

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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PA UPDATE MATTERS

EDITORIAL

The Human –Wildlife Conflict

In this issue of the *PA Update* alone there are at least eight stories of human –wildlife conflict from different parts of the country. It is the same story everywhere, be it the Nameri National Park on the Assam – Arunachal Pradesh border, the mangrove swamps of the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, or the large areas of elephant country in Karnataka. Areas that were wildlife habitat earlier have been destroyed, forests have been encroached, and in many cases human settlements have been put up bang in the middle of wildlife corridors. Also in places where wild populations have increased, traditional methods of keeping them away from fields and settlements are often no longer allowed. It's the ideal recipe for disaster. The increasing number of reports of wide scale crop damage and human deaths by animals and the retaliatory killing of wild animals is a clear indicator that some creative solutions are needed quickly to deal with the matter.

We must also be clear that most of these killings of the wild animals are not the same as those for wildlife trade or to make a quick buck. It is the anger of the poor villager or tribal whose toil of an entire year and only source of food is wiped out in a one night rampage by elephants or wild boars.

A range of solutions have been suggested and are also being tried. They include the more drastic ones like asking for permission to shoot raiding animals, particularly the wild boar to creating borders and fences to keep the animals in. There are other suggestions too: change in crops and cropping patterns to dissuade the wild animals from entering fields and for the creation of live (green) fencing for the fields which the animals cannot penetrate. There has also been the long felt and articulated demand from all sectors that loss by wildlife, either to crops, houses or human life should be swiftly and sincerely compensated. Finally, the growing sense of community alienation caused by centralised control over wildlife habitats, because of which wild animals are now seen as '*sarkari*' needs to be reversed....and a situation like that of the Sariska Tiger Reserve brought back. Here villagers willingly tolerate damage by wild animals since their increasing numbers are partly, and interestingly enough, a result of community empowerment and conservation initiatives.

All these steps will go a long way in reducing the rising hostility towards wild animals of people living in and around our PA network and also other forests.

It has also been seen that there is a lack of comprehensive information in the matter from across

the country, in the absence of which decisions taken end up being arbitrary and sometimes even wrong. An effort has been initiated to gather information on this for a national picture (see National News). Contributions and inputs from all are urgently needed.

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

Study for radio tracking of leopards proposed

With increasing incidents of leopards straying into villages in different parts of the state, the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department (FD) has decided to take up a leopard tracking study using radio collars

Recently two leopards were caught in the Mrugavani National Park, a deer park abutting Himayatsagar Lake in the Rangareddy district. In the last couple of years there have been four incidents of leopards straying into the Indira Gandhi Zoological Gardens in Visakhapatnam from the Kambalakonda forests, and there are regular such reports from the villages in the Tirumala foothills as well.

According to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) of the state, the number of leopards in the state has increased from 280 in 1998 to 531 this year and this study would help in finding out why the numbers are increasing, how the leopards live and what is driving them into human habitations.

Source: 'Radio tracking of panthers on the anvil',
The Times of India, 07/08/2001.

Wildlife management suffers due to eco-tourism

The recent transfers of one Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and another Deputy Conservator to the Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation (APFDC) for taking up eco-tourism projects has left three national parks and the Indira Gandhi Zoological Garden in Visakhapatnam practically headless. The national parks affected are the Kasu Brahmanand Reddy, the Mahavir Harina Vanasthali and the Mrugavani National Parks.

The FD has 'kept in abeyance' the post of Conservator for the Hyderabad range, while simultaneously transferring the post to the APFDC to take charge of various eco-tourism projects.

(Ed. There has been growing concern in other parts of the country too, that wildlife management and protection is suffering because resources and personnel are being diverted for tourism development activities. Earlier, last year the Project Tiger Steering Committee too had criticised the

Ecodevelopment programme in Nagarhole in Karnataka for similar reasons. See PA Update 24)

Source: P Balu. 'Wildlife posts fall vacant', *The Times of India*, 29/08/001

Rs. 3.5 cr. proposal for Mahaveer Harini Vanasthali NP

The Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation has forwarded a proposal for the development of the Mahaveer Harini Vanasthali National Park (MHVNP) as 'Nishal Van' to the New Delhi based Bhagwan Mahaveer 2,600th Janma Kalyana Mahotsava Maha Samiti. The samithi is chaired by the PM, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

It is proposed to use the 3600 acre national park for the development of different sectors such as a *dhyana Van* (for meditation), *ayurveda van* (for medicinal plants and herbs) and a *prani van* (for conservation of wildlife and birds).

It is also proposed to create water bodies and lay self guided five kms long nature trails apart from improving amenities for visitors and introducing catering services. There will also be a provision for cottages, dormitories and pitched tent accommodations for visitors. The installation of a statue of Lord Mahaveer is also planned.

Source: T Lalith Singh. 'Proposal sent for Rs. 3.5 cr. national park', *The Hindu*, 13/09/2001.

Contact: **CWLW**, Office of the Principal CCF AP Forest Department, Aranya Bhavan Saifabad Hyderabad

ASSAM

18 elephant deaths in Nameri

At least 18 wild elephants are reported to have died in the recent past in the Nameri National Park and the adjoining Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh. Most of the wild elephants killed were calves and semi-adults in the 3-7 years age bracket. The first death was reported in the first week of July and the reasons for this are not yet clear.

According to one point of view the elephants have been poisoned by villagers who live in areas adjoining the park. Elephants here are known to cause large scale damage to crops and the villagers may have retaliated to save their crops. The other reasons to support this theory include the fact that the elephant deaths were mainly reported from areas where there is large scale crop depredation. Death due to diseases like Foot and Mouth were also ruled out, because all herbivores other than the elephants remained unaffected.

The other point of view is that the elephants have been severely hit by some disease. The

symptoms which include blood, pus and body fluids oozing out from all the pores of the body, viz. mouth, ears, trunk, anus etc, point towards Anthrax. However, The State Veterinary Department, in a statement released to the press has said that the elephants were affected by Liver Fluke worm. The Liver Fluke worm is water borne and is usually found in the livers of sheep and pigs. At least 13 domestic elephants of the State Forest Department (FD) too were reported to have been affected.

More recent reports have, however, suggested that the deaths were indeed due to poisoning. The doctors of the State Veterinary College investigating the elephant deaths have reportedly confirmed this following the forensic report in which the 'organophosphorus' pesticide (Demecron) was detected in a sample of a elephant carcass. It has been suggested that the pesticide was mixed in country made liquor that the elephants are very fond of.

Source: '7 tuskiers die in Nameri', *The Assam Tribune*, 15/08/2001.

Rahul Karmakar. Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 16/08/2001.

'18 elephants feared poisoned in national park', *The Hindu*, 20/08/2001.

Shankhadeep Choudhary & Mita Goswamy. 'Man-animal conflict claims 12 tuskiers', *The Times of India*, 21/08/2001.

Samudra Gupta Kashyap. 'Elephant deaths in Assam park spell trouble for authorities', *Indian Express*, 21/08/2001.

Dibya J Bora. Email to Kalpavriksh dated 30/08/2001

Surajit Khaund. 'Pesticide poisoning responsible for pachyderm deaths at Nameri', *The Assam Tribune*, 15/09/2001.

Contact: **Pankaj Sharma**, Range Forest Officer, Dolabari, Tezpur 784 001 Assam

Rathin Barman, Aaranyak, Samanwoy Path (Survey), PO Beltola, Guwahati – 781028, Assam. Tel: 0361-636768 / 266087. Fax: 266087. Email: rathinbarman@satyam.net.in;

Dibya J Bora, Ganesh Mandir Lane, New Guwahati, PO Noonmati, Guwahati-781020. Email: gradmin@iocl.co.in

Bibhab Talukdar, Samanwoy Path (Survey), PO Beltola, Guwahati - 781 028, Assam. Email: bibhab1@sancharnet.in

Soumyadeep Dutta, Natures' Beckon, Datta Bari, Ward No.1, Dhubri – 783301, Assam. Tel: 03662-31067. Fax: 30076.

Human-cum-veterinary camp in Pobitara

The NGO, Early Birds organised a full day human-cum-veterinary treatment camp in and around

Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary on July 1, 2001. 242 patients were examined by the doctors of the organisation.

