Farooq Abdullah. The project has been opposed since its inception (see *Updates* 23, 21 and 19) and the latest move too has been opposed by a number of organisations.

Source: Bittu Sahgal. Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 12/06/2000.
Letter dated 13/06/2000 sent to the PM of India, by Kalpavriksh and others.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden – J&K**, T.R.C., Srinagar – 190001, J&K. Tel: 0191 – 544575, 0194 – 452469.

KARNATAKA

Firing range adjacent to Bannerghatta

In addition to problems of quarrying, electrocution deaths of elephants and crop raiding (see *Updates* 25 & 24), now there are plans to set up a firing range adjacent to the Bannerghatta National Park. 253 acres of land adjoining the park have been acquired by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) for the purpose. The acquisition of the land was done at the cost of Rs 75.9 lakhs way back in 1996 itself.

A CRPF official quoted in the *Asian Age* has said that all the requisite permissions for the firing range had been obtained from the Union Ministry of Forests and Environment. He added that the Karnataka government has been notified and adequate compensation has been paid to the villagers for land obtained for the range.

The Revenue Department had earlier allotted this land to the Forest Department (FD) in September 1995. For some reason the same plot of land was then handed over to the CRPF as well. The CRPF quickly set up base and presently are reported to have a camp on the bed of a water hole that is used by wild animals. This transgression was noticed by the FD only recently. The PCCF (Wildlife) of the state has written to the Union Ministry to intervene in the matter. It has been suggested that the firing range be shifted to another location, but no formal proposal for this has been forwarded yet.

Source: Jaideep VG. 'Firing range to come up in forest', *The Asian Age*, 26/03/2000.
Joseph Hoover. 'Firing range spells elephants' doom', *Deccan Herald*, 05/04/2000.

Contact: **ACF (WL)**, Bannerghatta NP, Bangalore-560083, Karnataka.

Study on man-elephant conflict in Bannerghatta

The Bangalore based Institute for Natural Resources Conservation, Education, Research and Training (INCERT) has undertaken a study on the man-elephant conflicts in and around Bannerghatta National Park. The study has been initiated because of the continuing and alarming decline of elephants here and to try and find some suitable solutions for the problem.

According to another report, a tusker was shot dead in the south eastern part of the park in the Bajjekere area. The tusks of the animal had been removed when the carcass was found by the Forest Department (also see *Updates* 25 and 24).

Source: 'Elephant killed by poachers', *The Hindu*, 01/06/2000.

Contact: **INCERT**, No. 10, Sirur Park, B Street, Seshadripuram, Bangalore-560020, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3364142 / 682. Email: navbarat@blr.vsnl.net.in

Crow and monkey menace at Ranganthithu

The growing population of crows and monkeys in the Ranganthithu Bird Sanctuary is becoming a menace for the other birds and the tourists that visit here. There are some reports that the crows and monkeys have been scaring away the migratory

birds and also destroying their eggs. There has been a difference of opinion of how to handle the situation. While some forest officers have suggested that an attempt should be made (with guns and firearms if needed) to scare away the nuisance makers, others feel that they should be no interference and nature should be allowed to follow its way.

Source: Laiq A Khan. 'Migratory birds face a new menace', *Deccan Herald*, 03/04/2000.

Contact: **Forester**, Ranganthithu Bird Sanctuary, Palahalli, Shrirangapatta Taluka, Mandya – 571401, Karnataka.

Police action in Nagarhole

In the second incident of its kind in two years, the police has assaulted a group of tribal families while trying to dislocate them from the Nagarhole National Park. The incident took place on the 23rd of July when FD personnel entered the Kolengere tribal settlement inside Nagarhole to forcefully move the 30 families here to the rehabilitation site at Veeranhosalli on the fringes of the park. Some of the people have been badly injured and had to be admitted to the Government hospital at Gonikoppal.

Source: Roy David. Email dated to 01/08/2000.

Contact: **Roy David**, CORD, 119 / 1, 4th Block, Kushalnagar – 571234, Karnataka. Tel: 08276-74487/73287. Fax: 74091. Email: david@giasbl01.vsnl.net.in
DCF (WL), Hunsur, Wildlife Preservation Division, PO Hunsur, Mysore - 571105

3 predator species at same density level in Nagarhole

Studies by Dr. Ullas Karanth of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) have revealed that three predator species, the tiger, leopard and wild dog are found at same density levels in the Nagarhole National Park. That a single forest area supports same density levels of 3 predator animals is considered an uncommon occurrence.

Dr. Karanth has attributed this to the fact that there are prey species of different sizes found in Nagarhole. Kaziranga NP has the highest density of large prey at 16.9 animals per sq. km., followed by Pench (11.0), Nagarhole (8.7) and Kanha (4.5).

Source: R Krishna Kumar. '3 predator species at same density level in Nagarhole', *The Hindu*, 03/06/2000.

Contact: **Dr. Ullas Karanth**, WCS, India Programme, 403 Seebo Apts, 26/2 Aga Abbas Ali Road, Bangalore – 560042, Karnataka. Tel: 080-5591747/ 1990.

Email: wcsind@bgl.vsnl.net.in

Elephant poaching in Bandipur

Three juvenile elephants were shot dead in the core area in the Bandipur National Park in June, earlier this year. Two carcasses with the tusks missing were first found in the Maddur range of the park. The poaching came to light following an exchange of fire between the gang of poachers and members of an anti-poaching team of the Forest Department (FD). The poachers however could not be apprehended.

The discovery of the third carcass was made a few days later, during an intense combing operation in the forests following the killing of the earlier two elephants. This time too there was exchange of fire, but there was no success in apprehending anyone.

The killings of the elephants have again revealed the sorry state of patrolling in the forests of Karnataka. It has also been admitted that forest staff are very badly equipped to handle situations like this, and there is a need for more and better arms to be provided to the staff.

Source: S. Bharath Kumar. 'Poachers kill two juvenile elephants', *The Hindu*, 21/06/2000.

S. Bharath Kumar. 'One more elephant shot dead in Bandipur', *The Hindu*, 25/06/2000.

Contact: **Field Director**, Bandipur TR, Aranya Bhavan, Ashokapuram, Wood Yard, Mysore-570008, Karnataka. Tel: 0821-480875. Fax: 480901.

