

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

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

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EDITORIAL

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Expert panel suggests marine sanctuary status for mass nesting sites of sea turtles
EIA urges India to take US help for wildlife protection unit
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Joint Forest Management (JFM) and PAs
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\$ 77 million Sunderbans project launched
Shell to explore for oil in the Sunderbans
Global warming to affect Sunderbans
Marine Park in St. Martin's Island
2 eco-parks to be set up in Sherpur district

Nepal

Call to develop Kaligandaki Gorge as nature recreation park

Pakistan

Drought affects Khirthar
Water level in Haleji lake drops
WWF identifies 87 wetlands

Sri Lanka

ADB to fund ecodevelopment project
Large scale illegal activities in national parks
Garbage dumping threatening Bellanwila-Attidiya marsh
Sri Lanka's elephant population rising
Fear of epidemic among wild elephants

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New Protected Areas Web Sites

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Toxics and Wildlife
Vacancies at the Wildlife Trust of India

UPCOMING

Short course on conservation biology for students
Course on Ecodevelopment for Biodiversity

Conservation

International training workshop on PA management and conservation
5th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights

WHAT'S AVAILABLE ?

- People, Parks & Wildlife, Towards Coexistence
- Human Development Report 2000
- State of India's Environment: The Citizens Fifth Report
- *Van Sahyog*
- A Global Review of Protected Area Budgets and Staff
- Flamingo Newsletter
- *Sariska Vaibhav*
- Dialouge on Sariska
- Regenerating of Forest

PA UPDATE MATTERS

Life Subscriptions

Index of Protected Areas in the *PA Update*

CORRESPONDENCE

EDITORIAL

New Initiative in Sariska

In the overall picture of doom and destruction, there continue to be many positive initiatives and signs of hope. Many forest officers, individuals, researchers, NGOs and local communities continue their work against all odds and sometimes with very successful results. The initiative in Sariska (see Rajasthan; Joint Management to begin in Sariska) is one such positive initiative. Recently there was a meeting of local community representatives, the local NGO, Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS), forest department officials, and other NGOs in Sariska. There is now a proposal the formation of an informal management committee that will now look at some of the most crucial issues that affect the PA and the communities that depend on the resources here for survival. These are the kind of creative and innovative responses that are needed if we are to fight the serious threats faced by our PAs.

Conflicts too continue and there has been wide spread concern over the developments around some protected areas in Madhya Pradesh, particularly Kanha and Kuno Palpur (see Madhya Pradesh; Protests at Kanha / Kuno Palpur). Following a very successful Bhoo Adhikar Satyagraha by the Ekta Parishad, the tribals and

local people displaced by these protected areas decided to raise the demand for access to resources that they have been so far denied. The forest department and a large section of our conservation lobby is worried and has even suggested that the people here should follow the lead taken by the people of Sariska.

The Ekta Parishad has clarified that they do not support the denotifications of PAs, as this will not solve the problem either of the livelihoods of people or the conservation of natural resources. What is very important is also how the Forest Department (FD) and the conservation lobby respond to a situation like this one. Unless they are also not willing to come half the way (like in Sariska), there can be no meaningful dialogue or resolution. The fact is, and not many of us are willing to accept it, that millions of people are dependant on our protected areas to meet their survival needs. Turning a blind eye to their legitimate needs will not only adversely affect these communities but also make our severely threatened PA network even more fragile. In the final battle to save our wilderness from the assault of the new commercial and industrial forces, conservationists, researchers, NGOs, people's organisations and local communities have to work together, not in opposition to one another.

This is where creative and innovative responses will help.

A significant development in the country has been the creation of three new states, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Uttaranchal. Each one is rich in natural resources, particularly forests. It would be interesting to see how wildlife will be treated under the new regimes. Hopefully they will not continue to see forests and minerals as their main source of revenue, but attempt to forge a new model of development that is based on conservation and sustainable use of the rich natural resources. We have to wait and watch.

Finally, we would like to apologise for the delay in getting out this issue of the *Update*. The cliched 'unavoidable reasons' were responsible. Consequently we decided to bring out a double issue comprising both PA Updates, 27 and 28, and lots of information!

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ASSAM

US NGO to fund program to save elephant habitat in state; Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary

The United States based Asian Elephant

Conservation Fund (AECF) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have shown interest in funding programs for elephant habitats in the state. The funding would come in under their 'Project Elephant' scheme. The Assam Forest Department has suggested the names of the Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary and the Gejera Sapori of Majuli as sites where elephant depredation is rampant and hence fit for funding under this programme.

The Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary with a core area of only 19 sq. kms is home to a herd of over 30 elephants. As a result there is a lot of conflict here. Similarly, the Gejera Sapori is a relatively new sand bar formed by siltation of the Brahmaputra. Formed over the last 10 years the sand bar is approximately 5 Kms wide and 50 Kms long. Recently, in July 2000, a 20 member herd of elephants had taken refuge here causing serious panic among the human settlements in the area.

Source: 'US-based NGOs keen to save elephant habitat in state', *The Assam Tribune*, 07/07/2000.

Funds crunch affects Kaziranga

According to officials of the Kaziranga National Park, a severe funds crunch is impeding the anti-poaching operations and adversely affecting the park's upkeep. It is estimated that more than 200 rhinos have been poached and 60 poachers have been killed here in the last decade. With better facilities and funds, the officials say, the protection of the park can be improved further.

However, for the last few years, the Assam state government has been releasing less than half of the annual budget allocated for the park. Consequently, few of the patrol vehicles are in running condition, boats have not been repaired for long and the elephants with the FD often go half fed with private contractors refusing to supply feed as outstanding bills are increasing every year. The 350 odd forest guards in the park are ill equipped and have no sophisticated weapons, while poachers enter the park armed with sophisticated carbines fitted with silencers and night vision devices.

The park authorities were recently also forced to retrench 160 casual forest guards because of lack of funds.

Source: 'Rhinos could become extinct as funds crunch hits Kaziranga', *Sentinel*, 09/06/2000.

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

Elephants on rampage around Kaziranga

There have been reports of large herds of elephants

going on rampage in areas in and around Kaziranga National Park. Earlier this year, in June 2000 more than 15 people were killed by elephants in the Golaghat district of Assam. Numaligarh here is the location of a new oil refinery and according to experts this has been one of the major reasons of increased intensity of the conflicts. Local villagers say that elephants here are no longer scared of traditional methods – like torch flames and drum beating – which are used to scare away the animals from human habitations.

It has been estimated that at least 300 people have been killed by rampaging elephants in Assam, in the last three years. Assam wildlife authorities have urged the Central Government to allow them to capture the wild elephants to minimise damage.

Source: 'Rampaging elephants kill more than 50 in Assam', *The Observer of Business and Politics*, 12/07/2000.

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

Rhino poaching in Orang

The continued poaching of rhinos in the Rajiv Gandhi (Orang) National Park was discussed during the last meeting of the State Wildlife Advisory Board in Guwahati in July earlier this year. It is estimated that 51 rhinos have been killed in Orang in the last decade and five were killed in the first half of 2000 itself (see *PA Updates* 26, 24 and 21).

According to an official present at the meeting, concern was expressed at the situation but no concrete plan was drawn up to tackle the issue. The Guwahati High Court has also asked the government to reply within three months on the steps being taken to stop the incidence of poaching here. A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has been filed in the matter by the Aranya Suraksha Samiti, an NGO working for wildlife conservation in the state.

Source: Roopak Goswami. 'Extinction spectre over rhinos', *Telegraph*, 27/07/2000.

More ULFA trouble in Manas

A large number of United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) militants have reportedly sneaked into the Manas National Park from the Bhutan side. This has followed the alleged infighting in the ULFA camps in September earlier this year. The Chief Minister of Assam informed the state assembly that at least 35 militants had entered Barpeta district and offensive operations by security officers were underway.

Source: 'More ULFA trouble in Manas', *Tigerlink*,

October 2000.

Contact: **Director**, Manas National Park, PO Barpeta Road, Dist. Barpeta – 781315, Assam. Tel: 03666-61413. Fax: 60253.

Manas Bandhu groups formed in Manas

As an outcome of the combined efforts of the Forest Department (FD) and the people of Manas over the last two years, more than 25 *Manas Bandhu* groups have been formed. These groups are comprised of young volunteers from the villagers around the park and have been mainly involved in conservation works and organising awareness campaigns.

In order to keep up the enthusiasm, the FD conducted a workshop in the month of September at Bansbari to explore the possibilities of cooperation between these groups and other NGOs for taking up various activities related to wildlife conservation, generating opportunities for self employment and for strengthening people's support for Manas.

Source: '*Manas Bandhu Groups*', *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

Contact: **Field Director**, Manas Tiger Reserve, see above.

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

BIHAR

Conflict between forest staff and police in Betla

Timely intervention by senior officials averted a major stand off between staff of the Forest Department (FD) and Bihar Military Police (BMP) Jawans deputed at the Betla National Park check post. The stand off occurred following the interception, by the forest staff, of timber being allegedly smuggled out of the park in a BMP bus. Infuriated by this, 3 BMP jawans assaulted a forester at the Betla check post, following which, the forest personnel stopped work and went out of the forest. They also blocked the Betla-Garu road.

Aggravation of the situation was prevented when the Palamu SP, Vinay Kumar Pandey ordered the withdrawal of the entire contingent of the BMP jawans. The forest personnel too responded in a positive manner, and went back to work. The DIG of the area has ordered a probe into the entire episode.

Source: 'Palamu Tiger Project officials avert crisis', *The Times of India*, 29/08/2000.

Contact: **Field Director**, Palamu Tiger Reserve, Daltonganj – 822 101, Bihar. Tel: 06562-22650

GOA

Goa appoints 10 honorary wildlife wardens

Under the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972, the Goa government has appointed 10 honorary wild life wardens to control poaching and clandestine trade in wild life animals.

These wardens may identify and select areas suitable to be declared as sanctuaries and national parks and carry the message of conservation to the people all over, a government notification said. The tenure of each honorary warden will be one year from the date of notification. The government has given them powers to inspect licenses under section 47 (b) of the Act and also the authority to search and seize and detain under section 50 of the Act.

Source: '10 wildlife wardens appointed', *The Times of India*, 29/10/2000.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Junta House, 3rd Floor, Panaji – 403001, Goa. Tel/Fax: 0832-224747.

GUJARAT

Tourism promotion in PAs in Gujarat

The Gujarat Tourism Department and Forests and Environment Department have decided to promote three protected areas in the state; the Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary, the Wild Ass Sanctuary in the Rann of Kutch and Pirotan island in the Marine National Park as 'Eco-tourism' spots. The Chief Minister of the state, Mr Keshubhai Patel has issued orders to this effect following a senior level meeting in Gandhinagar recently.

Details of the proposal are not yet available.

Source: 'Eco-tourism spots to dot Gujarat's expanse', *The Times of India*, 17/06/2000.

Legal view sought on clearance to Essar for project in Marine National Park

The Gujarat government has decided to seek the opinion of the state's Advocate General (AG) on giving wildlife clearance to Essar Oil for laying the 15-km pipeline from the Gulf of Kutch to the Vadinar terminal area. Bureaucrats are reportedly in a dilemma whether the much sought after wildlife clearance should be given in view of a recent orally dictated high court ruling which says that the Vadinar and Positra projects coming under the jurisdiction of the eco-sensitive Marine National Park should not be granted such clearance (see *PA Updates* 26, 25, 24, 23 and 21).