A total number of 42 cattle heads were vaccinated against the diseases of HS+BQ. The villages of Kuchwari, Hatigor and Sildubi were the main beneficiaries of the programme.

Source: Moloy Baruah. Letter to Kalpavriksh dated 03/07/2001.

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

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

GOA

State to seek SC approval to denotify Netravali, Madei

The Goa Government Cabinet has decided to approach the Supreme Court (SC) for approval for the denotification of the Netravali and Madei Wildlife Sanctuaries. The Chief Minister (CM) of the state has said that the government wants to denotify the sanctuaries because the process of notifying them had been faulty and 'irrational', no public notice was issued, nor were objections from the public sought as required under the law. He also said that the decision to notify was taken in a haste by some over enthusiastic officials. NGOs in the state have refuted these claims by the CM and have said that the move is a political one and also aimed at benefiting the mining lobby in the state.

The State government has proposed to denotify a total of around 170 sq. kms from the two sanctuaries (See *PA Update* 30 & 31). An estimated 16,000 people in 47 villages live inside the areas notified as the sanctuaries

The CM has however said that with the approval of the SC, the government will conduct a proper survey of the areas, exclude the inhabited areas from the protected areas and at the same time also include an uninhabited area of around 149 sq kms into the protected area network and issue fresh notifications for same.

Source: 'Govt. to seek SC's nod for denotifying 2 sanctuaries', *The Navhind Times*, 09/08/2001.

'Goa to move SC to wriggle out of notification mess', *The Times of India*, 09/08/2001

Sandesh Prabhudesai 'Goa's animal kingdom shrinks', *The Pioneer*, 12/08/2001

'NGOs Up-in-arms against Govt. decision on Madei, Netraveli', *Herald*, 14/08/2001.

Contact: **Paresh Porab**, 223 / 4, Near Patrao, BB Borkar Road, Alto Porvorim, Bardez - 403 52, Goa. Tel: 0832-412895. Email: sagun.parab@tatainfotech.com
Claude Alvares. Tel: 0832 - 263305 / 6.
Email: oib@goatelecom.com

Funds for Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary

The Goa government has proposed to invest Rs. 12.9 lakhs for 'Wildlife and Eco-tourism' for the Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary at Chorao island. The work proposed is to be completed by March 2002.

Source: 'Vigilance dept. put on the mat', *The Times of India*, 16/08/2001.

Illegal felling in Cotigao

150 odd trees are said to have been illegally cut from within the Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary in South Goa district. The trees were cut for the region with survey number 81/2 situated in the Morphondamol region inside the sanctuary.

The residents of the area have submitted a memorandum to the FD demanding that the culprits should be apprehended. No further details in the matter are presently available.

Source: 'Action sought on illegal tree cutting in Canacona', *The Navhind Times*, 29/08/2001

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

GUJARAT

Project to study leopards in Gir

The Department of Wildlife Sciences of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) has undertaken a project for the study of lions in the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park. Gir is considered to have the highest density of leopards in any national park in the country.

The study will focus on the survival status of the leopards here and is to be carried out with the help of state of the art, radio-telemetry equipment. Eight leopards will be radio-collared and their movements will be monitored for the next three years as part of this study.

Source: 'Project to study leopards at Gir sanctuary', *The Times of India*, 29/08/2001.

Contact: **JA Khan**, Dept. of Wildlife Sciences,
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh
202002, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0571-701052 /
701213. Fax: 701205. Email:
wsi@nde.vsnl.net.in

State opposed to shifting of lions from Gir

The Forest Minister of Gujarat, Kanjibhai Patel recently told the State Assembly that the state had not received any directive from the Central Government for the shifting of lions from Gir to Madhya Pradesh. He said that the government would take the assembly into confidence if anything of the kind was to be taken up and that the move would be opposed.

Earlier, in July, the Junagadh legislator, Mahendra Mashru had threatened to launch a public awareness drive in the matter. He said that there was no question of shifting lions from the state as it was a matter of pride for Gujarat. He said that the Centre had an 'imaginary fear' that the Gir lions would become extinct if not shifted. Recent census figures, he pointed out, had shown an increase in their numbers. He also said that like Gir, the Kuno forests where they are to be shifted could also be affected by infections and the idea to move them was the 'brainwave' of a forest officer, in which Gujarat would be the loser. (Also see *PA Updates* 32, 26, 22 and 20).

Source: 'Shifting of lions from Gir draws legislator's ire', *The Times of India*, 14/07/2001
'State opposed to shifting of lions from Gir', *The Times of India*, 10/08/2001.

Road for temple inside Gir

The state government has agreed to open up a 10 kms long road inside the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary for the devotees wanting to visit the Pataleshwar Mahadev Shrine, which is located inside. The road leads from the Babariya check post near Sasan to the temple and further to Bahej.

So far no access was granted to visitors during the monsoons, which is the closed season for the sanctuary. During other seasons too, the visitors had to pay a fee, procure passes, get themselves registered and follow stipulated traffic rules on this stretch of road inside the sanctuary.

Now a General Resolution (GR) passed by the government has removed all curbs on entry by granting free transit. This has been strongly opposed by a number of NGOs here like the Sky Forest Youth Club (SFYC), Keshod and the Ahmedabad Nature Lovers Association (ANALA). They argue that the monsoons are a critical period for the forests to regenerate and also the breeding period for a large number of animal species. They also feel this move will set a bad precedent and politicians are already

asking that the road be kept open through out the year. Additionally there are another 24 other temples in the forests here, some located deep in the heart of the national park. There have been demands to open roads to many of them (See *PA Updates* 29 and 27). Three years ago a similar problem had arisen when certain concessions were given to the Kankai Temple.

There are also half a dozen other roads inside Gir, including the Dhari-Kodinar State highway No. 33, which are accessible during the daytime with certain traffic regulations. The 20 kms long Sasan-Satadhar road passing through the constituency of former Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel has also been at the centre of controversy with the villagers asking for it to be paved and conservationists strongly opposing it.

Source: Shyam Parekh. 'Another road to controversy in Gir', *The Times of India*, 09/08/2001.

'Row over opening of road rocks Gir sanctuary', *Navhind Times*, 12/08/2001.

Contact: **Revtubha Rajjada**, SFYC, C/O Vaibhav Book Store, Station Road, Keshod – 362220, Gujarat. Tel: 02871-32185 / 34529. **Manish Vaidya**, Nature Club of Sabar, B-60, Harshnagar Soc., D' Cabin, Ahmedabad - 380 019 Gujarat. Tel 079 – 7509174. Fax: 7508252. **Mahesh Singh**, DCF, Sasan, Junagadh – 363125, Gujarat.

Wild Ass Sanctuary to be denotified

The State Forest Minister, Kanjibhai Patel recently assured the Gujarat State Assembly that 589 sq. kms of the Wild Ass Sanctuary will be denotified for the development of the salt industry.

The decision has been taken following a report submitted by the Gujarat Environment Education and Research (GEER) Foundation. GEER had been assigned the task of doing a study following a special civil application filed in the Gujarat High Court in the matter. GEER foundation, had in fact submitted its report more than two years ago in which seven patches of land had been identified within the sanctuary for the establishment of the salt pans (See *PA Update* 21).

Source: 'Decision on shifting Surat courts soon: Minister', *The Times of India*, 01/08/2001.

Contact: **HS Singh**, GEER Foundation, Indroda Park, Sector 9, Gandhinagar – 382009, Gujarat. Tel: 02712-21385. Fax: 41128. Email: geerindia@sify.com

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

HIMACHAL PRADESH

State to wind up forest flying squad

The Himachal Pradesh Government has decided to wind up the Flying Squad Division (FSD) of the Forest Department (FD). The move has been criticised as being a regressive step, compared to the recent decision to make firearms available to forest officers.

The FSD had been set up eight years ago and it had been carrying out surprise checks to detect unlawful felling of trees, smuggling of timber, irregularities in allotment and cutting of trees given under Timber Distribution Rules to the rights holders, resin tapping and muster rolls.