Mining lease in Kudremukh extended

The Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd. (KIOCL) has been granted another year's lease extension to continue mining in the areas of the Kudremukh National Park (see *Updates* 25, 23, 22, 21 and 20). Widescale protests from national and some international organisations could not influence the decision in favour of the continued mining. Recently religious leaders like Sri Vishweshwara Theertha Swami of Pejawar Math, Udipi and Sri Bharathi Theertha Swami of Sri Sharada Peetam. Sringeri had also expressed their opposition to the extension of the mining lease.

Even a huge iron ore slurry leak from a KIOCL pipeline inside the forests here (see following story item) could not prevent the lease from being extended. In responses to protest notes sent to him, the Chief Minister of Karnataka, SM

Krishna sent assurances that the matter would be looked into. However, once the lease was extended the State Forest Minister, KH Ranganath, issued a clarification that the decision to extend the lease was not taken by his government, but was handled by the Union Ministry for Environment and Forests.

Source: 'Extension of mining lease to KIOCL opposed', *The Hindu*, 18/06/2000.
M Raghuram. 'Leak in KIOCL pipeline worsens', *The Hindu*, 20/07/2000.
'Vimochana Ranga to protest in Bangalore', *The Hindu*, 22/07/2000.
SK Ramoo. 'KIOCL mining lease renewed despite protests', *The Hindu*, 26/07/2000.
'State has no hand in extending KIOCL lease', *The Hindu*, 31/07/2000.

Contact: **DCF (WL)**, Kudremukh Wildlife Division, Karkala – 574104, Karnataka.
SA Hussain, Biodiversity Initiative Trust, 'Basera', Amar Alva Road, Monkey Stand, Mangalore – 575001, Karnataka.
Email: sahbird@vsnl.com
Leo Saldanha ESG (R), S-3, Rajashree Apartments, 18/57, 1st Main Road, SRK Gardens, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore - 560041, Karnataka. Fax: 91-80-6723926 (PP). Email: esg@bgl.vsnl.net.in
Karnataka Vimochana Ranga (KVR), C/o Shree Electronics, Opp Anjaneyaswamy Temple, Bharathi Street, Shringeri- 577139, Karnataka.
KVR – Bangalore, C/o BG Krishnamurthy, No. 36, 2nd cross, Okalipura, 1st stage, Bangalore-560021, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3382778 (PP)
Nagarika Seva Trust, Grace Villa No 514, 5th Cross, 7th Main, HMT Layout, RP Nagar, Bangalore – 560032, Karnataka.
Tel / Fax: 080 – 3535532 / 679.
Email: nst@vsnl.com

Iron ore slurry leak from KIOCL pipeline

There has been a serious leak of iron ore slurry from a KIOCL pipeline that passes through the Kudremukh National Park. The situation was worsened because of incessant rains. The slurry has badly polluted the Yennehole river, the main source of drinking water for 27 villages that are based on its banks. A 12 member study team from the Karnataka Vimochana Ranga (KVR) recently visited the area to study the impact of the slurry leak. According to them the pollution in the river has to be seen to be believed. Thick layers of slurry could be seen floating in the river making the water completely unfit for consumption. The seriousness of the leakage which was noticed at Kanyalu in Karkala taluka can be gauged from the fact that on

the 26th of July the leakage was as much as 4000 tonnes against the transportation capacity of the pipeline of 15,000 tonnes. According to local people fish and frogs have been badly affected, and have all but vanished from the river. The likely reason for this is that the Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) and the Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) of the river water have come down drastically because of the pollution.

The 97 Km long pipeline was laid between Kudremukh and Mangalore Port 30 years ago to transport iron slurry. It now appears to have lived its life considering there are leakages from it at various points. The repair of the pipeline continues to be low on the agenda of KIOCL, and is likely to be undertaken only if the mining lease is extended to another 20 years.

Source: M Raghuram. 'Leak in KIOCL pipeline worsens', *The Hindu*, 20/07/2000.
Alladi Jayasri. 'PM urged not to extend KIOCL mining lease', *The Hindu*, 23/07/2000.
Pramod Mellegatti. 'Slurry leak causes incalculable damage', *The Hindu*, 07/08/2000.

Contact: **Leo Saldanha**, (see above)
Karnataka Vimochana Ranga, (see above)

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

KERALA

Elephant electrocuted in Periyar

A pregnant female elephant was electrocuted in the Periyar Tiger Reserve when she came in contact with a sagging power line near the Mullapperiyar dam. This is the ninth such incident in the reserve since 1987 and a total of 11 elephants have been killed in this manner.

In 1998 a tiger cub too had been electrocuted at the same spot. The place where these deaths occur most frequently is Edappalayam, where a three km long transmission line traverses the forests to provide electricity to the Lake Palace, a five star hotel managed by the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation. Eight accidents and 10 elephant deaths have been reported from this particular area itself.

Source: 'Elephant electrocuted in Periyar Reserve', *The Hindu*, 23/06/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Aranya Bhavan, Forest Complex, SH Mount, PO

Kottayam – 686006, Kerala. Tel: 0481-505940

Tourism project adjoining Idukki

The Kerala Revenue Department has decided to hand over 741 hectares of ecologically sensitive high altitude grasslands in the Elappara and Vagamon villages in Idukki district to set up a 'tourism resort of international standards'. The terrain forms part of the over 1,100 hectares of the grassland earlier known as the Vagamon estate.

In fact, a couple of years ago, the Kerala FD had sent a proposal to the government to add this region to the adjoining Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary. While that request is still pending, the land is now being allotted for the tourism project.

Source: P Venugopal. 'Tourism project in eco-sensitive area', *The Hindu*, 03/07/2000.

Contact: **Range Officer**, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady, Dist. Idukki, Kerala.

ADB to fund creation of new marine park

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed in principle to fund a marine national park in Kerala. The funding will be done subject to certain conditions. It will be based on a combination of programmes such as poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation and the participation of the coastal population as stakeholders.

The Bank will provide Rs. 15 lakhs initially, for a detailed scientific study to finalise a project report. Officials from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi, Central Water Development Agency, Kozhikode, the State Forest Department (FD) and some universities will be asked to prepare the report. The exact location will be decided based on the final proposal of the study team. The ADB has plans for similar parks in 11 other Asian countries.

Source: 'ADB to fund marine park', *Business Standard*, 22/04/2000.