Officials have said that it is a matter of interpretation whether an orally dictated ruling could be taken as final till its copy is given to all the parties in dispute.

Essar however expressed confidence that the clearance will be got. The company has tied up with ABB for this Rs. 8000 crore project which has a capacity of 12 million tonnes.

The latest status in the matter is not known. Source: 'State to seek legal view on wildlife clearance to Essar', *The Times of India*, 31/08/2000.

Indo-Oman pipeline through Marine NP scrapped

The Petroleum Minister, Mr. Ram Naik has said that the proposed US\$2 billion Indo-Oman pipeline project has been scrapped as it was found to be economically unviable. The pipeline was to pass through the Marine National Park in the Gulf of Kutch and had been strongly opposed by conservationists (see *PA Updates* 26, 25, and 24).

The 1200 kms gas pipeline was a joint venture of the Oman Oil Corporation (OOC) and the Gas Authority of India Ltd. (GAIL) for which a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 1993.

Source: 'Indo-Oman gas pipeline project scrapped: Naik', *The Times of India*, 16/08/2000.

Contact: **Ram Naik**, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shastri Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Marg, New Delhi – 110001. Tel: 011 – 3386622 / 3381462

Port at Positra inside Marine National Park opposed

Fisheries expert, ND Chhaya has opposed the move of the Gujarat State Government for the establishment of a port at Positra inside the Marine National Park. He was speaking at a seminar on 'Marine pollution and coastal development in Gujarat' organised by the Centre for Environment Education in August.

Positra is a well known breeding and nurturing ground for a wide array of coastal fisheries and is home to many endangered species of marine life that includes pearl oysters and soft corals. There already exists an all weather port at Okha which is only 30 kms away. It would be ideal to expand this port rather than construct a new one at Positra, he pointed out.

Source: 'Keep off Positra warns marine expert', *The Times of India*, 07/08/2000.

Coral species disappearing in Marine National Park

Recent research has shown that at least eight species of stony corals and four of soft corals have disappeared from the southern Gulf of Kutch in the last ten years.

Rishad Parvez, an expert on biodiversity in the Gulf had conducted a study from 1984 to 1989 and recorded 37 species of stony corals and 10 species of soft corals in the national park. However a study conducted from January to June 2000 in Bet-Dwarka, Positra, Mangunda, Boria, Paga, Dabdaba, Kalumbhar and Chusna island and the reefs here, revealed that the twelve varieties of coral that were earlier common have disappeared. Some species of sponges, crabs and prawns have also been lost.

Dr. Parvez has however said that the extinction is not total and the species can be found in other parts of the park. Fisheries Director, MI Patel has also said these species are found at other places in the park and that some species are found only at certain times.

The possible reasons for the destruction of the corals include reduction in mangrove cover and increased pollution of the sea waters in the region. It may be recalled that there has been large scale industrial development in this area and fears have been constantly expressed of its impact on the biodiversity here (see *PA Updates* 26, 25, 24, 23 and 21).

Source: Shyam Parekh. 'Marine National Park corals in deep waters despite protection', *The Times of India*, 12/08/2000.

Contact: **Rishad Parvez**, Dept. of Zoology, School of Sciences, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Tel: 079-6302362 / 1648.

Eight new spider species in Vansada National Park

Eight new spider species have been found in the Vansada National Park, the smallest in the state of Gujarat. The study that made this discovery was part of the Gujarat Ecological Education and Research (GEER) Foundation's project titled 'Biodiversity studies of the State's Protected Areas'.

The study in Vansada which was carried out between June 1998 and June 1999 revealed that the park was a treasure trove of spider species. 121 species were recorded here, eight of which are absolutely new to science.

Source: Shyam Parekh. 'Scientists' web catches eight new spider species', *The Times of India*, 09/09/2000.

Contact: **GEER**, Indrora Park, Sector – 9,

Gandhinagar – 382009, Gujarat. Tel: 02712-21385. Fax: 41128. Email: geer@guj.nic.in

Trees axed near Gir forest to pave way for shrine

Nearly 500 trees have been chopped off in the thick Girnar forest on orders of Vithalbapa, a trustee of the Datar Trust, which runs a shrine on the foothills of the Girnar mountain. This was done to open a road through the jungle from Damodar kund to Datar. It is feared that if the road is allowed, thousands of trees will be chopped down. Officers who tried to take action against tree felling were promptly transferred.

The Datar Trust is a popular religious site in this area. It is a *dargah* but has been maintained by Brahmin pujaris for the last two generations. It has been a source of controversy and has seen communal conflicts in the past. Local units of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal and the Sadhu Samaj have come out in support of Vithalbapa, and this is considered one of the reasons why the forest officers needed to be transferred.

Source: 'Trees axed near Gir forest to pave way for shrine', *The Times of India*, 27/08/2000.

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

Buffaloes succumb to mysterious disease in Gir

Around 30 buffaloes were reported to have succumbed to a mysterious disease in Gir in the month of August. It is suspected that the buffaloes may have been affected by the same disease that claimed the lives of a number of animals in zoos across the country.

It may be recalled that earlier there were also reports of deaths of lions in Gir due to a mysterious disease (see *PA Update* 26).

Source: 'More deaths at Gir: 30 buffaloes succumb to mystery disease', *The Times of India*, 06/08/2000.

Gir comes to aid of villagers, cattle during drought

According to estimates made by forest officials and others, the forests and grasslands of Gir National Park helped substantially in fighting the drought that recently affected large parts of Gujarat. It has been estimated that nearly 80 lakh tons of grass was removed from Gir during this period to support animals all over the state. Additionally two lakh man days of work was generated in Gir in during the first six months of the year and the 250 check dams and 200 causeways here, helped substantially

in recharging ground water.

According to the DCF, Gir (West), Mr. Mahesh Singh, the benefit of keeping a forest ecosystem alive and sustainably tapping its natural resources in times like drought was immense and obvious. It was also pointed out that the district scarcity committee did not receive any complaints regarding drinking water from those villages inside and on the periphery of Gir, which were being managed under an ambitious eco-development project of the state forest department.

Source: Shyam Parekh. 'Gir aided millions of animals to combat drought', *The Times of India*, 04/08/2000.

Plans for Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary

The state Forest Department is taking some major steps to improve tourist facilities as well as the habitat for birds at the Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary, a shallow lake spread over 120 sq. kms.

The department has built a canal – 6 metres wide and 1km long from the entry point of the lake, where boats will ferry tourists. Besides, a 4.5 kms long earthen wall has also been built, which will raise the level of the lake by about 4-5 metres and help retain water around the year.

Source: 'Govt. chalks out plans to revive lake sanctuary', *The Times of India*, 04/07/2000.

Balaram Ambaji WLS to be denotified

There are reports that the Gujarat government is seriously considering a move for the denotifying of a large chunk or the entire area of the 544 sq. kms. Balaram Ambaji Wildlife Sanctuary in the Banaskantha district. This is being suggested at the behest of the powerful industrial lobby in the state that is eyeing the rich deposits of limestone, marble and granite that are found in a part of the park.

The Additional Chief Secretary (Environment and Forests) is reported to have recently presided over a meeting to discuss the possible denotification of the sanctuary. Another meeting was scheduled to be held in the last week of November, but no details of the same are yet available.

Source: Arun Agnihotri, Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 25/11/2000.

Contact: **Arun Agnihotri**, 5, Purohit Colony, Sardarnagar, Vadodara - 390002, Gujarat.
Email: tufnuttock@satyam.net.in

Banni grasslands, part of Great Rann of Kutch to be handed to revenue department

The Gujarat cabinet has recently decided to hand over the Banni grasslands from the Forest Department (FD) to the Revenue Department (RD). The decision was taken after a three person cabinet sub-committee comprising Industries Minister, Suresh Mehta, Finance and Revenue Minister, Vajubhai Vala and Forest Minister, Kanjibhai Patel okayed the proposal. The decision has to be cleared by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Gujarat assembly as well, as it is protected forest land and also contains a part of the Great Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary.

Ostensibly, the aim of the move is to revive the Banni as a grassland for the maldhari cattle. Presently 40% of the grassland area is estimated to have been eaten up by the wild weed *gando baval* due to the FD's indifference. It is proposed that the weed will be uprooted, but the RD says that it has neither the human resources nor the expertise to do that.

Some people have pointed out that the purpose behind the move is to allow the extraction of the weed for commercial purposes. It is known to produce very good charcoal and has a good market in cities like Ahmedabad. It is also a well known fact that this area has huge mineral deposits including those of limestone and bauxite and this cannot be exploited till the land is under the control of the FD.

Source: 'Cabinet move on grasslands a tough task', *The Times of India*, 07/08/2000.

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

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Angling reserve in Sirmour for golden mahseer

The Himachal Angling Association (HAA) has demanded that a 5 kms stretch between the Renuka Jatun barrages on the Giri river in the Sirmour district be declared an 'angling reserve', to protect the golden mahseer. The association has said various factors like illegal fishing and construction of barriers for hydel projects were preventing the free migration of the fish for feeding and breeding purposes.

The HAA has also alleged that the state Fisheries Department had failed to develop a technology for the production of mahseer seed under controlled conditions and had been unable to

enlist the support of the local pradhans and zila parishad members in the conservation programmes.

Source: 'Protection of golden mahseer sought', *Tribune*, 02/09/2000.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden – HP**,
Mistchamber, Khalini, Shimla – 171002,
Himachal Pradesh. Tel: 0177-201660 /
223030.

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Village regenerates forest on banks of Wular lake

A forest patch of over a 100 acres on the banks of the Wular lake has been regenerated by the local villagers. Residents of village Garoora have managed this after sustained efforts for over a decade.

The effort was initiated after discussions in the village about the serious problem of flash floods that was causing serious damage to property and crops here. The first step was the decision of the village to enclose the patch of barren land with barbed wire purchased by pooling together village resources. No state government employed forest guard was allowed to enter the area, and villagers decided not to take any cattle for grazing into the area. Each of the 60 odd houses in the village contributed Rs. 30 per month to pay two local boys who were designated as forest guards. As a result of the protection accorded, the forest has regenerated beautifully and wild animals like the leopard, bear, jackal and fox have returned.

Source: Faisal Ahmed. 'Villagers restore paradise in part', *Financial Express*, 17/09/2000.

Govt. spending huge amounts for golf course in Salim Ali NP

The J&K government has been spending huge amounts of money for the Sher-e-Kashmir International Golf Course (SKIGC) in the Salim Ali (earlier City) National Park in Srinagar. With effect from July 2000, the state government has hired Australian golf course expert, Roger Harle on a two year contract at a monthly salary of US\$ 6000 (Rs. 2.8 lakhs). Additional perks would amount to another US\$ 2000 per month. He has also been given a fully furnished three bedroom house, a house keeper, a chauffeur driven car and return air fares for his entire family between Melbourne and Srinagar. Visas and evacuation, if needed, would also be arranged by the golf course authorities. Medical cover is also to be provided for the expert and his family. All this is being done when the government is strapped for funds and is having a

difficult time paying salaries to its employees on time.

This pet project of the Chief Minister of the state, Mr. Farooq Abdullah, has been generating controversy from the beginning. The denotification of the national park has been proposed for this course (see *PA Update* 26) and hundreds of trees were cut here in 1999 to make way for the course (see *PA Update* 21). (also see *PA Update* 21 and *JPAM Update* 19).

Source: Mufti Islah. 'Bankrupt J-K opens purse strings for golf', *Indian Express*, 01/10/2000.