The three flying squads in recent years had been rendered ineffective because of lack of cooperation from the territorial staff and inability of the authorities to take action against the culprits apprehended by them. The squad had become inconvenient for both the forest mafia and the officials, because it detected various irregularities. Recently there was a complaint regarding the felling of trees on private land in the Amb area in Una district and though the case had been handed over to the FSD, investigations could not be carried out because the forest officials openly refused to give any assistance.

Source: Anjali Mahajan. 'Himachal to wind up forest flying squad', *The Pioneer*, 22/08/2001.

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

JHARKHAND

Railway line through Hazaribagh scrapped

The Hazaribagh –Koderma railway line that was to pass through the Hazaribagh National Park has been realigned due to environmental reasons. It will now skirt the forests of the national park and will go from Koderma to Bagoder and Bishungarh.

This railway line along with a proposed highway had threatened to cut the protected area into two, making animal movement here hazardous. Environmental groups had protested against the railway line (see *PA Update* 26) and the efforts appear to have borne positive results.

Source: Bulu Imam. Email dated 10/08/2001.

Contact: **Bulu Imam**, Regional Conveyer, INTACH, Human Ecology Centre, The Grove, P.O. Hazaribag, Hazaribag – 825301, Jharkhand. Tel: 06546-63278.

Fax: 421317. Email:
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KARNATAKA

Upper Tunga project threatens Mandagadde Bird Sanctuary

The Upper Tunga Project (UTP) on the River Tungabhadra is likely to adversely affect the small Madangadde Bird Sanctuary in Shimoga district. The sanctuary is a tiny island in the course of the river. It is feared that the rise in the water levels following the impounding of water in the reservoir at Gajnur as part of the UTP, downstream from the sanctuary will submerge the island in the monsoons next year.

Officials however maintain that the rise in water level will affect the sanctuary only partially and that it will not be fully submerged. FD officials have said that the water may rise only upto the top of the trees at its maximum and that too for a short period during the monsoon. The Irrigation Department (ID) had reportedly sanctioned Rs. 20 lakhs to the Forest Department (FD) for the protection of the sanctuary. The FD has in turn asked the ID to prepare a plan to be implemented by an independent agency.

Proposals to deal with the situation include raising the level of the island and raising the height of the stone wall around the island to prevent its submergence.

Source: Pramod Mellegatti. 'Will floods prevent seasonal migration of 'alien' birds?', *The Hindu*, 21/08/2001.

Mysore varsity to study mammals outside PA Network

The Psychology Department of the Mysore University has taken up a three year project to research lesser known mammals inhabiting the non Protected Area (PA) forests of the state. The Union Science and Technology Ministry has approved a budget of Rs. 5.10 lakhs for the same.

Dr. Mewa Singh of the University has said that they would be collaborating with the Forest Department (FD) for the study. He further said that conservation and research efforts have so far been primarily aimed at the megafauna inside protected areas and no serious attention has ever been paid to the habitats and wildlife outside the PA Network.

Source: 'Mysore varsity to research lesser known mammals', *The Times of India*, 18/08/2001.

Contact: **Dr. Mewa Singh**, Professor of Psychology, University of Mysore, Mysore – 570006, Karnataka. Tel: 0821 518772 / 514239. Fax: 514239. Email: mewasingh@sancharnet.in

Kaiga-Narendra power line opposed

Environmental groups recently organised an opposition rally to the 440kv high tension Kaiga-Narendra power line planned by the National Grid Corporation. The proposed power line will pass through the Bedti and Kali valleys and also affect the Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary and Anshi National Park (see *PA Update* 32). It has been estimated that the laying of this line will result in the cutting of nearly 1.5 lakh trees in an area of over 520 acres.

The Bedthi Aghnashini Kolla Samrakshana Samiti (BAKSS) and the Vruksha Laksha Andolana have been in the forefront of the opposition to this project. The BAKSS has written to the Chief Minister of Karnataka, Mr. SM Krishna, appealing for his intervention to stop all work on the project. Sri Gangadharendra Saraswati Swamiji, Seer of the Swarnalli Math too has written to the Union Minister for Forests and Environment (MoEF), urging him that environmental clearance should not be given.

Environmentalists have also suggested two alternatives to the proposed power line: upgrading the existing 220kv Kaiga-Kodsalli-Nagzari-Narendra line to a 440kv line, or installing an underground high tension line through the coastal region where the forest destruction would be minimal. They have also urged the government to hold a public hearing before taking up the project.

Source: RS Habbu. 'Greens oppose Kaiga-Narendra power line', *The Hindu*, 15/08/2001.

Contact: **Anant Hegde Ashisara**, Vriksha Laksha Andolana, Village Ashisara, Yellapur Road, Sirsi -581402 Uttara Kannada – Karnataka. Tel: 08384-79388.

Bird park resort' proposed near Bandipur

The Karnataka Tourism Minister recently told the State Legislative Assembly that M/s Bandipur Birds Park Private Ltd. had proposed the setting up of a 'Birds Park Resort' at Mangala village adjacent to the Bandipur forests in the Gundlupet taluk.

More details of the same are not available. The Minister also said that the project proponents had been asked to furnish further details for the Single Window Agency of the State to consider it. He was also unaware if permissions from the Revenue, Forest and Environment Departments had been obtained.

Source: 'Bird park resort' proposed', *The Hindu*, 24/07/2001.

HC admits petition against firing range near Bannerghatta

The Karnataka High Court (HC) has recently admitted a writ petition by the Wildlife Trust of India

(WTI) to stop the setting up of a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) firing range within a Reserve Forest (RF) adjoining the Bannerghatta National Park (see *PA Update* 26). The petition had been filed by the WTI in January 2001 under its Rapid Action Programme (RAP).

In a preliminary order in March 2001, the HC had issued a notice to the State government and to the CRPF to explain the reasons for creating a firing range in the area near the national park.

In its order allowing the petition, the HC has also issued explicit directions to the state government to allot an alternative site in a safe zone within a period of six months and not to carry out any firing activity in the area.

Source: Ashok Kumar. Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 20/09/2001.

Contact: **Ashok Kumar**, Wildlife Trust of India, PO Box 3150, New Delhi - 110 003. Tel: 011-6326025/6 / 6325775 / 6. Fax: 6326027 Email: ashok@wildlifetrustofindia.org
ACF (WL), Bannerghatta NP, Bangalore – 560083, Karnataka.

Wildlife trade around Bannerghatta

Investigative work by the Institute for Natural Resources Conservation, Education, Research and Training, (INCERT), Bangalore, along with the Forest Department (FD) has confirmed fears that there is large scale trade in skins of wild animals from forests in and around Bannerghatta National Park (BNP).

This was confirmed following the arrest of some tribal individuals with skins of a number of wild animals including the jackal, jungle cat, sloth bear, spotted deer, mongoose, monitor lizard, Malabar squirrel, and civet cat in the weekly bazaar in Bannerghatta village in August earlier this year.

Source: Email from Navbharat Enterprises dated 04/09/2001.

Contact: **INCERT** No. 10, Sirur Park B St. Seshadripuram, Bangalore – 560020. Tel: 080-3364142 / 3364682 Email: navbarat@blr.vsnl.net.in

Physical barrier at Bannerghatta to keep elephants in

In an attempt to keep the elephants of the Bannerghatta National Park from straying into the adjoining fields and villages a new method is now being tried. With the failure of solar powered fencing and elephant proof trenches to deal with the problem,

a 'physical barrier' is being constructed as a permanent solution.

Initially iron rods are erected vertically in a 5 foot deep trench. Two horizontal tracks will then be attached to them at a height of 4 feet and 8 feet respective from the ground level. This method checks the elephants from crawling through the horizontal bars or jumping across them.

The method, which is said to be widely successful in Africa, has been suggested by a wildlife expert, Dr. Chittiappa and reportedly verified by Dr. R Sukumar of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore.