Contact: **CMFRI**, PB 1603, Tatapuram, PO Kochi-682014, Kerala. Tel: 0484-394867. Fax: 394909. Email:

mdc_cmfri@400.nicgw.nic.in

ADB, PO Box 3019, Lodi Rd. HPO, New Delhi – 110003. Tel: 011- 4692578. Fax: 4636175. Email: adbirm@adb.org.

Website: www.adbindia.org

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden** – Kerala, Vazhudacaud, Trivandrum – 695014, Kerala. Tel: 0471-322217 / 204896. Fax: 325804.

MADHYA PRADESH

NGO seeks creation of a Wildlife Security Force in state

A Bhopal based NGO, Crusade for Survival of Environment and Wildlife (CREW), has recommended the creation of a Wildlife Protection Security Force and a prosecution agency in Madhya Pradesh for the enforcement of forest related laws. The organisation has released a report on the state of wildlife in the state; 'The Vanishing Stripes – II'

The report also discusses other issues including the pending final notification of the Pench National Park, the continuing 'tiger shows' for 'high profile' state guests, and the diversion of forest and protected areas land for non forestry projects like in Madhav National Park (Mohinisagar dam) and Nauradehi Sanctuary (Nirandapur Irrigation project).

Source: Yogesh Vajpeyi. 'Report says MP tiger habitat going to dogs, seeks force', *Indian Express*, 03/07/2000.

Contact: **Ritesh Sharma**, CREW, E 3/8, Arera Colony, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

Programme by tribal villagers in Bori to conserve trees

Tribal villagers in and around the Bori Wildlife Sanctuary in Hoshangabad district have come together in a promising effort to conserve the fruit bearing trees in the forests here. Breaking branches or unripe fruits from trees like *mahua*, *amla* and mango has been prohibited and those caught violating the rules are fined by the villagers. There will also be rotational patrolling of the forests.

The initiative began last year after the Kisan Adivasi Sangathan (KAS) called a meeting of 17 villages of the area to discuss the issue. A decision to take collective action was taken in meeting held on May 4, 1999. The decision was then printed and circulated to all the villages in the area. A fine of Rs. 551 has been fixed as a penalty for the violation of the decision and an award of Rs. 251 as an award for anyone providing information of the violations or for helping to apprehend the violators.

Similar initiatives have been reported from other villages in the area as well.

Source: Fagram, Kisan Adivasi Sangathan. Letter from dated 24/04/2000.

Contact: **Fagram / Sunil**, Kisan Adivasi Sangathan, AT/PO Kesla, via Itarsi, Dist. Hoshangabad - 461111, Madhya Pradesh

Butterfly survey in Kanha

Recent surveys by the Central Region Station, Zoological Survey of India (CRS, ZSI) have yielded some new species of butterflies from the Kanha National Park. Three species have been reported for the first time from the park, whereas one has been reported for the first time from Madhya Pradesh.

In 1995, seven butterfly species were reported from the park. This number has now risen to 19 species in 11 genera and 4 families.

The butterfly survey was part of larger survey that is being carried out by the CRS, ZSI in the park.

Source: 'Kanha, abode for rare species of butterflies', *Central Chronicle*, 2/05/2000.

Contact: **Dr. RK Singh**, CRS, ZSI, 424, New Adarsh Colony, Kamla Nehru Nagar, Jabalpur-482002, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 0761-315592

Director, Kanha National Park, Mandla – 481661, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 07642-50760/61.

State allows hunting of *neelgai*

The MP State Government has decided to allow hunting of *neelgai*, as they are becoming a serious menace to crops. It is estimated that the population of *neelgai* in the state has increased rapidly from 14,000 two years ago to nearly 20,000 today. Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have already allowed the killing of *neelgai*. (Also see HIMACHAL PRADESH; State to take steps to curb wildlife menace).

The MP government is also planning to allow the killing of wild boar in the near future.

Source: News item on www.rediff.com dated 05.06/2000.

Contact: **CWLW**, MP, Van Bhawan, Tulsi Nagar Bhopal 462003, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 0755-557371/ 550391. Fax: 011-761102.

MAHARASHTRA

Demolitions in Sanjay Gandhi NP put off.

The Bombay High Court has put off the demolitions of the encroachments to the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), Borivli for the period June 15 to September 31, the monsoon season. The court also extended by two weeks the time to the encroachers to avail of the relocation scheme that has been offered by the government. (Also see *Updates* 25, 24, 23, and 22)

Source: 'State govt. calls off slum demolitions in National Park', *The Times of India*, 15/06/2000.

'Borivli demolitions to be put off', *Indian Express*, 15/06/2000.

Contact: **DFO**, Sanjay Gandhi Rashtriya Udyan, Borivli (E), Mumbai – 400066, Maharashtra.

Nivara Hakk Suraksha Samiti, Sankalp Bldg, 5th Floor, Plot 1040 off Sayani Rd. Prabhadevi, Mumbai – 400025, Maharashtra. Tel: 022 – 4227690.

Debi Goenka, BEAG, 4, Kurla Industrial Estate, LBS Marg, Mumbai – 400086, Maharashtra. Tel: 022 – 5798638. Fax: 5771459 Email: debi.beag@softhome.net

State launches forest website

The Maharashtra State Forest Department has launched its own website, www.mahaforest.gov.in which will also have information on various national parks and sanctuaries in the state.

Source: 'Forest website launched', *The Times of India*, 10/06/2000.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden** – Maharashtra, Jaika Building, Civil Lines, Nagpur – 440001, Maharashtra. Tel: 0712 – 526758 / 530126.

ORISSA

Boundaries of Bhitarkanika to be redefined; evictions opposed

The government has issued a notification redefining the boundaries of the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary in Kendrapara district. The notice issued under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act (WLPA) - 1972 has extended the boundaries of the sanctuary to cover 401 villages under the Aul, Rajnagar, Pattamundai and Mahakalpada police stations.

This would mean the sanctuary would now extend from Mahurigaon bordering Bhadrak District to the Dhamra confluence of the Bay of Bengal coast in North Wheeler's island and Nasi and Babubali isles in the east.

The notice asks those who possess land within the revised boundary to submit a record of rights in support of their land. While divesting people's rights, it vests exclusive rights with the forest department.

There is the fear, that as a result of this latest development more than 75,000 people will be evicted from the area. The Rajnagar Bikash Sangram Samiti has opposed the notification and threatened to start an agitation against the relocation

of the people.