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

KARNATAKA

Road through Kudremukh to be widened

There are reports that the Sringeri-Karkala road that passes through the Kudremukh National Park is to be widened and will be declared a national highway. This road also passes through the heart of Lion tailed macaque habitat.

Source; 'Road through Lion tailed macaque habitat to be widened', *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

Contact: **DCF (WL)**, Kudremukh Wildlife Division,
Karkala – 574104, Karnataka.

Sanjay Gubbi, Green watchers, 2208/B,
Sadhana Rd., KR Extension, Tumkur –
572101, Karnataka. Tel: 0816-73030 /
73170 Fax: 74468. Website:
www.envirolink.org/orgs/greenwatchers

MoEF allows KIOCL to fell trees in Kudremukh

There are reports that the Central Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) has written a letter to the Karnataka Forest Department to give permission to KIOCL to fell over 500 trees in the prime forests of Kudremukh NP (outside the lease area of KIOCL). This is being done in order to facilitate the re-laying the 90 km long pipeline from the mining site to Mangalore harbour.

The same letter also notes that the Supreme Court's order about ban on any felling of trees in such areas can be circumvented by stressing that the trees are not being felled for commercial purpose. The latest information in this matter is not yet available.

Source: SA Hussain. Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 03/11/2000.

Contact: **SA Hussain**, 504 Lawns View Apts.

Sturrock Rd. Falnir, Mangalore – 575001,
Karnataka. Tel: 0824 – 448976 / 445647.
Fax: 445647. Email; sahbird@vsnl.com

Tribals resettled from Nagarhole given land

The first batch of 50 tribal people rehabilitated from the Rajiv Gandhi National Park, Nagarhole, were recently given land possession certificates for five acres of land and a house at Veeranahosalli, near Hunsur.

However some local people were unhappy over the allotment of land to 'outsiders'. The tribals too complained that the power provided to the settlement was not adequate and the water supplied through a single hand pump was insufficient to meet their needs. An estimated 1,550 tribal families have been identified for rehabilitation outside Nagarhole as a cost of Rs. 15.5 crores that will be shared between the State and Union Governments.

Representatives of tribal organisations, meanwhile, have accused the Forest Department (FD) of coercing the tribals to leave as part of the relocation plan to facilitate the World Bank sponsored Eco-development project (also see *PA Updates* 23 and 22).

Source: 'Rehabilitated tribal people get land possession certificates', *The Hindu*, 25/07/2000.

'Tribal people being evicted forcibly from Nagarhole', *The Hindu*, 06/09/2000.

Ranganthithu affected by floods in August

The increased outflow of water from the KRS reservoir in the last week of August resulted in the flooding of the Ranganthithu Bird Sanctuary. Nearly 35,000 cusecs of water was released from the reservoir in one night and this led to the water level rising sharply. The bamboo groves, a favourite roosting place for birds in the sanctuary, were partially submerged and water entered the corridors constructed for visitors to walk up to the other end of the sanctuary. Boating facilities for tourists too were temporarily suspended.

Though the flooding was severe, the sanctuary officials said that it was not as bad as the flooding in 1991 and 1994 when even the ticket counter was flooded.

Source: 'Ranganthithu Bird Sanctuary flooded', *The Hindu*, 29/08/2000.

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

Attempts to save Bannerghatta elephants from electrocution

A joint initiative is being attempted to prevent electrocution deaths of elephants around the Bannerghatta National Park. After nine pachyderms were electrocuted here last year, forest department (FD) officials, NGOs and the community at large are trying together to avoid these accidents this time around (see *PA Updates* 26 and 25). The state government has set up a Joint Task Force comprising of the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation (KPTC), the forest and police departments to check illegal tapping of power to electrocute elephants.

The problem is conspicuous between the months of October and February, when elephants migrate en route Bekatur and Arabikere along the Kollegal Sathyamangalam highway. Vital migration corridors have been cut off because of agriculture and this has aggravated human elephant conflicts here. The cropping pattern followed in the 74 villages, where ragi is grown in the kharif season, attracts the elephants to the fields.

In an attempt to reduce this conflict, elephant proof trenches (EPT) have been laid around the 140 km long periphery of the reserve, besides constructing rubber walls and solar electrified fences.

The government has also proposed an initiative to insure the fields, wherein cheques will be issued to farmers after assessing the crop damage.

Source: Paswana Poonacha. 'No shocks this time for migrating elephants', *The Times of India*, 31/10/2000.

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

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

KERALA

Management plan for Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary

The Kerala Forest Department (FD) has launched a major programme for the conservation of the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary spread over an area of 99 sq. kms. It envisages a preservation policy for the sanctuary with the help of foresters, environmentalists and scientists. Christened 'Vision for Next Millenium' a blueprint of the statement was prepared at a workshop held in the sanctuary recently.

Source: 'Major plan to protect flora and fauna of

Chinnar sanctuary', *The New Indian Express*, 12/08/2000.

No land for Sabrimala temple from Periyar

In a letter to the Kerala Forest Department, the Central Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), has clearly stated that no land from within the Periyar Tiger Reserve will be allotted to the Sabrimala temple (also see *PA Updates* 24, 23 & 21 and *JPAM Update* 20).

The Ministry in the letter has referred to the report by the committee that was appointed to evaluate the situation and had categorically suggested against any clearance. The news has been welcomed by environmentalists and conservationists.

The Ministry has also indicated that it could allot land outside the Reserve to the temple. This would ensure that the reserve would not be unduly affected by the development activities.

Source: 'MoEF says no to denotification', *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

Contact: **Director**, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Aranya Bhavan, Forest Complex, SH Mount, PO Kottayam – 686006, Kerala. Tel: 0481-505940.

Vinod Kumar Damodar, Friends of the Elephant Forum, Breeze, Cherooty Nagar, Calicut - 673006, Kerala.

Former poachers protect Periyar

A team of ex-poachers has been successfully formed to protect the forests of the Periyar Tiger Reserve from illegal activities like poaching and timber smuggling. The program was initiated under the Rs. 40 crores World Bank (WB) aided eco-development project for the conservation of biodiversity here.

Forest officials hit upon this idea two years ago while interrogating some smugglers who had been arrested for smuggling of cinnamon bark from the reserve. According to Mr. Shivdas, Asst. Field Director of Periyar, the idea was to get 'thieves to catch the thieves'. Funds were available under the WB project and the FD recruited 20 poachers who wanted to return to life within the bounds of law. The group was convened into an 'eco-development' committee which was to administer the protection activities that were assigned to the group. The FD also decided not to press charges on the pending criminal cases against these 20.

That the initiative has been successful is evident from the fact that there is a marked reduction in poaching and smuggling from the forests here. Some of the more noteworthy successes include the seizure of seven ivory tusks

here in August 1998 and the catching in 1999 of a notorious poacher with over 300 kgs of gaur meat.

Source: Pallav Bagla. 'Once they shot elephants, now they hunt poachers in forests', *Indian Express*, 26/09/2000.

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

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

MADHYA PRADESH

56 villages to be moved from Indravati TR

The Madhya Pradesh Forest Department (FD) has planned to relocate 56 villages from the Indravati Tiger Reserve. The total number of people to be moved is around 6000. According to the FD the villages need to be relocated to ensure the survival of one of the last surviving populations of wild buffaloes in the country. Indravati Tiger Reserve presently supports a small population of an estimated 20 wild buffaloes. Confirmation of this news has been sought and details are awaited.

Source: '*Sankatgrast van bhaison ko bachane 56 gavon ke grameeno ki punarvas yojana*', *Dandakaranya- Samachar*, 03/09/2000.

Contact: **Field Director**, Indravati Tiger Reserve, PO Jagdalpur, Bastar – 494001, Madhya Pradesh.

SC Varma, Bastar Society for the Conservation of Nature, Jeevan Sadan, Nayapara, Jagdalpur – 494001, Bastar, Madhya Pradesh.

Protests at Kanha / Kuno Palpur

Ekta Parishad, recently organised protest rallies at the Kanha National Park and Palpur – Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary. This was following the successful completion of the six month long *Bhoo Adhikar Satyagraha* that travelled through remote and interior parts of Madhya Pradesh.

On September 11, a rally was organised near village Sarai, where nearly 350 people participated. Most of these were from village Sonf, one of the first to be relocated when the Kanha National Park was formed. On the 13th of September nearly 3000 people demonstrated at the park entry point at Mukki.

The demands of Ekta Parishad include: relocation of resettled villages back to the forests in Kanha from where they were moved; changes in the tourism policy so that it benefits the local

people; no financial assistance to be accepted from the World Bank or any other anti-forest international financial organisation; amendment to be made to the Indian Forest Act to provide for pattas to the villagers that have been on forest land for years, recognition to the rights of forest dwellers and stern action against forest mafias.

The Ekta Parishad has however clarified that they are not demanding the denotification of protected areas, because that will secure neither the conservation of the area nor the livelihood rights of local communities.

Source: 'Trouble in paradise', *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

Personal communication from Gautam Bandopadhyay, Ekta Parishad.

Contact: **Director**, Kanha N P, Mandla – 481661, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 07642-50760 / 61. **Gautam Bandopadhyay**, Ekta Prishad, O3 Anupam Nagar, Shankar Nagar, Raipur- 492007, Chattisgarh. Tel: 0771-421926, 07721 – 4498. Email: gautamb@bom6.vsnl.net.in **CWLW**, MP, Van Bhawan, Tulsi Nagar Bhopal 462003, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 0755-557371/ 550391. Fax: 011-761102.

MAHARASHTRA

Two new sanctuaries at Rajmachi and Tamini-Sudhgarh

The dense forests of Rajmachi and Tamini Sudhgarh, bordering Pune and Raigad districts are to be declared as wildlife sanctuaries. Rajmachi lies between Bhimashankar and Mayureshwar Wildlife Sanctuaries, while Tamini-Sudhgarh is a bridge between the forests of Mahabaleshwar and the Chandoli Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Rajmachi Sanctuary would cover an area of 122 sq. kms. and forms the catchment area of the Andhora, Shirota and Walwan lakes. Tamini-Sudhgarh would cover an area of 228 sq. kms. in the catchment area of the Mulshi lake.

Source: 'Maharashtra to have two new wildlife sanctuaries', *Financial Express*, 13/08/2000.

Contact: **Mr. NHN Shaikh**, DCF (Wildlife), New PMT Bldg., Swargate, Pune – 411042. Tel: 020-4471465. Fax: 666326.

Human Rights tribunal, Justice Krishna Iyer flay HC stand on encroachments in Sanjay Gandhi NP

A three member tribunal of the Indian People's

Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) has stated that the Bombay High Court orders directing the eviction of 75,000 dwellings in the vicinity of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park at Borivali was nothing short of a 'fraud on the court'. This was because none of the orders considered the rights of the parties most affected, in this case, the slum dwellers.

The tribunal of the IPHRC was headed by the former Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, Justice Rajinder Sachar and had as its members, Justice (Retd.) SM Daud and Justice (Retd.) H Suresh.

Earlier, in August, the state government had instituted an inquiry against the alleged excesses committed by the forest officials in the demolitions of slums here. This decision was taken following a complaint made by the Nivara Hakk Suraksha Samiti (NHSS) to the Chief Minister of the state.

There have also been reports that the plans of the government to shift people from the national park to Kalyan-Ambarnath may run into trouble, with locals at the rehabilitation site opposing the plan. The residents of the villages of Khoni, Shirdone, Ghesar and Antarli, where the national park oustees are to be resettled have formed the Gairon Bachao Samiti (GBS) under the leadership of DB Patil, a Shiv Sena leader here.