Source: 'A 'fool-proof' barrier to keep elephants out', *The Times of India*, 12/08/2001

Contact: **R Sukumar** Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore-560012, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3343382. Fax: 3315428. Email: 'rsuku@ces.iisc.ernet.in

Meeting on human-wildlife conflict in Chamrajnagar district

In an attempt to find solutions to the ever increasing human-elephant conflicts in the Chamrajnagar district (also see *PA Update* 32), a multi-stake holder meeting was recently organised in Yelandur. It was jointly organised by the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), Anand, the Karnataka Vanasamvardhana Trust (KVT), Bangalore, the Institute for Natural Resources Conservation, Education, Research and Training, (INCERT), Bangalore, the Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra (VGKK), BR Hills, the Wildlife Aware Nature Club (WANC), Tumkur and the Wilderness Club.

Around 150 local land and livestock owners participated in the meeting which was also well attended by staff from the Forest Department (FD).

Issues discussed included: Problems faced by the local farmers due to wild animals like spotted deer, wild boar and elephants; the probable causes for the human-animal conflicts here; the system for providing compensation by the government; possible technical solutions to the problems; change in crops and cropping patterns; problems arising out of cattle grazing in and non timber forest produce (NTFP) collection from the forests; and formation of local communities to protect the forest and manage the conflict.

Source: AN Yellapa Reddy. Email dated 09/08/2001. Cheryl Nath. Email dated 21/08/2001

Contact: **AN Yellapa Reddy**, KVT, Adichinchigari Mahasanstana Branch Math, no. 17, 1st B Main Road, Vijayanagar, Bangalore – 560040, Karnataka. Tel: 080 – 101803 / 5721680. Email: navbarat@blr.vsnl.net.in

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

Joint Karnataka, Kerala, Police Department, Forest Department meeting

An inter-state border crime meeting of the Police and Forest officials from Karnataka and Kerala at the sub-divisional level was recently held at Bittangala near Virajpet in Kodagu district. It was a follow up of the first border crime meeting held between the two from Kodagu and Kannur districts a few months ago.

The issues discussed included the ganja menace in the region, the poaching of elephants in Kodagu by people in Kerala, and timber smuggling

Source: K Jeevan Chinnappa, 'Joint mission to curb smuggling, poaching', *The Hindu*, 20/08/2001.

KERALA

Crocodile population increase causes problem in Neyyar

Increase in the population of crocodiles in the Neyyar reservoir in the Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary has resulted in large scale human-crocodile conflicts. The reservoir, which is the main source of drinking water for more than 5000 people in the area was made a crocodile breeding centre in 1983.

The increase in the conflicts has now prompted the Human Rights Commission to ask the forest officials to find a solution to the problem. They are now thinking of means of reducing their population here. The state government has also offered a reward of Rs. 4000 to anyone who captures a crocodile and returns it to the farm.

Source: Vinod K Damodar. Letter to Kalpavriksh. MG Radhakrishnan. 'Unsafe sanctuary for man and beast', *India Today*, 08/10/2001.

Contact: **Vinod Kumar Damodar**, Friends of Elephants Forum, Near Cherooty Nagar, Calicut – 613006 Email: vinodkumard@hotmail.com

Eco-tourism project for Shendurney

A project comprising eco-friendly general tourism, eco-tourism and pilgrimage tourism is soon to be launched in the Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary in the Thenmala forests along the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border. The Rs. 9 crore project is to be undertaken by the Thenmala Eco-Tourism Promotion Society (TEPS) and is claimed to meet the three objectives of

safeguarding the natural environment, providing and maintaining the quality of tourists and benefiting the local people.

The project has been divided into four sectors – 'culture zone', 'adventure zone', 'leisure zone' and 'deep woods'. At any one point of time, only a group of 10-15 people including guides are to be allowed. This has been fixed on the basis of the 'carrying capacity' of the place as suggested by the Peechi based Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI). It has also been decided that KFRI would conduct environment impact assessment (EIA) studies periodically to analyse the negative impact if there was any, and the tourist centre would be temporarily shut for the public till normalcy was restored.

Source: 'First ecotourism project to go full steam ahead', *The Times of India*, 21/08/2001.

Contact: **KFRI**, Peechi – 680653. Tel: 0487 – 282365 / 884 /037/ 061-4. Fax: 282249. Email: libkfri@md2.vsnl.net.in

Plea against reinstatement of official

The Kerala High Court (HC) has issued a notice to the Kerala Government on a petition challenging revoking of suspension of PK Surendran Achary, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Development and Projects, against whom nine vigilance cases have been registered. The Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau had recommended his prosecution in early 1999 along with that of 7 other officials in a multi-crore scam relating to the construction of buildings inside various PAs in the state. The scam had involved the alleged diversion of Rs. 15 crores from World Bank funds meant for a social forestry project (see *PA Update* 22).

The recent HC notice has been issued in light of a petition by the Vanya Prani Parirakshan Sangh (VPPS) stating the decision of the government to allow him to rejoin was against public interest and that he should be prosecuted under provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) – 1972.

Source: 'Plea against official's reinstatement', *The Times of India* 19/07/2001.

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

MADHYA PRADESH

All protected areas proposed for full / partial denotification

There are reports that the Madhya Pradesh (MP) government is proposing the entire or partial

denotification of all the 25 wildlife sanctuaries and 9 national parks in the state.

A cabinet sub-committee headed by the State Forest Minister, Mr. Harvansh Singh is said to be working on these proposals. The sub-committee has no statutory powers, and the latest in the matter is not yet known.

Source: 'MP denotifications', *The Hindustan Times*, 23/08/2001.

Kishore Rithe. 'Sailana-Sardarpur Florican Sanctuaries in trouble' Email to Kalpavriksh dated 30/08/2001.

Contact: **Harvansh Singh** Forest Minister, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Update on developments in Kuno

The Samrakshan Trust which is working with the villages that are being relocated for the 'Lion Reintroduction' program in Kuno Palpur has sent the following update on the developments there:

22 villages have moved out from the sanctuary so far. 18 of these have been allotted land and have begun cultivation at the new site. They have also received cash installments for house construction. Four villages have moved out without official sanction, because of security problems faced inside the sanctuary due to their isolation. They have not yet started getting any rehabilitation benefits.

A good monsoon this year has ensured that the water harvesting structures made by the relocated villagers have filled up and it is hoped these will act as an insurance against future rain failure. Four villagers have also formed village development committees.

In other developments, progress has been made on restocking the prey base in the sanctuary. In a joint operation, the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and the Forest Department (FD) captured 3 neelgai from the Chambal ravines and released them in the sanctuary. Ecological monitoring work in the sanctuary has also been taken up by the FD. (Also see *PA Update 29*)

Contact: **Arpan Sharma**, Samrakshan Trust, C/o C-II/2, IIPA Campus, IP Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi – 110002. Tel: 011-2795088 / 3351648. Email: asmitak@vsnl.com

Tigress killed, social activists attacked in Bandavgarh

Following the death of a tigress on May 30, 2001, in Bandavgarh, there have been a number of developments of serious concern:

First reports related to the death had suggested that the tigress had died accidentally after getting entangled in a chainlink fence. Subsequently

the Forest Department (FD) alleged that the animal had died after being strangulated in a trap set up by poachers for wild boar, *cheetal* and *neelgai*. Three local people were then arrested in the matter.

This fact was disputed and opposed by activists and NGOs working in the region. It was their claim that the three arrested were innocent and their arrest was only a cover up for the failings and complicity of the FD in the matter of the death of the tigress. They also demanded a CBI inquiry in the matter.

Following this, social activists groups including Ekta Parishad and the National Forum for Forest Workers and Forest People (NFFWFP) organised a rally in Bandavgarh on August 24, to protest against the arrest of the three locals. This rally was however brutally disrupted and the activists and member of the local communities that had come to participate in the rally were beaten with sticks and other sharp edged weapons.

It is alleged that the assailants belonged to the ruling political party in Madhya Pradesh and that they are hand in glove with the timber and poaching mafia that is active here. The demand for a CBI inquiry appears to have raised their hackles.

Source: 'Young tigress found dead', *Tigerlink*, September 2001.

Communication from Ekta Parishad to Kalpavriksh, dated 25/08/2001.