Source: '75,000 face eviction from Bhitarkanika',
Statesman, 22/05/2000.

Contact: **Banka Behary Das**, Orissa Krushak
Mahasangh, 14, Ashok Nagar,
Bhubaneshwar 751 009, Orissa. Tel:
0674-409125 / 404222.

Plan to restore ecosystem of Chilika

Over the years the Chilika lake has been silting up due to the choking of its outer channel and mouth opening into the sea. A project of the Chilika Development Authority (CDA), to rectify the situation is now nearing completion. As a part of this project which was started in February 1998, a three Km long lead channel is being dredged that will link the lake and the outer channel. This will facilitate water exchange and salinity flux between the sea and the lake.

It is reported that the area of the lake has shrunk from 824 sq. kms to the present 790 sq. kms in the last two decades. Siltation has also made the lake shallower in many parts and the salinity of the lake too has decreased drastically from the normal 15 parts per thousand (ppt) to the between 2-5 ppt today.

Studies by the Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS), Pune and the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa have revealed that the mouth of the inlet channel has been continuously shifting and its cross section has been reduced because of the tidal influx into the lake. Siltation and reduction in salinity have also increased eutrophication and growth of fresh water weeds. Satellite studies have revealed that as a result of the weed growth from 20 sq. kms in 1973 to 398 sq. kms today, area available for fishing in the lake has decreased substantially.

Source: Debabrata Mohanty. 'Plan to restore ecosystem of Chilika', *Hindustan Times*, 27/05/2000.

Fishing in Chilika affects dolphins

There are reports that fishing in the Chilika lake using fishing nets is adversely affecting the endangered Irrawady dolphins here. The North Eastern part of the lake, supports a small population of these animals within the area between the mouth of the Chilika at Arakhuda and the opening of the outer channel at Magarmukh. However the spread of fishing nets along the entire breadth of the lake is obstructing the free movement of the dolphins and has resulted in their being confined to small isolated pockets. Local administration says that they are unable to remove the nets due to strong political

pressure that the villagers are able to bring on them.

Source: Email from Anup Nayak
bravo_123@satyam.net.in

Contact: **Anup Nayak**, DFO (WL), Chilika,
1865/66 Nuasahi Nayapalli (near Sub PO),
Bhubaneshwar – 751012. Orissa. Email:
bravo_123@satyam.net.in

Akhand shikar in Simlipal

There have been reports of mass hunts by tribals inside the Simlipal Tiger Reserve starting on April 15, synchronising with *Chaitra Sankranti* celebrations. These annual, ritual mass hunts are an important part of the tribal culture, but in recent years there have been attempts to wean away the tribals from this because of the large damage caused to the forests and wildlife (see *Updates 21 and 17*)

Source: Poornima Joshi. 'Hunting by tribals keeps foresters on their toes', *Hindustan Times*, 21/05/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Simlipal Tiger Reserve Field
Near Murgabadi Square, At / P.O
Baripada, Dist : Mayurbhanj, Orissa.

Plea to declare Sunabeda a Tiger Reserve.

The 'Wild Orissa' Society recently conducted a six day survey of the Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary, as part of a World Wide Fund for Nature – Tiger Conservation Programme (WWF- TCP) funded tiger survey in the area. The survey team found proof of large variety of wildlife including large mammals like tiger, leopard, sambar and cheetal in the area. The Society has pointed out that this area is very rich and should be considered for inclusion in Project Tiger.

Source: Basant Kumar Kar. 'Wild Orissa's visit to Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary'. Report received on email from Wild Orissa.

Politicians picnic inside Chandka

Nearly 1000 people including the Chief Minister of Orissa, Navin Patnaik recently had a picnic at Kumarkhunti deep inside Chandka Wildlife Sanctuary. Two makeshift tents were erected for this at Kumarkhunti and special cooks were brought from Bhubaneshwar to prepare the food. Several vehicles belonging to the Bhubaneshwar Municipal Corporation were organised to transport the VIPs from the state assembly to the venue inside the sanctuary, but most of the politicians drove in their own vehicles or government cars.

The activities reportedly caused a panic in a herd of elephant that happened to come close to

the site of the picnic. The Chandka sanctuary was recently in the news when a herd of elephants from the sanctuary entered Bhubaneswar and damaged a few houses. This kind of incident has been attributed to increasing human activity in the sanctuary according to wildlife activists.

Source: Rajaram Satpathy. 'Animals panic as Naveen and company picnic, poach on wildlife sanctuary rules', *The Times of India*, 27/07/2000.
ST Beuria. *Deccan Herald*, 27/7/2000.
'Feast in sanctuary creates controversy', *The Hindu*, 28/07/2000.

Poachers kill tusker in Satkosia

A notorious gang of poachers recently shot dead a tusker in the Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary. The poachers were unable to remove the tusks as forest officials were able to reach the spot and opened fire. Wildlife groups in the area have pointed out that most of mature tuskers found in the forests here have been shot down by this well organised gang.

Source: Biswajit Mohanty. Email dated 29/07/2000.
Rajaram Satapathy. 'Tusker shot dead in Orissa', *The Times of India*, 31/07/2000.
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

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden – Orissa**, Plot No. 8, Shahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar – 751007, Orissa. Tel: 0674-513134 / 515840. Fax: 512502.

PUNJAB

Army to assist in project for Harike

Following a request from the Punjab Government, the army will launch a pilot project to check the degradation of the Harike Lake Wildlife Sanctuary. The main problems facing the 148 sq. kms lake include choking by water hyacinth, pollution, poaching and encroachments which has resulted in reduction of the surface area and depth of the lake. Under 'Project Sahyog', the army will clear demarcated zones of the dying wetland. It will set up three task forces with three teams each for the purpose. Each team will have a strength of 10 combatants and 24 civilian labourers equipped with two motorboats, tractor trailers and other requisite mechanical equipment. The estimated cost of Rs. 75 lakhs will be met by the State Government. The project is being undertaken by the state government

under the aegis of a larger Rs. 40 crore project that is being funded by the World Bank. (also see *Update 25* and 18)

Source: 'Project to save wetlands', *Tribune*, 21/04/2000.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden -Punjab**, SCD, 2463 – 64, Sector B-C, Chandigarh. Tel: 0172 – 705828.