Source: 'Encroachers' rights were crushed', *Indian Express*, 01/11/2000.

Anil Singh. 'Villagers resent rehab of slum-dwellers on their turf', *The Times of India*, 04/09/2000.

'Inquiry ordered into excesses by officials in national park', *Indian Express*, 24/08/2000.

Contact: **DFO**, Sanjay Gandhi Rashtriya Udyan, Borivali (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

NGO suggests that boundary of Koyna WLS be fixed after rehabilitation of all displaced

The Koyna Association for the Protection of the Right to Live (*Koyna Jeevan Hakk Samarakshan Sanghatana*) has demanded that the final limits of the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary be determined only after the rehabilitation of all those who are to be displaced on account of the sanctuary. There are a number of villages on the west bank of the Koyna

reservoir who have been demanding resettlement for a long time.

The association has submitted a memorandum to the district collector in this connection.

Source: 'Relocate people before fixing Koyna sanctuary limits, govt. told', *The Times of India*, 28/10/2000.

Contact: **C/o Satyashodh**, Koregaon, Satara
Satara 415 501, Maharashtra.

FD opposes capacity enhancement of Koyna hydro project

The Maharashtra Forest Department (FD) has opposed the move to enhance the capacity of the Koyna Hydro Electric Project (KHEP). The KHEP has an installed capacity of 1920 MW and there are plans to raise it to 2500 MW. The specific opposition of the FD has been to the proposed construction of the 400 MW plant in Humbarli near the Ozarde water falls. This area is part of the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary and the FD has argued that the construction activity would adversely affect the area. The blasting operations for the construction of the power house, roads and other such activities are also likely to have an impact on the wild animals here.

Source: 'Koyna hydro project faces rough weather', *Indian Express*, 07/08/2000.

Contact: **DCF (Wildlife)**, Koyna WLS, Kolhapur – 416002, Maharashtra. Tel: 0231-522766 / 660682.

Rs. 37 crore plan to check poaching

The government of Maharashtra has launched a Rs. 37.27 crore plan to tackle the threat to poaching of wild animals in the state. The plan aims to arm 720 officers with pistols and to equip 514 squads with one rifle for each member. The plan was announced by the CM of the state, Mr. Vilasrao Deshmukh in Mumbai in the month of August.

Source: 'Rs. 37-crore plan to check poaching', *The Hindu* 25/08/2000.

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

MANIPUR

Steps for the protection of lakes in state

The Chief Minister (CM) of Manipur, Wahengbam

Nipamacha has said that his government will take up various steps for the protection of many 'dying' lakes in the state including the Loktak lake. He was speaking at a workshop on 'Hydrological modelling, reservoir operation, and flood mitigation management of the Loktak lake' held in Imphal recently.

As a first step in this direction, he said, the Loktak Development Authority (LDA) may be converted to a Lake Development Authority.

Special attention was also being paid to the Loktak lake and the CM said that he would write to the 11th Finance Commission seeking funds for the protection and development of this unique water body.

Source: 'Manipur to take steps for protection of Loktak lake', *The Assam Tribune*, 03/09/2000.

Contact: **CWLW**, Govt. of Manipur, Sanjenthong, Imphal – 795001, Manipur. Tel: 03852-220854 / 285358.

ORISSA

Illegal prawn gheries proliferate in Bhitarkanika

Though destroyed in the October 1999 super cyclone, most of the illegal prawn gheries in and around Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary have been reconstructed. This was stated in a report submitted recently to the Orissa High Court by the Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC), Central Division, in response to the court's directive on a petition filed by Biswajit Mohanty of the Wildlife Society of Orissa (WSO) (see *PA Update* 25).

The report expressed concern that there were large scale encroachments with a lot of investment and that these definitely presented a threat to the mangrove forests of the region. The RDC reported that there were four gheries, two of approximately 635 acres and 600 acres respectively in Hatamundia and two of 310 acres and 800 acres respectively in Kansadrachia. It was also reported that these had come up in the area where they had been functioning before the super cyclone. Their embankments appeared to have been repaired or reconstructed within the past six months.

Figures available from various sources like the District Collector and the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) reveal that while 38 prawn gheries existed on 5883 acres of forest land before the cyclone, 33 were existing now on 5853 acres. Similarly, 158 gheries existing on 614.76 acres of revenue land before the cyclone had increased to 286 located now on 503.92 acres.

According to the report, the Forest Department here did not have necessary resources to patrol the area and as a result they neither had

accurate information nor the capacity to evict the encroachers. It has been estimated that a group of 100 labourers working under police protection for a period of 3 months was needed to clear the area of encroachments. This would need Rs. 8 to 10 lakhs and would have to be followed by constant vigilance to prevent them from reappearing.

Source: 'Illegal prawn *gheries* posing a threat to mangrove forest', *Sentinel*, 04/07/2000.

Contact: **DFO** Bhitarkanika NP, Forest Dept, AT/Po Rajnagar, Dist. Kendrapara – 745225, Orissa. Tel: 06729 – 72460/64. Fax: 06727-20775.

Biswajit Mohanty, Wildlife Society of Orissa, Shantikunj, Link Road, Cuttack – 753012, Orissa. Tel: 0671 – 334625. Fax: 610980. Email: biswajit@cal.vsnl.net.in

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

Dolphins threatened at Gahirmatha

The number of dolphins seen in and around Gahirmatha is reported to be falling rapidly. A rough estimate by the World Wide Fund for Nature – India (WWF-I) some time ago put the number of these mammals here at 400.

The main threat are the fishing nets with small meshes where the dolphins get entangled while trying to eat fish trapped inside. Locals also regularly hunt the animal for meat and oil, which is believed to be a pain reliever and cure for several other diseases.

Source: Ashis Senapati. 'Dolphins' days are numbered at Gahirmatha', *The New Indian Express*, 13/09/2000.

Contact: **BC Choudhary**, Wildlife Institute of India, PO Box 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun - 248001, Uttar Pradesh. Email: bcc@wii.gov.in; undpturtle@wii.gov.in
DFO Bhitarkanika NP, See above.

Paramilitary forces for protection of Simlipal

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has agreed to deploy paramilitary forces inside the Simlipal Tiger Reserve and allocate Rs. one crore annually for the purpose. About a year and a half ago, two factories manufacturing arms inside the Tiger Reserve were located and raided by the Forest Department (FD). This had created great concern in the understaffed and under armed FD.

It has been alleged that the timber mafia here works with groups of tribals and as they are armed they create a lot more trouble for the

department. It has also been alleged that the annual *akhanda shikar* often becomes the pretext for burning down chunks of forest for increasing the area of cultivated land.

Source: Poornima Joshi. 'Paramilitary forces set to take on poachers', *Hindustan Times*, 05/06/2000.

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

***Eupatorium* affects Simlipal, Chandka**

A survey by the Wildlife Society of Orissa (WSO) has revealed that major forests and wildlife habitats in the region, including protected areas, have been badly affected by the weed *Eupatorium odorata*, known locally as *pokasunga* and *bombay lata*.

The areas worst affected by the weed are Simlipal, Chandka and the Charkhola hills in the Dhenkanal district, where thousands of acres of meadows and vacant grasslands, normally grazed by herbivores like deer and elephants, now have a thick cover of the weed. This is also considered to be part of the reason why elephants from the Chandaka WLS frequently stray into the city of Bhubaneshwar.

The weed has also adversely affected the local human populations here like the Bhuyan tribals of Keonjhar and Angul districts. The weed has invaded fields on the hill slopes and grazing grounds in adjoining villages, forcing the tribals to fell more trees to shift cultivation.

Source: Rajaram Satapathy. News item in *The Times of India*, 17/08/2000.

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

Mangrove regeneration project failing in Orissa

Despite claims by the state Forest Department (FD), the attempts to regenerate mangroves in denuded patches along the Orissa coast appears to be failing. Unscientific planning by concerned authorities has, reportedly, severely threatened the mangrove tracts in the estuaries of Rivers Mahanadi and Devi.

The social forestry wing of the mangrove division has taken up afforestation on a 1 sq. km area with an allocation of Rs. 15 lakh over the last three years. However, those at the helm have allegedly chosen unsuitable sites and as a result the scheme has failed. A team of experts on mangroves which visited the mangrove nursery and afforestation points near Talchua and Rangani hamlets near Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary also found the techniques applied for mangrove plantations to be unscientific.

Source: 'Move to regenerate mangroves fails in

Orissa', *Statesman*, 17/06/2000.

Tourism complex planned on Chilika coast

The Orissa government has planned a major tourism complex on the Puri-Chilika coast. The government has already cleared a special tourism project at Sipasarubali, two kms from Puri towards Chilika. 3,283 acres of land have been identified for the project, which would be a vast complex housing entertainment parks, star hotels, a golf course, air strip and facilities for water sports. The Orissa Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (OIDC) has been asked to acquire the land, of which about a 1000 acres will be taken over in the first phase. The cost of land development which is estimated at around Rs. 20 crores will be borne jointly by OIDC and the Tourism Department.

Environmentalists have opposed the plan saying that this would result in the complete destruction of the Balukhand forests, which is also a wildlife sanctuary. They have also argued that the entire length of the coast here is important from the environmental point. Already illegal prawn farming and pollution have caused a lot of damage and the coast now needs to be protected.

Source: Ashutosh Mishra. 'Orissa plans tourism complex at Chilika coast', *The Pioneer*, 25/08/2000.

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

Special Task Force set up for Chilika

A special task force has been constituted by the Orissa Government to stop illegal fishing and poaching activity in Chilika lake. Personnel from the Indian Navy, Revenue Department, Forest Department, and the Fisheries Department would now patrol vulnerable areas of the lake. The task force would be headquartered at Satpada and is also expected to prevent the mushrooming of illegal prawn *gheries* in the lake. Chilika lake is being systematically destroyed by illegal prawn farms which have encroached upon vast patches of the waters here. This had lead to violent clashes between the traditional fishermen and outsiders who had set up these *gheries* (see *PA Updates* 22 and 21).

Source: Biswajit Mohanty. Email dated 04/08/2000.

Contact: **Anup Nayak**, see above

Biswajit Mohanty, see above.

Bird protection committee reduces poaching in Chilika

A bird protection committee, formed at Sorana village, has effectively brought down poaching in the Chilika lake area. Till a few months ago, Sorana was known for large scale poaching. The committee was formed four months ago following the initiative of the Division Forest Officer (DFO) here, Mr. AK Nayak. Villagers here decided not to kill any birds, nor allow their trade. A local NGO Wild Orissa has also helped the villagers and the forest department (FD) in this effort.

At a recent meeting held in the village, the villagers assured the FD that they will help eliminate poaching activity from the entire area. They however appealed to the DFO to make alternate livelihood arrangements as they were dependant on the birds for a living. A resolution was adopted to move the Chilika Development Authority and the Khurda collector to take up some alternate income generation activities here.

Source: 'Bird protection panel brings down poaching', *Indian Express*, 21/11/2000.

Contact: **Anup Nayak**, see above

Wild Orissa, S-R-I, OUAT Colony, Gopalbandhu Chowk, Bhubaneswar – 751001, Orissa.

Nandakishore Bhujbal, Wild Orissa At/Po Tangi, Dist. Khurda, Orissa.