Contact: **Gautam Bandopadhyay**, Ekta Prishad, O3 Anupam Nagar, Shankar Nagar, Raipur-492007, Chattisgarh. Tel: 0771-421926, 07721 – 4498. Email: gautamb@bom6.vsnl.net.in
Field Director, Bandavgarh TR, Umaria – 484661. Tel: 07653-22214

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

MAHARASHTRA

Irrigation project threatens Tipeswar

The Tipeswar Wildlife Sanctuary in the Yawatmal district of Maharashtra is threatened by the Lower Painganga Irrigation Project, which is expected to submerge 4.82 hectares of land inside the sanctuary and another 1105 hectares of forest land around it.

The project on the River Painganga which was estimated at Rs. 1400 crores in 1995 is an inter-state venture between the governments of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh (AP). It was sanctioned in 1998 and is expected to irrigate a total of 1,60,050 hectares of land in the districts of Yawatmal and Chandrapur in Maharashtra and Adilabad in AP.

The Government of India is yet to give clearance to the project under the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) – 1980 and reportedly no public hearing has been held as mandated under the Environment Protection Act (EPA) – 1986.

The proposal had been sent to the Conservator of Forests (CF), Nagpur who then made a site inspection visit on July 7, 2001. He is supposed to have suggested that the construction of the canal be restricted to a minimum area, that a wire fencing be erected along the canal for the safety of wild animals and for the construction of a bridge for wildlife to cross the canal. The Irrigation Department has agreed to this, and the CCF (WL) is also reported to have given permission to the project on the terms mentioned by the CF (WL), Nagpur.

Source: Kishore Rithe. Email dated 30/08/2001.

Contact: **Kishore Rithe**, Pratishtha, Bharat Nagar, Akoli Road, Near Sai Nagar, Amravati, Maharashtra. Tel: 0721-672359. Fax: 670308. Email: ncsa@bom3.vsnl.net.in

Inquiry demanded into illegal felling in Nagzira

The Nagpur based *Maharashtra Vanrakshak Vanpal Sanghatana* (Maharashtra Forest Guards Association (MFGA)), has demanded that a fair inquiry be conducted into the smuggling of teak valued at around Rs. 10 lakhs in January and March 2001, from the Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary. The timber was felled and smuggled from the Magezari beat of the sanctuary.

Following an inquiry conducted by the Conservator of Forests responsible for the area, Mr. Ashok Khune, Forest Guard, PM Raghorte had been suspended.

The MFGA has said in a letter dated 15/08/2001 to the Lokayukta, Maharashtra, that this is unfair and a clear case of the absolving the senior officials, of their responsibility in the matter.

They have even alleged that senior officials like Mr. Khune, Mr. Bardekar, ACF, Wildlife, Gondia and Mr. YB Patle, CF (Wildlife), Nagzira are directly involved in the smuggling and that should be immediately suspended. The reactions of the forest officials to these allegations are not presently available.

(Ed: For a full copy of letter to the Lokayukta in Marathi, contact Kalpavriksh at the editorial address)

Source: Vijay Mehar. Letter to the Lokayukta dated 15/08/2001.

Contact: **Vijay Mehar**, Maharashtra Vanrakshak Vanpal Sanghatana, Near Govt. Printing Press, Civil Lines, Nagpur –1, Maharashtra.

Survey and Monitoring of Tadoba Andhari TR

A Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) funded project, 'Survey and Monitoring of Tiger Habitat in the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve' is being presently carried out.

The duration of the project is one year: from April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002. It includes survey and mapping of tiger habitat; dependency survey of 10 peripheral villages; giving of motivational rewards to five field workers and an year long monitoring of the tiger reserve.

Source: 'Survey and Monitoring of Tiger Habitat-Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve', *Tigerlink*, September 2001.

Contact: **Harshwardhan and Poonam Dhanwatey**, Shivneri, 59/60 Dagdi Park, Ramdaspath, Nagpur –440010, Maharashtra. Email: shivneri@nagpur.dot.net.in

Workshop on NGO Networking in Melghat

The 2nd workshop on 'NGO Networking for Wildlife Conservation in Melghat' was held from June 7-9, 2001. Jointly organised by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and the Nature Conservation Society, Amravati (NCSA), it was a follow up to the meeting held in Pench in December 2000 (see *PA Update* 30&31). 23 participants from nine organisations participated in the workshop.

The participants also visited Bori village, which has been recently relocated from inside the protected area to Rajurgirwarpur in the Akola district.

A list of recommendations was also prepared at the end of the workshop.

Source: 'Second workshop on NGO networking', *Tigerlink*, September 2001.

Contact: **Kishor Rithe**, NCSA, see above

Tunnel through Sanjay Gandhi NP

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has reportedly, cleared the laying of an underground pipeline through the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), overriding objections of the Forest Department (FD) and local NGOs.

The pipeline is to pass through the core area of the park and it is not exactly clear what the construction and the maintenance of the pipeline will entail.

Source: Sunjoy Monga. Email dated 06/08/2001.

'SGNP tunnel cleared', *Sanctuary*, October 2001.

Contact: **Sunjoy Monga**, 45 /46, Madhurima, MG Road, Kandivli (W), Mumbai - 400 067,

Maharashtra. Tel: 022-8052148. Email: sunjoymonga@vsnl.com
DFO, SGNP, Borivali (E), Mumbai – 400066, Maharashtra.

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

ORISSA

Elephant census in Chandka

50 elephants have been reported in the Chandka Wildlife Sanctuary, which is located about 20 kms from the state capital Bhubaneswar. The census was conducted by the state Forest Department (FD) from May 5 –7, earlier this year.

20 elephants were counted in the Bharatpur Reserve Forests which are separated from the Chandka and Dampara Reserve Forests by a 15 Kms stretch of human habitation. This is one of the major causes of a number of reports of human-elephant conflicts that are reported from here. (Also see *PA Updates* 32 & 29).

Source: Monalisa Bhujbal. Email to Kalpavriksh
Contact: **Monalisa Bhujbal**, Wild Orissa, Plot 3A, Janpath, Satyanagar, Bhubaneswar – 751007, Orissa. Tel: 0674-512044. Email: wildorissa@hotmail.com
DFO – Chandka Wildlife Division, FD, SFTRI Campus, AT/Po Ghatkia, Bhubaneswar, Dist. Khurda, Orissa

Habitat destruction, illegal fishing threaten crocodiles in Bhitarkanika.

Rapid habitat loss is reported to be posing a major threat to the future of the saltwater crocodile in the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary. 75 % of the total 1200 odd population of the crocodiles here has now been restricted to within 25% of the sanctuary area at the Dangmal, Saguna Chara and Mahisamda creeks. Indiscriminate fishing within the sanctuary area is considered to be one of the most important causes preventing the crocs from colonising other areas.

It is feared that this could lead to inbreeding and also makes the entire population of the animals susceptible to diseases. The Wildlife Society of Orissa has sought the intervention of the state government and asked for steps like the relocation of yearlings in new mangrove areas and the prevention of illegal fishing in all such areas.

Source: 'Loss of living area poses threat to crocs', *The Statesman*, 10/09/2001.

Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty** Wildlife Society of Orissa, Shantikunj, Link Road, Cuttack – 753012, Orissa. Tel: 0671 – 334625. Fax: 610980. Email: biswajit@cal.vsnl.net.in
DFO - Bhitarkanika National Park, Forest Department, At/Po Rajnagar, Dist Kendrapada – 745225, Orissa. Tel: 06729 – 72460/64. Fax: 06727-20775

Tagged turtles missing

The four satellite tagged Olive Ridley turtles that were fitted with transmitters in April 2001 as part of the joint United Nations Development Program (UNDP) – Government of India (GOI) sea turtle conservation project have stopped transmitting signals and are reported to have gone missing. It is feared that they may have fallen victim to the heavy trawling activities in the Bay of Bengal off the coasts of Sri Lanka and India. (Also see *PA Update* 32).