RAJASTHAN

Cheetal deaths in Ranthambhor

At least a dozen *cheetal* have reportedly been found dead at different locations in and around the Ranthambhor National Park. According to preliminary information available five animals found dead near Khandar, adjacent to the park were suspected to have died of tuberculosis. According to the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) of the state, the deer could have been infected through contact with cattle by sharing water from the same water hole.

Seven other cheetal who were found dead at two different locations near the park are suspected to have fallen prey to the village dogs. Experts are however skeptical of this explanation as the dogs are normally no match for the fast running cheetal. Samples from the dead animals have been sent to the laboratory for tests to ascertain the exact reasons for the deaths.

Source: Rajesh Sinha. '12 cheetals die in Ranthambhor', *Indian Express*, 11/07/2000.

Contact: **Director**, Ranthambhor TR, Sawai Madhopur – 322001, Rajasthan. Tel: 07462-20223

Monkeys not welcome in Sariska

Forest department officials in Sariska Tiger Reserve have opposed the plans of the Jaipur Municipal Corporation to translocate rhesus macaques from the city to the forests here. The macaques have reportedly become a big nuisance in the city..

The park authorities have pointed out that the simians were not welcome in Sariska because they were a nuisance to tourists here as well. Importantly, deaths of wild animals in the park in the recent past have been linked to infections that the monkeys may have carried to the park from the city environs.

The park authorities have also undertaken the task of catching the monkeys here and releasing them in the wild in the neighbouring districts of Dholpur and Bharatpur. So far 300 monkeys have been caught and moved from Sariska. This move too has been opposed by animal lovers and the

villagers of these two districts.

According to another report one tiger cub too has died in Sariska due to a liver infection.

Source: Prakash Bhandari. 'Monkey trouble at Sariska sanctuary', *The Times of India*, 07/06/2000.

Rajesh Sinha. 'Sariska shuts door on Jaipur monkeys', *Indian Express*, 12/06/2000.

Prakash Bhandari. 'Monkeys pose danger to tigers in Sariska', *The Times of India*, 13/06/2000.

Vijay Thakur. 'Nandankanans brewing in Rajasthan', *The Statesman*, 10/07/2000.

Contact: **Tejbir Singh**, Director, Sariska Tiger Reserve, Sariska, Alwar – 301022, Rajasthan. Tel: 0144 – 41333.

Rajendra Singh, Tarun Bharat Sangh, Bhikampur – Kishori, via Thanagazi, Alwar – 301002, Rajasthan. Tel: 01465 – 25043.

Tigress spotted in Keoladeo Ghana NP

In a development that has excited everyone, a tigress has been spotted in the Keoladeo Ghana National Park. The cat was first spotted by scientists of the Bombay Natural History Society, who have been studying birds of prey here. According to official records, the last tiger was hunted in Bharatpur in 1962.

The Director of the park, Shruti Sharma has confirmed the sighting. She added, she believes that the tigress has been around for about eight months. It is not clear however, where the animal came from and how it reached here.

Source: Rajesh Sinha. 'Big cat spotted in Ghana Bird Sanctuary', *Indian Express*, 31/07/2000.

Atul Kumar. Email dated 31/07/2000. 'Tigress in Bharatpur', www.tehelka.com, 01/08/2000.

Contact: **Shruti Sharma**, Director, Keoladeo Ghana NP, Forest Department Bharatpur 321001, Rajasthan. Tel: 05644-22777 / 22824. Fax: 22555.

TAMIL NADU

Fragmentation of forests impacts herpetofauna in Annamalai Hills

Studies by the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), Coimbatore, has revealed there has been a significant change in the herpetofauna due to the fragmentation of the rain forests in the Annamalai Hills. Data from forest fragments in the hills was compared to data from

the contiguous forests of the Kalakad – Munduntharai Tiger Reserve (KMTR). There was a significant decline in the abundance of amphibians in the forest fragments and an increase in the abundance of reptiles. Forest fragments also showed a low species richness, both in amphibians and reptiles. This also showed a correlation with fragment area, and was lower than in the forests of KMTR.

Source: 'Impact of fragmentation on rain forest herpetofauna'. Annual Report: 1999 – 2000, SACON.

Contact: **Dr. Ajith Kumar**, SACON, Anaikatty, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 0422 – 857102 – 106. Fax: 857088. Email: salimali@vsnl.com

Chief Wildlife Warden-TN, 6D, Panagal Building, Jeenis Road, Saidapet, Chennai – 600022, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 044 – 4321738.

UTTAR PRADESH

Controlling hoplo in Rajaji

The UP forest department (UPFD) has embarked upon an exercise in the Rajaji National Park to save the 6 odd lakh sal trees in the park from the insect hoplo, whose numbers have increased alarmingly in the last few months. The one inch long winged insect is a native of sal forests and destroys the tree by burrowing in its bark and stems, causing it to dry up. The FD has resorted to the 'trap tree method' to check this spread. Young sal trees are hewed and the bark cut into small pieces which are then scattered in the region where the insects abound. The liquid that oozes out emits an odour, which attracts the insects. The insects feed on the sap and get intoxicated, which makes it easy to capture and kill them. Young local boys have been pressed into service for capturing and killing the insects, for which they are paid 75 paise per insect.

The exercise which was scheduled to begin in July had to be advanced on account of pre-monsoon showers. Till date three trees have been felled leading to the killing 18,000 hoplos. The total investment in the exercise is estimated to be Rs. 10 lakh and the FD has also taken the permission of the Supreme Court for felling of 160 trees.

Contact: **Director**, Rajaji National Park, Shivalik House, Dehradun- 248001, Uttar Pradesh. Website: www.rajajinationalpark.com
Chief Wildlife Warden-UP, 17, Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow - 226001, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0522-283864. Fax: 283868.

WEST BENGAL

State government non-committal on nuclear

plant in Sundarbans

The West Bengal power minister was non committal on the proposal to set up a nuclear power plant in the Sundarbans during a debate on the power department budget in the state assembly recently. He has however made it clear that he is in favour of the plant, and that issues like those of nuclear waste disposal were no real problem.

It may be recalled that the state government had recently proposed the construction of the power plant and that there has been widespread opposition to the move (see *Update* 25).

Source: 'West Bengal govt. non – committal on N-power project', *The Times of India*, 12/07/2000.