New outlet from Chilika lake opened

A new, 40 feet wide outlet from Chilika lake to the sea was opened on 23rd September near the Shipkuda village. This was part of the lake development project being implemented by Chilika Development Authority at the cost of 27 crores. The new opening has reduced the distance between the lake and the sea to 7 kms. Earlier water from the lake used to flow for 32 km in a channel running parallel to the sea before joining it at the confluence point. The effort is aimed at increasing the salinity of the lake.

The move has however resulted in a sharp fall in the fish catch here and the local fishermen are reported to have been affected. The water level of the Chilika lake has gone down by almost 2 feet and the Irrawady river dolphins are now rarely sighted in and around Satpada. However it is believed that the long term impact of such an intervention will be beneficial for the ecosystem of the lake.

In the meanwhile, the arrival of winter migrants has started at Chilika. Shovellers and gadwalls were the first to arrive followed by wigeons and pintails. A larger number of birds are expected to winter in Chilika Lake this year in view of opening of the new mouth.

Source: Anup K. Nayak. Email to nathistory-

india@lists.princeton.edu dated
21/10/2000.

Contact: **Anup Nayak**, see above.

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

RAJASTHAN

Cell set up to deal with wildlife offences

Rajasthan has set up a Wildlife Cell in the Crime Branch of Rajasthan Police Headquarters, specially to deal with wildlife related offences. The cell was set up in April 2000 after discussions between Addl. DG of Police, Shantanu Kumar and the state Forest Secretary Salauddin Ahmed. A training for the 'Forest Department Investigators' was also conducted on the 14th of June, 2000.

Source: 'Wildlife Cell', *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

Contact: **Salauddin Ahmed**, Forest Secretary,
Govt. of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Rajasthan
Shantanu Kumar, Addl. DG of Police,
Police Headquarters, Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Joint management to begin in Sariska

An arrangement has been worked out by which the government and the villagers in the neighbourhood of Sariska Tiger Reserve will collaborate in the management of the park. There will be regular dialogue between the park authorities and members of the Sariska Management Committee (SMC) which will include villagers, officials, NGOs and experts.

The consensus on people's participation was reached at the end of a three day workshop that was organised by the Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS) in Sariska in September this year. The package, that was evolved includes immediate voluntary relocation of two villages inside the sanctuary, steps to improve crop yield and reduce weeds in the croplands surrounding the sanctuary, establishment of a voluntary protection force of youth and the formation of the SMC.

The TBS has expressed confidence that they would convince the villagers of Umri and Bagani, presently inside the park, to relocate voluntarily. The TBS has created a task force of 10 reformed poachers as tiger workers to protect the big cats here. Various agencies have also promised additional financial support for the management of the park. These include the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Project Tiger and the Irish ambassador who was present for the meeting.

Another decision taken at the meeting was related to tourism. Many participants were critical of the role of tourism and the TBS was of the opinion that the villagers got no benefit from tourism activities. It was decided that the park would now on be closed for tourists for a certain period of the year.

Source: Sunny Sebastian. 'A role for villagers in managing Sariska', *The Hindu*,
12/09/2000.

'Protecting Sariska-A workshop on community conservation', *Tigerlink*,
October 2000.

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

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

Ranthambhor NP to be renamed

The Rajasthan Cabinet has decided to rename the Ranthambhor National Park as the Rajiv Gandhi National Park. The move has been criticised by various people including senior conservationists and politicians like former Chief Minister of Rajasthan Bhairon Singh Shekhawat.

Source: 'Ranthambhor renamed as Rajiv Gandhi', *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

'Shekhawat opposes renaming of tiger sanctuary', *The Times of India*, 18/09/2000.
'Renaming of Ranthambhor resented', *The Hindu*, 16/09/2000.

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

Poachers kill member of Bishnoi community

Ganga Ram, a member of the Bishnoi community was killed when poachers hunting the endangered blackbuck fired at him. He was trying to prevent the poachers from hunting the animal at Chirai and Eklakhori villages under the Osian sub division of Jodhpur district when he was shot dead.

The members of the community kept the body of Ganga Ram for a long time without allowing the authorities to take it to Jodhpur for a post mortem. They were particularly agitated over the involvement of some influential persons in the team of poachers who were intercepted by Ganga Ram. They have also identified four persons from the group of poachers.

Source: News Items from *The Times of India* and

The Hindu dated 15/08/2000.

TAMIL NADU

Campaign to save Pulicat Lake

A loose coalition of environmental activists, academics and people from Kattupalli island have started a campaign to spread awareness on the ecological and economic importance of the island and the Pulicat lake. Large scale industrial development planned for the area severely threatens the lake system here (see *PA Updates* 24 and 23).

The Kattupalli island has been selected as the site for the petrochemical park to be set up by the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TNIDC). The other projects that are coming up here are the North Chennai Thermal Power Station (NCTPS) and the Ennore Satellite Port.

There are reports that the impacts of these projects are already beginning to be felt. The construction of sea walls for the Ennore Satellite Port has resulted in coastal erosion and accretion (sand build up). This has led to the formation of a sand bar across the mouth of the Ennore Creek, preventing the flushing out of the industrial pollution that is being let out into the creek.

The NCTPS too has been releasing hot coolant water at 40 degrees centigrade into the Buckingham canal which drains into the lake. Recently, fisherfolk from 29 surrounding villages tried to block the flow of water from the canal into the lake by using sandbags. Dead fish have been found floating in the lake waters and this is believed to have been caused by the rise in the water temperature and increasing pollution of the lake. The decision for direct action was taken after a meeting of leaders from all the 29 villages around the lake

It is estimated that the livelihoods of nearly one lakh people is dependant on the lake.

Source: 'Campaign to save Pulicat Lake ecosystem', *Business Line*, 03/07/2000.
'Pulicat lake area continues to be tense', *The Hindu*, 09/08/2000
'Fishworkers plea to save lake near Chennai', *Business Line*, 12/08/2000.

Three new sanctuaries proposed in state

The Tamil Nadu Forest Department (FD) has proposed the creation of new three new wildlife sanctuaries in the state. The areas identified for this are the forests of Hogenakkal, Kodaikanal and Meghmalai. Simultaneously there are other attempts of the FD for forest conservation. This includes the Centre-sponsored 'thrust area projects', under

which schemes for 16 thrust areas have been drawn up.

Source: '3 new sanctuaries proposed', *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

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

UTTAR PRADESH

Animal deaths by electrocution in Hastinapur

A large number of wild animals from the Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary continue to be electrocuted by the live electric wires that farmers have erected around their fields to save their crops. Crop protection in this manner is not only cost effective, but also generates additional income via the sale of the meat of the dead animals. Additionally the horns, bones, and skins are also sold in the market. The carcasses are usually thrown into the Ganga to avoid detection.

There have also been reports of human deaths due to electrocution by these same live fences. A few years ago the Wildlife Warden of the park had accidentally stepped on a live wire and had been injured seriously. According to statistics available with the Forest Department (FD), there were only six cases of electrocution in 1999, five of blackbucks and one of a hog deer. Nineteen people have been arrested here so far in the connection of the electrocution of animals.

Source: Swati Sharma. 'Animals fall prey to live electric wires', *Statesman*, 18/06/2000.

Ranipur WLS benefits due to activities of a dacoit

The 230 sq. kms. Ranipur Wildlife Sanctuary in the Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh has benefitted by the activities of a dacoit popularly known as *dadua*. This has been admitted even by the Chief Wildlife Warden of the state, Mr. Ramlakhan Singh.

Dadua has been operating in the ravines of Bundelkhand and the forests of the sanctuary have helped him outsmart the police in the area for over 10 years. There was a case in the recent past when the dacoit tipped off the sanctuary's wildlife warden of the plan of one of his staff members to kill a sambhar in the sanctuary. The man was subsequently punished by the department.

It is also due to *dadua* that there is virtually no poaching in the sanctuary and that illicit felling of trees is under check. Officials admit that it is the dacoit who has instilled a fear in timber smugglers and poachers and that they are benefitted tremendously in their work because of this.

Source: Hemendra Narayan. 'Thanks to a dacoit, the jungle is safe', *Statesman*, 13/09/2000.

Gang smuggling sandalwood from Hastinapur WLS busted

Forest officials arrested eight members of a gang involved in smuggling sandalwood from Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary and neighbouring forests in the month of August (also see *PA Updates* 25, 23 and *JPAM Update* 19). The kingpin of the gang, a person by the name Yaseen, however, managed to give the authorities the slip. More than 50 Kgs of sandalwood valued at over Rs. 12 lakh was seized from the gang. This is one of the biggest catch of sandalwood in recent times. The forest department had also arrested 6 other people about a month earlier and they are now under trial.

The gang leaders are reportedly regulating their entire network from Delhi and earning huge profits by dumping the sandalwood into the market of holy cities like Mathura and Haridwar.

Source: 'Sandalwood smugglers' gang busted in Meerut', *Hindustan Times*, 21/08/2000.

Land being bought in Govind Pashu Vihar

There are reports that the rich and powerful from Delhi and other North Indian cities have been buying large chunks of land at various places in the Garhwal hills including the Govind Pashu Vihar. The *Parvathiya Vikas Samithi* (PVS), has been agitating against this large scale buying of land in the area by outsiders. According to the PVS most of the land on both sides of the 11 kms long road that runs from Netwar to Sakhri through the sanctuary has already been bought up. The land price in the area too has gone up four times in the last two years. Whereas, two years ago the cost of land was Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 50,000 per acre, today the price has gone up to Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 lakhs per acre.

According to Mr. DR Goyal, the Director of the Govind Pashu Vihar, the outsiders may be buying revenue land in the 47 revenue villages inside the sanctuary.

Source: VJ Thomas. 'Rich on land buying spree', *The Times of India*, 06/11/2000.

Contact: **CWLW**-UP, 17, Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow – 226001, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0522-283864. Fax: 283868.

WEST BENGAL

Govt to take steps for wildlife conservation

The West Bengal government has taken up new measures to check poaching of wild animals. The move resulted after the seizure of 13 tiger skins and skeletons of four killed tigers from different places in the state in the past one year following combing operations made by the forest officials and the police.

An attempt is being made to build up better administrative relations between the police and the forest officials to control the poaching and killings of animals. Strategies are also being planned to decrease population pressures on the reserve forests.

Source: 'Govt. to take steps for forest conservation', *The Times of India*, 05/11/2000.

UNDP to assist FD for management of Jaldapara

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has sanctioned a grant of US\$ 200,000 for the implementation of the Management Plan for Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary. The plan had been earlier put together by the Forest Department (FD) with UNDP assistance.

The first installment of the funds has been received in March. The plan is said to have a substantial component of Eco-development through people's participation.

Source: 'UNDP & FD join hands to manage wilderness areas', *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

Contact: **DFO**- Jaldapara WLS, Forest Dept., Cooch Behar Division, PO & Dist. Cooch Behar, West Bengal.

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

SC bans removal of resources from PAs

The Supreme Court (SC) has banned the removal of dead, dying, diseased, wind fallen trees and grasses from national parks and sanctuaries across the country. The order was passed in February earlier this year in response to an Interlocutory Application (I.A.) prepared and filed by LAW-E under the forest matter CWP NO. 202 of 1995 in TN Godavarman Thirumalpad Vs. Union of India.

The I.A. was filed following orders issued by the governments of Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka dated June 11 and November 9/13, 2000 respectively, allowing large scale commercial operations for the removal of dead, dying and diseased and wind fallen trees, drift wood and grasses through their Forest Development Corporations, from areas notified as sanctuaries and national parks.

While some have welcomed the order as it will prevent the removal of timber and other destructive activities in PAs, others have expressed concern that the worst affected by this order are local communities who depend on these areas for their survival needs.