The route that the tagged turtles took can be seen at the following website:

<http://kachhapa.org/telemetry/maps/map.jpg>

Source: SN Agramee, 'Project to track Olive Ridley sinks, turtles missing', *Indian Express*, 06/09/2001

Contact: **BC Choudhary**, Wildlife Institute of India, PO Box 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun – 248001, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-640111 – 15. Fax: 640117 Email: bcc@wii.gov.in; undpturtle@wii.gov.in

Kartik Shankar C/O Madras Consultancy Group, H - Vi/2, Habib Complex, Durgabai Deshmukh Rd, Ra Puram, Chennai – 600028, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 044 - 4952655 / 4939161 / 4405370. Fax: 044 – 4934862. Email: kartik69@usa.net Website: <http://kachhapa.org>

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

RAJASTHAN

Large scale poaching in Bishnoi areas

The Bishnoi community of Rajasthan is reported to be very upset with the growing incidence of the poaching of blackbucks and chinkara in their area and the indifference of the local authorities in the matter. This year alone they have reported at least 11 incidents of poaching from the Nokha sub-district of Bikaner. There were only two such reports in the corresponding period last year.

According to officials the poachers come to Nokha on camels from villages in the neighbouring

districts of Chomu and Nagaur. They kill the animals for their coat, horn and meat.

Leaders of the Bishnoi Community have complained that the police and other officials do not cooperate with them in dealing with this menace and sometimes even demand money to conduct preliminary investigations against the poachers.

Source: 'Poaching angers Bishnoi tribe in Rajasthan', *The Pioneer*, 06/08/2001.

SIKKIM

Butterfly smuggling from Khangchendzonga NP

Two Russian nationals Victor Siniaev and Oleg Amosov were arrested in the Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP) in August on charges of illegally collecting live insects. It was reported that they had in their possession around 20 kgs of insects that had about 2000 beetles, moths and butterflies. They also had with them other collecting materials including a petrol generator, uv-bulbs, killing and collecting jars & envelopes, chemicals, wires, and nets. Four porters (including two Nepali nationals) were also arrested along with the Russians.

The arrests were affected by the Forest Department (FD) along with members of the Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC), an NGO from Yuksam in West Sikkim. According to some sources the two arrested Russians are well established smugglers and part of the large and illegal international trade in these insects. The arrested individuals however said that they are scientists and did not know that the area in which they were collecting insects was a national park. They have also said that they had only collected moths and beetles and there were only two butterflies in their collection. The Russian Consulate in Kolkata too issued communications to the FD saying that the two individuals were reputed scientists and this was a case of mistaken identities.

Forest officials and environmental organisations in the country have pointed out that even official organisations in India like the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) cannot enter national parks without valid permissions and correspondence on official letter heads. They also point out that any 'genuine' scientist would certainly visit local authorities if their collection work was of real significance to the international scientific community.

A Sikkim court later granted them conditional bail but refused to grant them permission to leave the state. They have been charge sheeted and during a recent court hearing the confiscated insects were handed over to the court.

Source: 'Russians caught while catching rare butterflies for smuggling', *The Asian Age*, 08/08/2001.

Amalendu Kundu. 'Russians smuggling butterflies remanded', *The Times of India*, 12/08/2001.

Dr. Ron Brechlin. 'Email Communication dated 15/08/2001.

'Butterfly case: Charges to be framed', *The Times of India*, 18/08/2001.

'Russians held for collecting insects granted bail', *The Times of India*, 22/08/2001.

Contact: **Sandeep Tambe** DFO (WL), Dept. of Environment and Forests, Govt. of Sikkim South and West Namchi, S Sikkim-737126, Sikkim. Email: sandeep_tambe@lycos.com

Pema Bhutia, KCC, PO Yuksam, West Sikkim - 737 113, Sikkim

Dr. Ron Brechlin (It is his contention that the two arrested Russian nationals are reputed scientists), Stettiner Str. 26, 17309 Pasewalk, Germany. Email: R.Brechlin@t-online.de

AN Zolotukhin, Consul General of Russia, Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Kolkata, 22A Raja Santosh Rd., Kolkata - 700027. Tel: 033-4797006. Fax: 4798889 / 4498701. Email: consulru@cal3.vsnl.net.in

TAMIL NADU

Plastic ban inside Mudumalai, Indira Gandhi WLSs

The District Collector, Nilgiri district has issued an order making Mudumalai and Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuaries 'plastic free zones'

The order came in the wake of problems faced by the FD in handling the plastic litter in the tourist zones and reports of deaths of wild animals due to the accidental ingestion of plastic.

Source: Ban on plastic inside WLS', *Tigerlink*, September 2001.

UTTARANCHAL

Payment for offensive against poachers in Corbett stalled

Payments for 'Operation Lord', the offensive against ivory poachers in Corbett, was stalled in early August by Project Tiger authorities. According to the Director, Project Tiger, the file was stuck in the finance department and as a result 275 people engaged in the operation had not being paid their dues since February. The total amount that Project

Tiger owed to the State Forest Department (FD) was Rs. 45 lakhs in salaries for six months.

The Chief Minister of the state, Mr. Nityanand Swami was reported to have rushed to New Delhi to sort out the matter.

This development came as a big blow to the anti poaching operations here. Latest details are however not available.

Source: Ajay Suri. 'Red-tape may become death noose for Corbett elephants', *Indian Express*, 08/08/2001.

Contact: **Field Director**, Corbett Tiger Reserve, Ramnagar –244715, Nainital, Uttaranchal. Tel: 05947 – 85489. Fax: 85376

Staff in Corbett attacked, killed

There were two attacks on forest staff in the Corbett Tiger Reserve in the month of August by suspected poachers.

The first incident happened on August 23 when a group of five armed men attacked four staff members at the Sonanadi range of the park.

In the second incident on August 29, Deputy Forest Ranger, Mr. Bipin Chandra Pandey was shot dead and three others were seriously injured. In both the cases the armed assailants were wearing army uniforms and it is believed that they have so far been active in Uttar Pradesh.

Search operations were launched to track them down and units of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) were also moved in. However there were no successes. It is suspected that the key person involved in the attacks was a former detainee under TADA and had links with pro-Khalistani terrorists.

The Uttaranchal Police is also reported to have busted an illegal arms factory near the park and arrested four people in this connection. No links have been found to the earlier mentioned attacks. The factory was found at Laldhang on the fringes of the park and it is suspected that the crude bombs made here were being used to kill wild animals.

Source: 'Four Corbett Park staff attacked', *The Hindu*, 25/08/2001

'1 dead, 3 hurt as poachers strike again at Corbett', *The Pioneer*, 30/08/2001.

Namita Kala. 'Who leads in Corbett?', *The Pioneer*, 02/09/2001.

'Arms factory unearthed near Corbett park', *The Times of India*, 01/09/2001

Contact: **Director**, Corbett TR, see above.

Poaching on the rise in Nandadevi

There are reports that there is wild scale poaching of wild animals from the buffer zone of the Nandadevi

Biosphere Reserve (NBR). Animals that are prized by the poachers include the musk deer, the Himalayan black and brown bears and the snow leopard. Operations are generally known to begin in November and go on till March. High altitude medicinal herbs too are reported to be smuggled out.

The poachers reportedly comprise mostly of Marchas, the ethnic Indo-Mongloid Tibetan tribe that lives here in large numbers. Hoteliers in the area are also involved and one of the big guns of this poaching racket is a retired Kumaoni Colonel.

17 villages in the buffer zone of the Reserve that fall in the Chamoli district are said to be involved in the poaching and smuggling operations. These include Reni, Lata, Malari, Peng, Tolma, Surai, Jamgavar, Dunagiri, Pangrasu, Tolma, Niti, Kaga and Garpag, of which the first three are the main centres.

The existence of poaching here was confirmed in a written statement to the Rajya Sabha by the Union Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr. TR Baalu. The statement said that the state government had acted on 81 cases of poaching here in the last six years .20 of these related to actual poaching while the others were related to attempts at poaching. The fine levied added up to a total of Rs. 63,000.

A statement was issued in response to this report by the villagers of some of the above villages and the NGO, Janadhaar. While admitting that poaching was a reality here, they pointed out that it was the handiwork of people from outside the region.

Source: Namita Kala. 'A sanctuary for poachers', *The Pioneer*, 29/06/2001.

'Poaching in Nanda Devi reserve a reality: govt.', *The Pioneer*, 04/08/2001.

Sunil Kainthola. Email to Kalpavriksh dated 03/10/2001.