Contact: **Pradip Dutta / Nilanjan Dutta**, Safe Energy and Environment (SEE), 28 Nazrul Park, PO Aswininagar, Calcutta – 700059, West Bengal. Email:

pakai@cal2.vsnl.net.in;

ndutta@cal2.vsnl.net.in

Director, Sundarbans TR, PO Canning Town, Dist. 24 Parganas-743329, West Bengal. Tel: 03218-55280/721683

Tiger attacks on humans on the rise

A census conducted in January in the Sundarbans, Terai and Duars regions in West Bengal has indicated that the incidence of tiger attacks on human beings is on the rise. Whereas the number of people killed by tigers in 1997 was reported to be six it had increased to 14 in 1999. The major reason attributed to this is the massive deforestation that is going on and the resultant reduction in the habitat for wildlife.

Source: Abhinaba Chatterjee. 'Attacks by tigers on humans on the rise: report', *The Times of India*, 24/07/2000.

Contact: **CWLW**, Government of West Bengal, Vikas Bhawan, North Block, Salt Lake, Calcutta 700 091, West Bengal. Tel: 033-3346900/3583208. Fax: 3345946. Email: wildlife@cal.vsnl.net.in

NATIONAL NEWS

Paramilitary force, special agency to tackle poaching, wildlife crimes

In an unprecedented move the Union Ministry for Environment and Forests has asked State

Governments to engage the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), Border Security Force (BSF) or any other additional force to deal with poachers, dacoits and militants operating in forests and protected areas.

In response, various states have made demands for PAs in their states. Madhya Pradesh has asked for forces for the Kanha and Bandavgarh National Parks, while Bihar has asked for the same for the Valmiki Tiger Reserve.

The Union Government has also identified a number of parks from across the country for the deployment of these forces. These include Manas and Kaziranga in Assam, Indravati in Madhya Pradesh and forest stretches bordering Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, where Veerapan and his gang of timber smugglers is active.

Another decision taken by the Union Ministry involves the setting up of forest police stations. The Union Home Ministry has already been consulted on this and talks are on with the Law Ministry to make necessary changes to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). According to senior officials in the Ministry, the idea behind the move for forest police stations is to provide legal immunity to the forest department to defend its turf. The Union Minister, Mr. TR Baalu recently also informed the Rajya Sabha that an 'exclusive agency' is proposed for the investigation of wildlife crimes.

Source: Ajay Suri. 'Paramilitary forces will now hunt for poachers', *Indian Express*, 19/05/2000.

'Govt. plans special agency to tackle wildlife crimes', *Indian Express*, 28/07/2000.

Contact: **SC Sharma**, Addl. IGF, MoEF, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodi Estate, New Delhi – 110003. Tel: 011-4362285.

'Wetland Protected Areas Network'

Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), Coimbatore, has initiated a project for the designing of a 'Freshwater Wetland Protected Area Network' for the country. It is to be done by integrating past mapping results with select image processing and will be followed by extensive ground truthing and field measurement of ecological and socio-economic variables.. The programme also aims at developing a comprehensive data and information base through inventory preparation, mapping and classification of inland wetlands spanning above 3 hectares in the country. This is being considered critical in developing a sustainable programme for wetland biodiversity conservation, an essential requirement of Contracting Parties of

the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

18/05/2000.

Source: 'Wetland Conservation', Annual Report: 1999 – 2000, SACON.

Contact: **Dr. SN Prasad**, SACON, see above.

Meeting on tiger conservation in the western region held

A meeting was held on June 4 in Mumbai to take stock of the status of the tiger and the possible steps that need to be taken to protect the species in the western region, comprising Maharashtra and adjoining states, principally in the Western Ghats and the Satpura Ranges.

The meeting was attended by representatives of various organisations like WWF – I, the WWF – Tiger Conservation Programme, BNHS, Ranthambhor Foundation and Kalpavriksh.. Forest Department officials including the CWLW of Karnataka also participated.

The participants agreed that a special tiger (protection) cell should be set up to initiate and coordinate action.

Contact: **Ashish Fernandes**, Sanctuary, 602, Maker Chambers V, Nariman Point, Mumbai – 400021, Maharashtra, Tel: 022- 2830061 / 81. Fax: 2874380. Email: cree@bom2.vsnl.net.in

SOUTH ASIA

BANGLADESH

Threats to Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary

The Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, some 70 kms south of the city of Chittagong, is facing a wide range of problems which includes negligence by authorities, indiscriminate felling of trees, encroachment by influential individuals and large scale poaching of endangered animals.

Considering the deteriorating situation in the sanctuary, a member of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and former Honorary Wildlife Warden of the sanctuary, Mr. Luftar Rahman has suggested that the Forest Department (FD), with a competent management set up should take care of the sanctuary or it should be handed over to some 'private organisations' who would be interested in developing the sanctuary.

Source: 'Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary needs Govt. patronisation'. *Bangladesh Observer*,

BHUTAN

Increasing livestock depredation by wild animals

Depredation of livestock by wild animals in Bhutan is increasing rapidly and has become an area of major concern here. According to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) over 100 yaks were killed in 1999 alone from one area, Laya. This has also been reported from in and around protected areas like the Jigme Dorji National Park.

A two day workshop 'Livestock Depredation by Wildlife in the Mountain Region' was recently organised in Thimpu, in May, to address this issue.

The attempt of the workshop was to formulate a country wide strategy to address the depredation issue and develop a system to authenticate and account for livestock mortality, and also to investigate the pattern and underlying causes for the increasing livestock mortality rates.

Over 25 Bhutanese officials attending the workshop said that resolving such conflicts was 'urgent and critical because protected areas would only work if they had the support of the people living in and around them.'

Source: Thuji Lhamu. 'Livestock increasingly threatened by wild animals', *Kuensel Weekly, Bhutan*, 13/05/2000.

NEPAL

Eco-tourism meetings in Nepal

Two meetings 'Green hotels and Eco-labelling in Tourism Industry' and 'Conservation of Protected Areas and its co-relation with tourism in Nepal' were recently organised. The former seminar was organised by the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) and the Bureau of Standards and Metrology. The second was organised by the Society of Population and Environment Journalists (SOPEJ) – Nepal. Both the meetings stressed on the fact that the need of the day was the promotion of sustainable tourism and its effective regulation so that it does not impact the ecology of the areas.