Source: 'Supreme Court bans removal of dead, dying, diseased, wind fallen trees and grasses from national parks and sanctuaries', *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

Contact: **LAW-E**, 409, Lawyers Chambers, Supreme Court, Bhagwan Das Road, New Delhi – 110001. Tel: 011-3070029. Email: lawe@bol.net.in

SC bans denotifications of PAs

The Supreme Court (SC) has restrained all state governments and union territories from denotifying any area inside national park and sanctuaries created under the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WLPA) – 1972. The court's order came in view of the Madhya Pradesh government's controversial decision to denotify parts of its reserve forests and protected areas. The bench gave four week's time to the state governments and union territories to file their responses to a public interest litigation filed by the Centre for Environmental Law (CEL) and the World Wide Fund for Nature – India (WWF-I).

It may be recollected that in the last couple of years many denotifications of protected areas have been proposed (and even carried out) under the Settlement of Rights (SOR) process (section 19-15 of the WLPA) following the order of the Supreme Court (SC) in a petition filed by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – India. (See *PA Updates* 21 and 20). (*Note: Settlement of Rights is a requirement of the WLPA and not a result of the WWF case alone*)

Source: 'Apex court bans dereservation of forest land', *The Times of India*, 14/11/2000.

Contact: **Raj Panjwani**, Advocate, Chamber 339, Delhi High Court, New Delhi.

Expert panel suggests marine sanctuary status for mass nesting sites of sea turtles

An expert panel on endangered sea turtles has

suggested declaration of mass nesting sites of turtles as marine sanctuaries and use of the turtle excluder device (TED) in fishing nets in all mechanised trawlers in mass nesting areas. The panel was appointed by the Union Agriculture Ministry following the US ban on import of shrimps from countries not using TED in shrimp trawlers. It was coordinated by the Director of the Kochi based Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

The panel identified littoral drifts causing beach erosion, casuarina plantations in areas close to the high tide line, construction of jetties, harbours and tourist complexes as the major reasons for the degradation of turtle breeding and nesting grounds.

The panel has suggested that TED should be made mandatory for the entire Orissa coast; and the Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh during the period November to April. In the turtle nesting areas in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry the panel has suggested that TED should be mandatory from December to April and can be limited to a four month period starting December on the coast of Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram districts of Kerala.

Source: KS Sudhi. 'Declare mass nesting areas of turtles as marine sanctuaries: Expert Committee', *New Indian Express*, 09/06/2000.

Contact: **Director**, CMFRI, PB 1603, Tatapuram, PO Kochi– 682014, Kerala. Tel: 0484-394867. Fax: 394909. Email: mdcmfri@md2.vsnl.net.in

EIA urges India to take US help for wildlife protection unit

The London based Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) has urged the Prime Minister of India to take assistance from the United States of America (USA) to create a special wildlife crime enforcement unit. The suggestion was made in the light of the recent large scale seizure of wildlife products including tiger claws, bone and tiger and leopard skins.

The agency has pointed out that at the 11th meeting of the United Nations' Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), held recently in April, India had agreed to set up such an agency. The move for this was however blocked by the Finance Ministry.

Source: 'India urged to take US help in forming wildlife protection unit', *The Hindu*, 29/09/2000.

Contact: **EIA**, 69 Old Street, London EC1V 9HX, UK, Tel: +41 (0) 171 4907040. Fax: +41

Elephant poaching on the rise

A Central anti-poaching fund of Rs. 257 lakhs has failed to prevent the killing of an average of a 100 elephants each year for the last three years in the 12 elephant range states in the country.

As many as 288 elephants have been killed in the last three years, a majority of them in Orissa. The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has also identified 24 sensitive areas and stressed the need for measures to save the elephants. These areas include Karbi Anglong and Darrang in Assam, Singhbhum and Palamu in Bihar, Bandipur, Nagarhole, Bhadra and Kollegal in Karnataka, Wynad, Rani-Konni and Idukki in Kerala, East Garo Hills, Tura Forest, and Khasi Hills in Meghalaya, Simlipal, Bonai, Satkosia Gorge and Athgarh in Orissa, Nilgiri North and Mudumalai in Tamil Nadu, Rajaji and Corbett in Uttar Pradesh and Jalpaiguri in West Bengal.

Source: Shivnath Jha. 'Free run for pachyderm poachers', *Statesman*, 01/08/2000.

Task Force recommends bifurcation of MoEF

A task force of the Planning Commission on Agroforestry and Joint Forest Management (JFM) under the Chairmanship of Dr. DN Tewari, has recommended the bifurcation of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) into the Department of Forests and a Department of Environment. The same has also been strongly suggested by Bittu Sahgal, Editor, Sanctuary Magazine and Valmik Thapar, Member, Steering Committee, Project Tiger in a recent issue of the Sanctuary Magazine.

The task force has also recommended that the government should provide Rs. 4,600 crores annually to fulfill the policy objective to have 33% of the country under forest cover. It has further suggested the setting up of a Green India Fund to raise additional financial resources from various domestic and external sources.

Source: 'Task Force recommends bifurcation of MoEF', *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

'Split Environment and Forest Ministry :Experts', *Indian Express*, 09/10/2000.

Contact: **Bittu Sahgal**, Sanctuary Magazine, 602, Maker Chambers V, Nariman Point, Mumbai – 400021, Maharashtra, Tel: 022-2830061 / 81. Fax: 2874380. Email: bittusahgal@vsnl.com

Parliamentary group of Environment and Wildlife

A group of 18 MPs from both the houses of Parliament have come together to form a Parliamentary Group of Environment and Wildlife (PGEW). These include Rajya Sabha MP, Mr. Karan Singh, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Ms. Maneka Gandhi, Mr. Amar Singh, Mr. Pritish Nandy, Mr. BP Singhal, Dr. Dasari Narayan Rao, Mr. Kartar Singh Duggal, Mr. Biplab Dasgupta and Ms. Chandresh Kumari. Mr. Karan Singh is the convenor of the group.

The first meeting of the group was held in the capital, New Delhi on August 1, 2000.

Source: 'Parliamentary Group of Environment and Wildlife' *Tigerlink*, October 2000.

Call to declare part of Western Ghats as eco-sensitive

The National Committee for the Protection of Natural Resources (NCPNR) and the NGO, Paryavarni have urged the Union government to convene a meeting of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Goa with voluntary organisations for declaring a portion of the Western Ghats as an ecologically sensitive area (ESA). The area proposed as an ESA would include the protected areas of Anshi National Park, the Dandeli WLS and the proposed Bhimgad WLS in Karnataka, the Cotigao, Netravali, Bhagwan Mahaveer, Bondla and Madei WL Sanctuaries in Goa and the Radhanagari WLS in Maharashtra. It would also include large areas of reserve forests and cover forests that are the sources of many important rivers here.

The call to declare the area an ESA is being made under Section 3 (2) v of the Environment (Protection) Act of 1986, Sec 5 (v) of the Environment (Protection) Rules of 1986 and guidelines for industries laid down by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests. It is hoped that declaring the area as an ESA will protect the fragile ecology of the region and help ward off threats like hazardous and polluting industries (also see *PA Update 26*).

Meetings of NGOs, activists and individuals working in the matter were organised in September in Belgaum and then in Kolhapur in November, where the concept and implications of declaring an area as eco-sensitive area were discussed.

Source: 'Plea to declare Sahyadri Biosphere ecologically sensitive area', *The Hindu*, 04/08/2000.

M Madan Mohan. 'Declare portion of W Ghats as ESA:NCPNR', *The Hindu*,

13/08/2000.

'Centre okays move on Western Ghats',
Deccan Herald, 13/08/2000.

Contact: **Paryavarani**, Mohd.Ali
Road, Tilakwadi,

Belgaum – 590006, Karnataka.

SR Hiremath, Samaj Parivartan
Samudaya, Ashadeep, Jayanagar Cross,
Saptapur, Dharwad - 580001, Karnataka.
Tel: 0836 – 774472 / 777430. Email:

jvs_hiremath@vsnl.com

Kanchi Kohli, E-180, GK II, New Delhi –
110048. Tel: 011-6414488 / 6291379.
Email: kanchik@vsnl.com

Meagre amount sanctioned for settlement of rights

The Centre today informed the Supreme Court that a meagre amount of Rs 45 crores has been sanctioned for settlement of rights of people living inside the 540 odd national parks and sanctuaries in the country.

Solicitor-General Harish Salve submitted before a bench comprising Justice SP Bharucha, Justice SSM Quadri and Justice N Santosh Hegde that this amount was against a sum of Rs 600 crores required for the purpose of settlement of rights.

Mr Salve also said that the Centre, in consultation with the states, proposes to set up a paramilitary force to protect forests as giving sophisticated arms to forest guards would not serve the purpose.

Source: 'Meagre amount sanctioned for the settlement of rights' *Press Trust of India*, 31/08/2000.

Scheme for ecodevelopment in and around PAs

The National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board (NAEB) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has drafted a set of guidelines for its *Samanvit Gram Vaikaran Samriddhi Yojana* (SGVSY) or 'Integrated Village Afforestation and Ecodevelopment Scheme'.

This Centrally sponsored scheme is to be implemented in all the Territorial Forest/ Wildlife Divisions in the country, which are estimated to be around 650. In order to integrate and co-ordinate the administration and activity of village level forest committees, a 'Federation of Forest Committees (FFCs)' is proposed to be constituted at the Territorial/ Wildlife Division level. Each of these divisions will constitute the planning unit or the project area for the Forest Development Agency (FDA), which are to be established on the lines of the DRDA. Each FDA will be headed by the respective Zilla Panchayat Adhyaksha, with the

respective Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) as its Member Secretary – cum- Chief Executive Officer.

There is a component of this scheme for ecodevelopment in and around national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. The main objective here is to reduce the dependence of local communities on the biomass resources of the PAs and at the same time mitigate the negative impact of the PA on the people.

Contact: **NAEB**, MoEF, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO
Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi –
110003.

Joint Forest Management (JFM) and PAs

A workshop jointly organised by the Indian Council of Forestry and Research and Education (ICFRE) and the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in June 2000 in New Delhi on the topic 'A decade of JFM' has issued a set of recommendations related to JFM. Following were the recommendations related to JFM and the PA network

- Section 29 and 35 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act – 1972 were identified as legal constraints in extending JFM to the PA network. The WLPA needs to be relooked at.
- Addressing people's needs and concerns is necessary
- Principles of JFM are recognised as a prerequisite for eliciting active support of local population in PA management.
- Modified approach on JFM may be developed for PA management
- Ecodevelopment activities undertaken in PAs may be dovetailed with JFM in PAs
- Settlement package on the lines of development projects needed to gain the goodwill of the people
- Grazing policy in consonance with JFM objectives to be adopted.

Contact: **Director General**, ICFRE, PO New
Forest, Dehradun – 248006, Uttarakhand.
Tel: 0135 – 757021-757028. Fax: 750298.

Guidelines for diversion of forest land from PAs for non-forestry purposes

In a letter issued to the Secretary (Forests) of all the states and union territories of the country, the Asst. Inspector General of Forests, Govt. of India, has stated that the MoEF has taken a decision not to permit development activities inside national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and tiger reserves that are not in consonance of section 29 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, (WLPA)- 1972.

The letter has suggested that the states and union territories should avoid recommending use of forest areas inside PAs for non forest purposes. Wherever this is inescapable, the state government has been advised to first get the consent of the Indian Board for Wildlife (IBWL) for getting approval of the state legislature for denotification of the area as sanctuary. Only after receiving this clearance, should the proposal under the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) – 1980 be submitted to the Central Government for consideration, otherwise it will not be considered.