Contact: **Sunil Kainthola**, Janadhikar, 682, Indiranagar, New Forest, Deharadun – 248086, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-764393. Email: dhaar@vsnl.com

Two mountaineering expeditions to Nandadevi denied permission

Two mountaineering expeditions to Nandadevi in the month of August have been denied permission by the Uttaranchal Government. The permissions were denied on the ground that the trek would have to pass through the core zone of the Nandadevi Biosphere Reserve (NBR).

The first one was an eight member South Korean expedition to the Dunagiri peak. The team had got the clearances from the Union Home and Defence Ministries, but did not attempt to seek the permits from the state authorities till the last minute.

Later in the month a two member American team was denied permission to scale the Kalanka peak.

The Indian Mountaineering Federation (IMF) was involved in both the expeditions. It is reported that the IMF gets in the range of US\$ 800 to 4000 as royalty per expedition. This depends on the category and prestige of the peak involved and this excludes charges for services provided to the mountaineering groups.

With attempts being made to open up the NBR to tourism (see *PA Update* 33) it is being feared that there will be greater demands for expeditions of this kind that will pass through the reserve. Already there are reports that there is great national and international pressure to open up the remote and presently 'out of bounds' regions of the park for trekking and mountaineering. The FD has taken a clear stand so far that they will not allow any activities in the core area of the park as it will adversely affect the delicate ecological balance of the region.

Source: Namita Kala. 'Centre clears foreign expedition through biosphere reserve', *The Pioneer*, 22/08/2001.
Namita Kala. 'Money matters, not wildlife', *The Pioneer*, 27/08/2001.

Nandadevi to be opened to tourism?

The expert eight member team that had gone into the Nandadevi Biosphere Reserve to explore the possibilities of opening the reserve for tourism (see *PA Update* 33) is reported to have recommended its restricted and controlled opening up. Details are however not available and the no confirmation of this has yet been received from the Indian Mountaineering Federation or the member of the expert team.

Earlier, Dr. S Sathyakumar, a specialist in High Altitude Ecology with the Dehradun based Wildlife Institute of India (WII), was reported to have opposed any move to open up the reserve to tourism. He said that the pristine ecology of the region would be adversely affected and that the opening up of the park would also encourage the extraction of medicinal plants from the reserve by the locals.

Meanwhile, the Pradhan of the Gram Sabha of village Lata on the periphery of the reserve has written to Mr. Harish Kapadia, leader of the expedition requesting for a copy of the report that has been submitted to the government. The villagers here are proposing to publish a book on their struggles which also includes the famous Chipko movement. It has also been alleged in the letter that one of the members of the expert team had taken out from the reserve the skull and horns of bharal and some rare

medicinal plants and that action should be taken in the matter.

In another development, the villagers here, along with the NGO, Janadhaar are organising a workshop on ecotourism in Joshimath on Oct 29-31.

Source: 'Nandadevi may open up for trekkers again', *The Indian Express*, 01/09/2001
'Pressure mounts on state govt. to reopen Nanda Devi biosphere', *United News of India*, 06/07/2001.

Dhan Singh Rana, Communication to Mr. Harish Kapadia.

Contact: **Director Nandadevi BR**, see above
Dhan Singh Rana, Pradhan, Gram Sabha Lata, Joshimath, Dist. Chamoli, Uttaranchal.

Sunil Kainthola, Janadhaar, see above
Harish Kapadia, 72, Vijay Apts, 16 Carmichael Rd., Opp. Usha Kiran Bldg, Behind Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra. Tel: 022-4950772. Email: harikaps@vsnl.com

AS Negi, CWLW, Uttaranchal, 85, Rajpur Road, Dehradun, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-744225 / 679817. Fax: 675138/747669

WEST BENGAL

150 human, 30 elephant deaths due to human-animal conflict in last three years in N Bengal

It has been estimated that there have been around 150 human and more than 30 elephant deaths in North Bengal in the last years due to increased human-elephant conflict here. The worst affected area is the Jalpaiguri district and according to officials of the Forest Department (FD), the main reason for this is the fast changing socio-economic picture of the region.

The specific reasons for this include the shrinkage of forest cover due to urbanisation, setting up of new rail lines (see *PA Updates* 32 & 29), irrigation canals, establishments of refugee colonies inside forest areas, and cattle grazing inside forests. This has resulted in a severe shortage of food for the pachyderms that are forced to move into villages and fields adjoining their forest homes.

In an effort to deal with the problem, the FD is trying to map out the exact trails and tracks used by the elephants. Modern technology like radio collars, remote sensing equipment, and satellite links are being used for the purpose.

The data and the mapping will be used to keep the elephants from straying into human habitations. Methods like the new generation solar powered electric fencing is to be used for this along

with traditional means like bursting fire crackers and the 'hoola party'. (Also see *PA Update* 32).

Source: Debasis Sarkar. '150 persons and 30 elephants killed in conflict', *The Times of India*, 16/04/2001.

Rescue homes for leopards, bears

The West Bengal government has proposed the creation of two rescue centres, one each for wild leopards and bears. A meeting for this was recently held between the State Forest Minister, Jogesh Burman, the Principal Secretary, PS Shasmal, the Chief Conservator of Forests, GB Thambial and the Additional Chief Conservator, Arin Ghosh.

The centre for leopards is to be started in Jalpaiguri district's South Khairbari area, keeping in mind the large leopard population in the Jaldapara and Gorumara forests in the region. There are many incidents here of leopards straying into villages and being attacked and injured. The estimated cost of the leopard rescue centre is Rs. 10 million and it is expected to be completed in March 2002.

The centre for bears is to be located in the western district of Purulia bordering the state of Jharkhand.

It has also been proposed that the rescue centres could be developed into tourist spots, with provisions for a safari as well.

Source: 'West Bengal to open rescue homes for leopards, bears', *The Navhind Times*, 05/08/2001.

Howrah station major point for wildlife trade

The Howrah railway station is fast becoming a major point in the route for trade in wildlife, both of live animals and animal parts. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has admitted that this kind of smuggling has increased over the past few months. An average of at least three smugglers are arrested here every month and the animals are handed over to the Forest Department (FD).

Live animals that have been seized include cobras, pythons, peacocks and other birds. The smaller animals are packed in packing boxes and stuffed into vegetable sacks, so that their sounds are not heard outside. This however results in large scale mortality of the animals. Skins of bigger animals like the tiger are also smuggled out from here.

The animals which are dead when seized have been stacked up at the wildlife wing of the FD, while the ones still alive are generally kept at the deer park in Salt Lake in Kolkata. Most of the wild animals are eventually moved to the Sundarbans or to the Alipore Zoo in the city.

Source: 'Its destination Howrah station for smugglers', *The Times of India*, 06/08/2001.

Sahara tourism project in Sundarbans, Teesta Valley

Sahara India has proposed a major tourism project which will include the Sundarbans and the Teesta Valley. It will be part of the 'Integrated Sahara Tourism Circuit' (ISTC) that is being developed by Sahara to link the important tourist destinations across the country.

The ISTC in West Bengal is in association with the government of West Bengal. It proposes to market and promote the Sundarbans and the Teesta Valley across the world and will provide package tours covering the mangrove forests, the rivers, wildlife, an International Biosphere Reserve, Island resorts, hill top monasteries and the rich socio-cultural life of the east and north eastern region of the country.

The total project is estimated to cost more than Rs. 900 crores. The infrastructure for the project would include among other things catamarans, luxury launches, a coastal cruise liner, house boats, speed boats, and 8 seater helicopters.

It is to be completed over a period of four years from the date of sanction of the Master Plan and completion of land acquisition proceedings.

There were earlier reports, however, which said that there were problems in the Sundarbans regarding provision of security for the project (see *PA Update* 30 & 31). The West Bengal Tourism Minister, was also reported to have said that he was waiting for the blueprint of the project.

Source: 'In your wildest dreams', *The Pioneer*, 22/03/2001.

National Waterway proposal through Sundarbans rejected

A committee constituted by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) to look into a proposal from the Inland Waterways Authority of India (Ministry of Shipping, Govt. of India) to declare a waterway stretch of the Sundarbans as a National Waterway, has rejected the same.