In another development, the King Mahindra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC) doubled the entry fees to the Annapurna and Manaslu conservation areas. The Trekking Agents Association of Nepal (TAAN) has opposed this decision saying that all their trekking and tour packages are generally booked an year in advance and as a result the brunt of the fee hike will have to be borne by the agents.

Source: 'Eco-labelling of hotels and resorts stressed', *Kathmandu Post*, 12/05/2000.
'Experts for Tourism', *Kathmandu Post*, 12/05/2000.
'TAAN flays entry fee hikes in conservation areas', *Kathmandu Post*, 24/05/2000.

Elephant havoc around Chitwan

Wild elephants have caused wide scale damage around the Royal Chitwan National Park (RCNP), since mid-February earlier this year.

Crops and houses have been damaged at ward-8 Krishna Nagar of Ayodhyapuri Village Development Committee (VDC), and ward-9 of Govindbasti VDC. Similarly on March 23, a tiger also killed a bull of one of the residents of Govindbasti. The residents of the two VDCs have complained about the RCNP's failure to provide help to the locals whose houses and crops have been destroyed.

Source: 'Elephant havoc in Chitwan', *Kathmandu Post*, 01/04/2000.

Rhino population increases

The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) conducted the rhino census in the Chitwan and Bardia National Parks in the month of April. The census was financed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) and is the first census that has been conducted by Nepali technicians.

The census has revealed that the rhino population in Nepal has increased from 446 in 1994 to 612 today.

Source: 'Rhino census gets underway', *Kathmandu Post*, 02/04/2000.

Gopal Sharma. 'Rhino population increases in Nepal – study', *Reuters*, 30/05/2000.

Wild water buffaloes under threat in Koshi Tappu

The estimated 200 wild water buffaloes that still survive in the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve are under threat from the large number of domestic buffaloes that roam in and around the grasslands of this reserve.

The reserve's warden has estimated that the total number of domestic buffaloes co-existing with the wild ones in and around Koshi Tappu is between 5000 to 7000. Part of the reason for this is the fact that since olden times herders from surrounding villages (including from Bihar in India)

have left their cattle to graze in the forests and grasslands here.

As a result, some naturalists believe that there are no 'pure' wild buffaloes left in the wilds of Koshi Tappu.

Source: Surendra Phuyal. 'Wild water buffaloes coming under threat', *Kathmandu Post*, 16/04/2000. .

Contact: (for all above) **Director**, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, PO Box 860, Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: + 977 1 227675. Fax: 250850.

SRI LANKA

Eco-tourism plan opposed

Wildlife and nature conservation groups in Sri Lanka have expressed opposition to an eco-tourism project that the Sri Lankan government is undertaking with funding from the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). An agreement to this effect was signed recently. The Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS) and the Environmental Foundation Limited (EFL) have said that the project involves the promotion of eco-tourism by allowing the private sector to set up hotels close to the borders of national parks and that this would adversely affect the wildlife and habitats here. Nature reserves at Giritale and Minneriya are the first to come under this programme and this will be followed by Yala, Udawalawe and Wasgamuwa.

They have warned that water for the hotels would have to be obtained from deep wells and this would affect the water table in and around the protected areas. There are also fears of increased pollution and growing human populations along the borders of the parks.

There is the additional fear that the entire management of the parks is to be privatised. The organisations have demanded that community service organisations should be allowed to play a bigger role in the buffer zones of the parks and that funds collected at the gates should be used entirely for the development of the parks.

Source: Chittaranjan de Silva. 'Conservationists protest against privatisation of nature reserves', *The Island*, 19/05/2000.

Rogue elephants to be relocated

Around 20 rogue elephants causing problems to villagers in various parts of Sri Lanka were to be captured and relocated to national parks. The operation was to be conducted in April by a 16 member team.

In the past the captured elephants would be released to the nearest national park, but they would invariably come back. As a result this time it was decided that the elephants would be relocated to national parks with no passage to their usual haunts.

Source: Tharika Goonathilake. 'Rogue elephants to be relocated', *Daily News*, 06/04/2000.

UPCOMING

XXIII International Ornithological Congress

The XXIII International Ornithological Congress (IOC) is to be held in Beijing, China from 11 – 17 August, 2002. A call for contributions has been issued by the organising authorities.

Contact: **IOC, Walter J Bock**, 1200 Amsterdam Avenue, Mail Box 5521. Tel: 1- 212 - 854 - 4487. Fax: 1-212-865-8246. Email: wb4@columbia.edu

Workshop on legal issues in PAs

Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad, has organised a workshop on Legal Issues Relating to Protected Areas as part of its Teach and Learn Environmental Education Modules (TALEEM) programme. The workshop is being organised in Pune from August 28 to September 1, 2000. This is a follow up to a recommendation made at the 4th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and Peoples Livelihood Rights that was held from April 15-17, 2000 in BRT Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnataka.

It will include presentations and discussions led by eminent professionals and academicians working in the field of environmental law; analysis of case experiences in legal action taken for protecting PAs, and a field trip to a PA.

Contact: **Programme Officer**, TALEEM, CEE, Nehru Foundation for Development, Thaltej Tekra, Ahmedabad-380054. Tel: 079-6442642 / 6442651. Fax: 6420242. Email: ceeindia@vsnl.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vacancies at Wildlife Trust of India

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), is a non-profit

conservation organisation, committed to urgent action that prevents destruction of India's wildlife. WTI has invited applications for the following posts. All posts are Delhi based:

1. Programme Officer, Rapid Action Project

The Officer is expected to pro-actively and independently react to wildlife emergencies across the country in conjunction with WTI's regional partners. The candidate should have a wildlife biology background with at least 2 years field experience or at least 5 years experience in co-ordinating wildlife conservation action.

2. Programme Officer, Van Rakshak Project

The Van Rakshak project is designed to support those who protect our forests. It envisages to train, equip and boost the morale of India's 50,000 odd forest guards. The programme officer post is primarily a traveling position and will involve field assessments of needs, working out distribution and post-distribution monitoring.

3. Co-ordinator, Wild Species

The Wild Species programme deals with species conservation efforts combining the outputs of other WTI programmes with unique conservation strategies that are relevant to particular species. Currently two species-specific projects are being undertaken on the Asian elephant and the Tibetan antelope with more on the anvil.