Additionally, in respect of certain proposals which do not involve a protected area, but is reported to be rich in wildlife or forms corridors for wild animals, the state government should furnish specific comments of the state Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) on the proposal submitted under the FCA for approval.

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

Information needed: Mining threats to wildlife

Kalpavriksh is collating information on mining threats to wildlife habitats (both within and outside PAs) in India. Information needed includes details of habitat being mined, concerned mineral, mining company or agency, damage caused etc. A questionnaire to enable to furnish the necessary information is also available.

Contact: **Neeraj Vaghlikar** (at the editorial address)

SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN

Lake Abi Estada severely threatened

Abi Estada of Ghazni Province, one of the largest stopover and breeding grounds for thousands of migratory as well as resident waterfowl is severely threatened due to a very severe drought. This high altitude lake supports large breeding colonies of the Greater Flamingo and is also visited by the highly endangered Siberian Crane.

Presently however, Afghanistan is facing its worst water crisis in three decades, which has affected up to 12 million people. The water content of Abi Estada has dropped 80% in comparison to the normal year. Additionally, about 10,000 *kuchis* (nomads) have also been brought to the area to save their livestock.

Source: Mr. Hussaini. Email to
environmentaljournalists@egroups.com
dated 05/11/2000.

Contact: **Mr. Hussaini**. Email:
hussaini@pes.comsats.net.pk

BANGLADESH

\$ 77 million Sunderbans project launched

The Bangladesh government has launched a six year Sunderban Biodiversity Conservation Project (SBCP) at a cost of US \$ 77 million. The project which began on April 1, 2000, will develop a management system for long term sustainable conservation of biodiversity in the Sunderban Reserved Forest (SRF). This includes the impact zone involving 17 Upazilas and 20 kms of seaward side off the Sunderban coast. The project was taken up following the declaration of the Sunderbans as a World Heritage Site in February 1999 (see *PA Updates* 23, 22, and 21).

The project will also attempt to reduce demand on the forests by social and economic development of the local people and will promote environmental awareness and support for the conservation of Sunderban Reserved Forest.

The Forest Ministry is also setting up in the Sunderbans a gene bank to protect the biodiversity of the region. This will be the first mangrove gene bank in the world and is being initiated under the World Bank's Forest Research Management Project.

Source: '\$ 77 m Sunderban Project launched',
Bangladesh Observer, 05/07/2000.
'Gene bank to be set up in Sunderbans',
Bangladesh Observer, 09/07/2000.

Shell to explore for oil in the Sunderbans

Oil major, Shell, is planning to survey the Sunderbans for oil and gas after company geologists pinpointed this area as one of the richest reserves in the world. Shell confirmed recently that it had signed a contract with Caim Energy, another British company to start exploring the area. The government of Bangladesh has also approved of the plan for the exploration. Shell has claimed that its activities will be limited to that part of the Sunderbans that is not within the limits of the World

Heritage site.

Environmental groups like the Friends of Earth Bangladesh, have opposed this move and have said that any kind of exploration activity will adversely affect the ecology of the region. (also see *PA Updates* 25, 22 and 21).

Source: 'Shell oil project threatens Sunderbans tiger reserve', *Asian Age*, 22/08/2000.

Global warming to affect Sunderbans

The draft report of the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), titled 'Considering Adaptation to Climate Change in the Sustainable Development in Bangladesh' has warned that global warming severely threatens the mangroves of the Sunderbans. According to the report, a possible 45 cms (18 inches) rise in sea level by the year 2050 may inundate 75 % of the Sunderbans.

Source: 'B'desh forest threatened', *Kathmandu Post*, 30/08/2000.
'Eco-systems at great risk', *Bangladesh Observer*, 31/08/2000.

Marine Park in St. Martin's Island

A marine park is to be established in Narikel Jinjira in the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh's only coral island, better known as St. Martin's Island. The island is one of the few areas in the world where coral-algal communities dominate rocky reefs. It also has significant breeding areas for the globally threatened marine turtle species and is a major wintering ground for migratory waterfowl.

The marine park project worth Taka 13.5 crore was undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests to address the issues of the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources here. The implementation work of the government funded five year project will be carried out by the National Conservation Strategy (NCS). The NCS has already formulated the management plan for the coral resources here. The island has been divided into six parts for this purpose. These are 1) Lands for general use (2) Buffer areas, (3) Coral growing zone, (4) Coral conservation zone, (5) Turtle breeding areas, and (6) Coral sanctuary.

Source: Shakhwat Hussain. 'Marine park to be set up in St. Martin's Island', *Bangladesh Observer*, 17/08/2000.

2 eco-parks to be set up in Sherpur district

The Bangladesh Ministry of Forests and Environment is going to establish two separate eco-parks at Madhulita and Ghazni Recreational Centre

under the Mymensingh Forest Division in Sherpur district. The project worth Taka 2 crores is expected to be completed in 2000-2001. Tourism development and biodiversity conservation are the twin objectives of this project.

Source: '2 eco-parks to be set up in Sherpur', *Bangladesh Observer*, 08/08/2000.

NEPAL

Call to develop Kaligandaki Gorge as nature recreation park

Karna Shakya, a prominent tourism entrepreneur and former park warden, has appealed to the government of Nepal to develop the Kaligandaki Gorge into Nepal's first nature recreation park, on lines similar to the Grand Canyon National Park in the United States of America.

He was speaking at a programme recently organised in Kathmandu by UNDP's Park and People Programme and the King Mahindra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC). He was of the opinion that this would bring this beautiful natural heritage of Nepal before the eyes of the world and also help in boosting tourism in the area. He also felt that the place had the potential of being included in UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Source: 'Call to develop Kaligandaki gorge', *Kathmandu Post*, 26/08/2000.

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

PAKISTAN

Drought affects Khirthar

An unusually long dry spell in May and June resulted in the death of a large number of endangered animals in the Khirthar National Park. According to preliminary reports, 22 animals including 18 of the extremely rare Sindh ibex and 4 Urials perished due to the scarcity of water. The scarcity was particularly acute in the higher altitudes and therefore affected the Sindh ibex which is a higher altitude species. The water scarcity had also made these animals weaker and more vulnerable to predators like wolves and foxes.

There are 14 major springs in this national park spread over an area of over 3000 sq. kms. The water output of these springs had gone down by 50% because of the weather conditions. Special efforts were made to provide water with the help of water tankers to different sites in the park.

The park authorities have also identified 10

sites in the park where they propose to install solar or wind powered tube wells – each costing around Rs.1 million. Lack of financial resources has prevented the project from being implemented.

Source: '22 animals die in six weeks: Drought endangers rare species in KNP', *Dawn*, 15/06/2000.

Water level in Haleji lake drops

The Haleji lake, a Ramsar site, and one of the major wetlands located on the Indus Flyway, is faced with a serious drop in its water level. Situated some 80 kms from the city of Karachi, it plays host to over 100,000 migratory waterfowl of over 200 species annually.

In June, earlier this year, the lake was faced with the double threat of drop in the level of the lake and its water surface being covered with weeds. The water level in the lake is maintained by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KW&SB) which earlier used to supply water to the city directly from this lake. Since last year however, the KW&SB has started supplying water to the city from the Indus sources directly and not through the Haleji lake. As a result the importance of the lake for KW&SB has declined. Weeding of the lake has also been stopped and this has led to a large part of the lake's water surface being covered.

The Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) which carried out a study of the lake, has requested the authorities including the KW&SB and the Irrigation Department to take steps for preventing the lake from being destroyed.

Source: 'Karachi: Haleji water level drops', *Dawn*, 20/06/2000.

WWF identifies 87 wetlands

Eighty seven wetlands have been identified in Pakistan in a preliminary list prepared by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), in pursuance of a UN sponsored programme for the sustainable utilisation of wetlands. WWF- Pakistan would prepare a proposal for implementation of a Global Environment Facility (GEF) project to this effect and submit it to the government of Pakistan. The wetlands listed come under various categories like Ramsar sites, game reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and 'non protected' wetlands.

Source: 'WWF identifies 87 wetlands', *Dawn*, 18/08/2000.

SRI LANKA

ADB to fund ecodevelopment project

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has agreed to provide the Sri Lankan government a soft loan of US\$ 45 million to fund a nature reserve conservation and ecotourism project. The project was planned in one and a half years by various agencies including Ministries such as Environment and Fisheries and Departments like Wildlife Conservation and Coast Conservation.

The project funds would be used to 'uplift' the living conditions of the inhabitants in the buffer zones of national parks and obtain their co-operation in preserving the nature reserves.

Source: Chittaranjan de Silva. 'ADB to help fund eco-tourism project', *The Island*, 09/07/2000.

Large scale illegal activities in national parks

Despite the stringent measures taken by the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWLC), a large number of illegal activities continue in national parks and nature reserves in Sri Lanka. Illegal gem mining, in particular, has badly affected Wagamuwa, Uda Walawe and the Norton Plains National Parks (also see *PA Update* 21).

The other illegal activities taking place in these parks include hunting and poaching, felling of trees, removing of plants and deliberately setting fire to the forests. Plant nurseries in Colombo have been majorly responsible for the removal of flora of ornamental and medicinal value from the parks.

There have also been reports of sea shell collection and tree felling from the Bundala National Park and hunting in the Yala National Park. In Yala, however, hunting and poaching has been brought under control, after the Sri Lankan army took control of some parts of the park.

Source: Shanika Sriyananda. 'Animals killed, rare plants stolen in National Parks', *Sunday Observer*, 23/07/2000.

Garbage dumping threatening Bellanwila-Attidiya marsh

Bellanwila-Attidiya marsh, a wildlife sanctuary and the only remaining wetland in Colombo is under threat due to encroachment, unlawful construction and garbage dumping. The 372 acre marsh which was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1990, plays an important role in flood control in the area and supports many rare species of fauna and flora. Environmentalists have protested against this destruction of the lake and pointed out that already a quarter of the lake has been destroyed.

Source: Shanika Sriyananda. 'Bellanwila-Attidiya

marsh now a garbage dump', *Sri Lanka Observer*, 20/08/2000.

Sri Lanka's elephant population rising

Sri Lanka's elephant population is reportedly growing, despite the threat from poachers and land mines. According to latest figures the population now numbers between 4,000 and 4,500, with nearly 1,500 born in the past five years. Better wildlife management, protection of forests and education of villagers have helped in the matter. However, the population is still just a fraction of the 20,000 elephants that flourished at the time of Sri Lanka's independence in 1948.

Poachers kill about 150 elephants every year, while several fall victim annually to traps set by villagers trying to save their crops from being damaged by elephants in remote areas bordering jungles. Elephants are also falling victim to the 17-year conflict between the government and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). A number of elephants have been killed after stepping on land mines.

Source: 'Sri Lanka's elephant population rising', *Kyodo News Agency*, 26/08/2000

Fear of epidemic among wild elephants

The Department of Wildlife Conservation has denied that Sri Lanka's already threatened wild elephants are suffering from a deadly epidemic. The concerns had arisen following the detection of a parasite known as 'liver flue' in a diseased baby elephant which died in July earlier this year. Officials of the Department have said that this was not the first time that the parasite had been detected and epidemic proportions had not yet been reached.

Source: Shanika Sriyananda. 'No danger of epidemic among jumbos', *Sri Lanka Observer*, 06/08/2000.