4. Wild Lands Coordinator

The mission of the Wild Lands programme is to create a buffer to the already existing protected areas of the country by catalysing the identification, acquisition and management of privately owned wild lands of critical importance to endangered wild species, and thereby contributing to their conservation. The first project in this programme deals with elephant migration corridors. The Wild Lands Co-ordinator will be expected to formulate, develop and supervise the programme including liaising with field biologists, lawyers, real estate personnel etc. A broad knowledge of the protected area system in India is preferred.

Applications must be sent in by August 31, 2000.

Contact: **Director Programmes**, Wildlife Trust of India, PO Box 3150, New Delhi –110003. Tel: 011-6326025/26. Fax: 011-6326027. Email: wti@wildlifetrustofindia.org

WHAT'S AVAILABLE

- Gole, Prakash. *Survey of birds of*

Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary and formulation of management guidelines for their protection. Ecological Society, Pune and Forest Department, Maharashtra.

This is a detailed report on the Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary that covers various aspects of the present status of the area. There are also recommendations for the better management of the park.

Contact: **Prakash Gole**, Ecological Society
1B Abhimanshree Society, Pashan rd.,
Pune 411018, Maharashtra. Tel: 020-
5650408. Email: pgole@pn2.vsnl.net.in
DCF Wildlife, Western Region, New
PMT Bldg., Swargate, Pune – 411042,
Maharashtra.

- Apte, T. and Kothari, A. 2000. *Joint Protected Area Management (JPAM): A Simple Guide. How it will benefit wildlife and people*, Kalpavriksh, Pune.

This booklet attempts to discuss the issues of JPAM in the country, with an attempt at simplifying the concept to as great an extent as possible. It is presented in a simple question answer format. It also has the statement and recommendations issued by the 4th Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights that was held in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary in April, 2000.

Contact: **Tejaswini Apte**, at the editorial address below

- Colchester M., Erni C. (Eds) . 1999. *Indigenous peoples and protected areas in South and South East Asia*, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, Copenhagen and The Forest People's Programme, Moreton-in-Marsh, England.

This book presents a compilation of the proceedings of the Conference on the same subject that was held in Sabah, Malaysia in December 1998.

Contact: **The Forest People's Programme**, 1c
Fosseway Business Centre – Stratford
Road, Moreton-in-Marsh, GL56 9NQ,
England. Tel: +44 1608 652878. Email:
ffppwrm@gn.apc.org

- Anuradha, RV. *Sharing the benefits of Biodiversity: The Kani – TBGRI deal in Kerala, India*. Kalpavriksh, Pune and International Institute of Environment and Development, London.

- Manu, K and Jolly, S. *Pelicans and People: The two-tier village of Kakkare Bellur, Karnataka, India*. Kalpavriksh, Pune and International Institute of Environment and Development, London.
- Kalpavriksh. *Source book on Community – Based Conservation in South Asia: People, Policies and Publications*. Kalpavriksh, Pune and International Institute of Environment and Development, London.

The above three booklets are outcomes of a series of case studies conducted by a group of individuals associated with Kalpavriksh. They were part of a regional and global process of understanding and documenting community based conservation of natural resources.

Contact: **Manju Menon**, at the editorial address below.

PA UPDATE MATTERS

1) Indexing of the PA Updates

We have now indexed all the *PA Updates* based on protected area names. As a result it will now be easy to access information related to a particular PA from across all the 25 *Updates* that have been published so far. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the index, please write to the editorial address below.

2) Life Subscriptions

In an effort to make the publication and distribution of the *PA Update* economically viable, we have initiated a scheme for life subscriptions for the readers. This has also been announced in the past issues of the *Update*. The life subscription has been fixed at Rs. 1000. We have yet received subscriptions from very few individuals. We request and would appreciate if more of our readers sent in their subscriptions to us.

3) Increasing circulation

It has been our attempt to reach the *PA Update* to a wide readership. The latest effort is to put on our mailing list, as many forest and wildlife officials as may be possible. Following our appeal in the last *Update* many of you wrote in with details. We are thankful for the same. However the list is still incomplete and there are many blanks from many states. Please do send us full addresses (including pincodes) of forest officers, whom you think we should send the *Update*. The same of course goes for NGOs, community representatives and others

4) More information needed

The *PA Update* is put together largely from news gathered from 3 main national newspapers, from information received via email, from readers and from occasional surfing of the web. A look at the *Update* will reveal that there are large parts of the country which are not covered well. This is an appeal to readers to regularly send us newspaper clippings and other information related to protected areas, from their part of the country. This will help make the *Update* more comprehensive and representative.

Contact: (for all the above); **Pankaj Sekhsaria**, at the editorial address below

CONSERVATION AND LIVELIHOODS NETWORK

The 4th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights was held from April 15-17, 2000 in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary in South Karnataka (see *Update* 25). The detailed statement and recommendations of the Consultation have now been finalised and are being circulated in Infopack 1 of the Conservation and Livelihoods Network (CLN) that is being attached with this issue of the *PA Update*. It also has the press statement issued by the consultation and some other relevant documents. It will be our attempt now to produce a bimonthly Infopack for the CLN, and your inputs and suggestions are most welcome.

We are also happy to announce that Centre

for Environment Education (CEE) is organising as part of its Teach And Learn Environmental Education Modules (TALEEM) programmes a workshop on Legal Issues Relating to Protected Areas. The workshop is to be held in Pune from August 28 to September 1, 2000 (for details see UPCOMING).

Contact: **Pankaj Sekhsaria**, at the editorial address below

CORRESPONDENCE

– Biswajit Mohanty...

This is with reference to the news item published in *PA Update* 25 about the broad daylight assault on the DFO, Nayagarh Forest Division at Chandka. We had felt very strongly about the issue and had brought it to the Forest Minister's attention requesting him to take strong action against the local Range Officer. Readers will be glad to know that the Range Officer against whom there are allegations of connivance with timber smugglers and non cooperation with police during raids has been suspended. In addition, the DFO of Chandka Wildlife Sanctuary has also been transferred and an efficient and dynamic officer posted in his place. It is now widely felt that the Chandka forests will be well protected.

Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty**, see above.

Protected Area (PA) 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. We acknowledge the support of **the South Asian Conservation Foundation** in the compiling and production of *PA Update* 26.

PA Update 26 was prepared by Pankaj Sekhsaria and Ashish Kothari.

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

Ideas, comments, news and information may please be sent to the editorial address:

KALPAVRIKSH

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