INTERNATIONAL

New Protected Areas Web Sites

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) has launched a website to enhance communication and further the work of WCPA members and the IUCN community. The website, which was inaugurated at the October, 2000 meeting of the IUCN in Amman, Jordan, can be found at <http://wcpa.iucn.org/welcome.html>

Source: Email from nayan@slt.net dated 08/11/2000

UPCOMING

Short course on conservation biology for students

The Ashoka Trust for Research In Ecology and the Environment, (ATREE) is organising a short course on conservation biology for senior graduate and post graduate students from universities and colleges in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The course will be field based with a solid foundation in the scientific principles and practices of conservation biology. It is to be conducted from January 2-16, 2001.

Contact: **T.Ganesh**, ATREE, 659 5th A, Main road, Hebbal, Bangalore 560024, Karnataka. Tel: 080 – 3530069 / 3533942. Fax: 3530070. Email: tganesh@atree.org

Course on Ecodevelopment for Biodiversity Conservation

A one month short term module based training course on 'Ecodevelopment for Biodiversity Conservation' is being organised at the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun from 8th January to 7th February 2001.

The course fee is Rs. 25,000 per Indian candidate and US\$ 2,000 per foreign participant.

Contact: **VB Sawarkar**, Addl. Director, WII, PB No. 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun – 248001, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135 – 640111-15, 640990. Fax: 640117. Email: wii@wii.gov.in

International training workshop on PA management and conservation

The Scientific and Cultural Society of Pakistan is organizing an International Training Workshop on Management and Conservation of Protected Areas in collaboration with IUCN Pakistan. The workshop will be held from January 20-31, 2001 in Karachi. Workshop topics will include among others; protected areas systems planning, water management, threatened species management, community based protected areas, monitoring techniques in protected areas, managing small populations of wildlife in protected areas, eco-tourism and protected areas and impacts of climatic

change. on protected areas.

Applicants are expected to have a good command of English and must have a good B.Sc. or equivalent degree or field experience equal to such level. The total tuition fee is US \$400, but a waiver is available for deserving candidates.

Contact: **Director**, Training Workshop on Management and Conservation of Protected Areas, The Scientific and Cultural Society of Pakistan, Head Office: B-7 Sheet No. 25 Model Colony Karachi-75100 Pakistan. Fax: (92-21) 409-336 E-mail: zaheerk2k@yahoo.com; zaheer@scsp.khi.sdnpk.org

5th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights

The 5th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights, organised by the Conservation and Livelihoods Network (CLN) is to be held in North Bengal in the month of April, 2000. The final dates and the venue are being fixed and will be announced shortly.

Contact: **Pankaj Sekhsaria**, at the editorial address below
Ruchi Pant, ATREE, Bungalow No. 2, Near Airforce Officers Enclave, Bhujjapani
PO Bagdogra, Darjeeling – 734422, West Bengal. Tel: 0353 – 550093 / 551110. Email: atree@dte.vsnl.net.in

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Information needed on diseases and wildlife

Well known veterinarian and member of the Wild Diseases Committee (WDC) of the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE), Dr. Jacob Cheeran has written in saying that he is trying to collect information regarding incidents/outbreaks of diseases in wild animals in protected areas.

There is no such information at the present and this is simply because these have either not been reported or not noticed at all. A data bank of this kind would go a long way in the health management aspects of wild animals.

Contact: **Dr. Jacob Cheeran**, 135, Nehrunagar, Thrissur – 680006, Kerala. Tel: 0487 – 420547. Fax: 421508. Email: info@vethealth.com; info@cheerans.com

Toxics and Wildlife

The Chintan environmental research and action group, in collaboration with other groups is planning to start work on issues related to toxics and their impacts on wildlife in India. The group has requested for information (even that which is old) and ideas on how this work can be taken up.

Contact: **Bharati Chaturvedi**, Chintan, 238 Sidhartha Enclave, New Delhi – 110014. Email: bharatich@hotmail.com

Vacancies at the Wildlife Trust of India

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) has invited applications for the following posts:

1. Project Officer, Elephant Conservation Project (ECP)/ Wild Species programme: The candidate should have a master's degree, preferably in wildlife or environment-related field of social or natural science, and at least two years' experience of working in the field of wildlife conservation. The post is based in Delhi but may involve extensive travelling.

2. Two Technical Field Officers, Elephant Conservation Project / Wild Species Programme: Two technical field officers are required for the ECP to work on an intensive demographic study of wild elephants in selected monitoring sites for the period of one year. This is one of the important components of the ECP. The candidates should have a wildlife biology background with at least 2 years field experience. The basic training for the demographic monitoring will be provided by the project. One post is for a site in Northeast India and the other is in the state of Orissa.

3. Wild Lands Officer: The Wild Lands programme of the WTI aims 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. The first project in this programme looks at elephant migration corridors.

The Wild Lands officer will assist the Wild Lands Coordinator in conceptualising, planning and implementing the programme. Candidates with at least two years experience and background in wildlife biology and a demonstrated interest in preservation and planning of wildlife habitats will be preferred.

4. Public Affairs Coordinator: The Public Affairs Coordinator will be expected to develop the WTI's Public Affairs cell, the main aim of which is to create an effective communications strategy.

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

Vacancies at ATREE

The Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) has invited applications for 3 senior positions at its Bangalore unit. Applicants must be Indian citizens.

1. Social Scientist: The applicant is expected to provide inputs to ATREE's ongoing programs on land-use change, community based conservation, integrated forest management, and environmental education.

2. Environmental Economist/Policy Analyst: The applicant is expected to provide inputs to ATREE's ongoing programs on micro-enterprises, community based conservation, integrated forest management, and environmental education.

3. GIS/ Remote Sensing Specialist: The applicant is expected to head ATREE's GIS team and provide inputs to ATREE's ongoing programs on land-use change and natural resource management. Applicants will be responsible for developing the GIS unit at ATREE.

Qualifications common to all three posts: Preferably, Ph.D in the respective fields with one or two years of experience. Exceptional candidates with Master's degree and 3-5 years of relevant experience will also be considered.

Contact: **Director**, ATREE, 659, 5th A Main Rd., Hebbal, Bangalore 560024. Phone: 80-3533942 Fax: 80-3530070. Email: director@atree.org or info@atree.org
Website: www.atree.org

WHAT'S AVAILABLE

- Saberwal, V., Rangarajan, M., and Kothari, A. *People, Parks & Wildlife, Towards Coexistence*. Orient Longman, New Delhi.

This is the 14th in the 'Tract for the Times' series from Orient Longman. This book traces the roots of the problems of the ideology of conservation in India today, and discusses its historical and conceptual basis. The book advocates that it is only through a participatory policy of conservation, that the hostility of local communities to conservation

can be overcome.

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Oxford. *Human Development Report 2000*.

Contact: **UNDP**, 55 Lodi Estate, Post Box 3059, New Delhi – 110 003. Tel: 0114628877. Fax: 4627612. Email: fo.ind@undp.org
Website: www.undp.org.in

- Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi. *State of India's Environment: The Citizen's Fifth Report*.

Fifth in the line of pioneering work in the field of environment in India. The report consists of two parts. Part I presents a report on environmental issues, events, policies and practices. Part II provides a statistical database on different aspects of India's environment.

Contact: **Centre for Science and Environment**, 41, Tukhlabad Institutional Area, New Delhi – 110062. Tel: 011-6981110 / 1124 / 3394 / 6399. Fax: 6985879/ 0870. Email: srabani@cseindia.org Website: www.cseindia.org

- *Van Sahyog*

This is a bimonthly 'JFM Network Newsletter' published by the National Support Group (NSG) JFM, Society for the Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD).

Contact: **Vanita Suneja**, NSG, SPWD, 1, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi – 110001. Tel: 011-3235994/6387/6440. Email: spwd@sdalt.ernet.in; spwd@vsnl.com

- James, A., Green, M. and Paine, J. *A Global Review of Protected Area Budgets and Staff*. World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), 1999.

This is the tenth in the WCMC Biodiversity Series based on research carried out by the WCMC in 1993 and 1995. As part of this study over 600 protected area agencies were surveyed to obtain data on their budgets and staffing levels.

According to the study the global mean budget for protected areas was US\$ 893 per sq. km in 1996. The mean for the developed countries was US\$ 2058 per sq. km, while for developing countries it was US\$ 157. The global mean staff input was 27 per 1000 sq. km protected. The developed countries mean staff input was 26.9 per

1000 sq. km, slightly lower than the developing country level of 27.6.

Contact: **WCMC**, 219 Huntingdon Road, Cambridge, CB3 0DL, UK. Tel: +44 1223 277314. Fax: +44 1223 277136. Email: wcmc@wcc.org.uk Website: <http://www.wcmc.org.uk>

- Flamingo Newsletter

This is a monthly newsletter published by the Ajmer based Wildlife Conservation Society of India. The Flamingo Newsletter aims to promote national and international cooperation and exchange of information related to the conservation of flamingoes.

Contact: **Prof. Dr. SP Bhatnagar**, A-51, Mansarovar Colony, Vaishalinagar, Ajmer – 305001, Rajasthan. Tel: 0145 – 642316

- Alfred, JRB, Mehta, HS, Sharma, V and Paliwal R. Some Migratory Birds of Pong Wetland, Himachal Pradesh. Zoological Survey of India, Solan.

This is a simple field guide, with colour plates and written information to identify the migratory birds of the Pong Dam Wildlife Sanctuary.

Contact: **State Council for Science, Technology and Environment**, 34 SDA Complex, Kasumpti, Shimla - 171009, Himachal Pradesh.

- Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS). *Sariska Vaibhav*. TBS, Thanagazi.

A guide in Hindi to the places of importance and interest found around Sariska. The book also has information on the common trees found here.

- Tarun Bharat Sangh. *Dialogue on Sariska*. TBS, Thanagazi

This book is a compilation of various papers depicting the work done by the TBS in the Sariska region over the last many years

- Shrotriya Prof. M. *Regenerating of Forest*. Tarun Bharat Sangh, Thanagazi.

An account of the work of the Tarun Bharat Sangh and its work in and around Sariska.

Contact: (For the above three) **Tarun Bharat Sangh**, Bhikampura, Kishori Thanagazi, Alwar – 301022, Rajasthan. Tel: 01465-25043.

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PA UPDATE MATTERS

CORRESPONDENCE

Life Subscriptions

In an effort to make the publication and distribution of the *PA Update* economically viable, we now have a scheme for life subscriptions for the readers. It has been fixed at Rs. 1000. We request and would appreciate if as many readers as possible would send in their subscriptions for the *Update*.

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

• Vinod Kumar Damodar...

'Reading the issue of *Protected Area Update* 25 (June 2000) I was struck to see the threats faced by our protected areas. We are very worried about the proposed 'survey' of the Sabrimala rail which will pass through the Periyar Tiger Reserve. The implementation of the project will finish off one of the biggest centres of the Asian Elephant, which is already under threat from the Pooyamkutty project.

Contact: **Vinod Kumar Damodar**, Friends of Elephants Forum, Breeze, Near Cherooty Nagar, Calicut – 673006, Kerala. Email: vinodkumard@hotmail.com

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* 27.

PA Update 27 was prepared by Pankaj Sekhsaria and Ashish Kothari with help from Neeraj Vagholikar.

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

The PA Update can also be accessed on the following websites:

<http://www.iucaa.ernet.in/~yogesh/jpamhome.shtml>; <http://home.att.net/~spiderhunters/attachments.htm>;
<http://www.indianjungles.com>

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

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