The committee comprising Sri SC Sharma (Addl. DG, Wildlife), Sri PK Sen (Director, Project Tiger) and Sri Valmik Thapar (Member, Steering Committee, Project Tiger) visited the proposed area on May 4 & 5, 2001 along with officials of the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve (STR).

The findings of the committee were the following The proposed route passed through the Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve, Sanctuary and the National Park; the implementation of the proposal would violate the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA)

and the Environment Protection Act (EPA); flora and fauna here would be seriously disturbed and damaged and that an alternative route outside this unique habitat would have to be found.

Source: 'Committee rejects proposals', *Tigerlink*, September 2001.

Contact: **Valmik Thapar**, Ranthambhore Foundation, 19 Kautilya Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi – 110021. Tel: 011-3792460. Fax: 3619457. Email: tiger@vsnl.com

Figures for tiger, human casualties in Sundarbans

The Kolkata based Institute of Climbers and Nature Lovers (ICNL) has released figures of the human and tiger casualties reported from the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve in the period June 1999 to April 2001.

56 people were killed in tiger attacks. Only six of the victims held legal permits for either fishing or honey collection. The majority of them were involved in prawn seed collection.

Figures provided for seizures around the tiger reserve show that 15 tiger deaths could be unearthed here during the period December 1999 – June 2001.

Source: 'Human & tiger casualty figures from STR', *Tigerlink*, September 2001.

Contact: **Mrinal Chatterjee**, ICNL, 17 New Santoshpur Main Rd., Santoshpur, Kolkata-700075, West Bengal. Tel: 033-4191237 / 4123286. Email: icnl@vsnl.com; sunderbantaiger@hotmail.com

Anti-poaching training in Sundarbans

A basic anti-poaching training programme on wildlife crimes and enforcement techniques was carried out by the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) in the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve (STR). Held from July 3-11, it was conducted under the Van Rakshak Project of the WTI.

The training module had two parts. The first dealt with the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) and the powers given to forest guards. The 2nd dealt with techniques of criminal investigation, forensics and field techniques for monitoring prey base and building information networks to prevent crime.

Local police and CBI officials also attended the training programme.

Source: 'Anti-poaching training programme', *Tigerlink*, September 2001

Contact: **MKS Pasha**, WTI, see above

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 FROM INDIA

Information needed on crop damage by wildlife

Following a decision taken at the 5th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights in Siliguri in April 2001, an attempt is being made to put together a national picture of the crop damage caused by wildlife. Kishor Rithe of the Nature Conservation Society, Amravati (NCSA) has prepared a detailed questionnaire for the purpose and has requested for responses.

Contact: **Kishor Rithe**, NCSA see above (*The questionnaire can also be accessed on the website of the Conservation and Livelihoods Network (CLN) which is www.cln_india.tripod.com*)

Website of Nilgiri Tahr Foundation

The Nilgiri Tahr Foundation has recently launched its website www.tahrfoundation.org

Suggestion for inclusion of animal welfare in legal studies

The legal education committee of the Bar Council of India (BCI) has recommended that animal welfare should be included as a subject in the curriculum for legal studies. The suggestion was made by the Chairman of the BCI in a letter written to the Ministry of Social Justice and Welfare in April earlier this year. It was suggested that animal welfare be taught as an 'environmental law including laws for the protection of wildlife and other living creatures'.. The Ministry had agreed to forward this recommendation to the following institutions: The National Law School of India University, Bangalore, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh and the University of Judicial Studies, Calcutta.

Source: 'Include animal welfare in legal studies', *The Pioneer*, 01/04/2001.

Delhi is major transit point for smuggled wildlife goods

In a statement made in parliament in July earlier this year, Union Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr. TR Baalu said that Delhi was a preferred transit point for smuggled wildlife goods because of better chances of deals with foreign buyers going

unnoticed. He admitted that there had been an increase in the number of seizures, but added that this could not be attributed to the increase in poaching alone. He was of the opinion that the involvement of specialised enforcement agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Customs Department, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Special task force had contributed to the rise in the detection of such cases.

Source: 'Delhi transit point for smuggled wildlife goods', *Press Trust of India*, 30/07/2001.

License policy for air guns to be reviewed

The Home Ministry has said that the Bureau of Police Research and Development will submit a list of air guns which need a license and it has also decided that no new licences will be issued for guns to be used for crop and cattle protection.

The Ministry was responding to a petition filed in the Delhi High Court by the NGO 'People for Animals'. The petitioners had pointed out that air guns were easily available and that their indiscriminate use was resulting in injuries to children and the killing of a number of birds and animals that were protected under the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) – 1972. They also pointed out that the government was issuing new licenses for arms to protect crop and cattle from wild animals without actually verifying the user's objective.

The Ministries of Social Justice and Empowerment and Forests and Environment had supported the petition, but that of Home Affairs was opposed to it. Finally, however the three ministries are reported to have reached a conclusion to review the policy regarding the issue of licenses for air guns.

Source: 'License policy for air guns to be reviewed', *The Times of India*, 24/08/2001.

Marine species added to Scheduled lists

A number of endangered marine species have recently been added to the Scheduled lists of the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) – 1972. The move came following months of lobbying by groups like the Reefwatch and Sanctuary Magazine along with inputs from other quarters as well.

Species included in the Schedule I of the WLPA include sharks, sea horses and five different types of corals.

Reports from the Andaman islands however, suggest that the shell industry has been badly affected. The Industries Department in the islands has said that at least 2000 people have been rendered jobless and they now need to help them look for alternative sources of earning a living.

Source: 'India moves to protect threatened marine species', *The Times of India*, 23/07/2001. Aparna Singh. Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 26/09/2001

Contact: **Bittu Sahgal**, Sanctuary, 602 Maker Chambers V, Nariman Point, Mumbai – 400021. Tel: 022 – 283 0061 / 81. Fax: 2874380 Email: bittusahgal@vsnl.com
Mitali Kakkar / Sarang Kulkarni, Reefwatch, c/o Offspring, Ground Floor, Priyanka Bldg., St. Paul's Road, Chimbai village, Bandra (W) Mumbai - 400 050, Maharashtra. Tel: 022-6518223. Email: coral110@rediffmail.com; reefwatch@usa.net

Aparna Singh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands Environment Team (ANET), PB No. 1, Junglighat PO, Port Blair – 744101. A & N Islands. Tel: 03192-80081. Fax: 32838. Email: aparna67@dte.vsnl.net.in; anet@vsnl.in

Insurance cover for forest guards

An NGO, the Wildlife Trust of India along with the United India Insurance (UII) is attempting to put into place an insurance scheme for the nearly 50,000 forest guards across the entire country. The plan covers only those guards who are on wildlife duty and insures every person against loss of life and disability with a cover of Rs. 1 lakh. Even temporary workers are sought to be ensured. The WTI will contribute the entire premium, with funds from a United Kingdom based foundation and there is no financial obligation on governments.

The first cheque of Rs. 1 lakh that was issued as part of the scheme was given recently to the widow of Ram Singh, a guard in Corbett Tiger Reserve who died on May 20, earlier this year.

Since it was difficult to get the consent of each guard for the scheme, one prerequisite for it was the consent of the employer, in this case the State. So far only eight states have responded. These are Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Rajasthan, Karnataka, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Meghalaya. Tamil Nadu already has a scheme and it is likely they may not go in for this scheme. The other states have yet to respond.

Source: Chandrika Mago. 'Forest guards to get insurance cover', *The Times of India*, 24/08/2001.

Contact: **Aniruddha Mookerjee**, (WTI), see above. Email: aniruddha@wildlifetrustofindia.org

National Seminar on the elephant held

A two day national seminar – 'Call of the Elephant' was organised on August 18-19, 2001, in Kolkata.

Organised jointly by Pugmarks and the Indian Museum, Kolkata, it was also accompanied by a two week long exhibition.

The seminar had a multidisciplinary approach and covered a range of issues that included evolutionary aspects, the relationship of the elephant with human beings since the Pleistocene era and the depiction by humans of elephants in painting, sculpture, literature, and the performing arts during the ancient, medieval and present times.

Source: Smaran Ghosal. 'National Seminar-Call of the Elephant', Email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 08/09/2001.

Contact: **Smaran Ghosal**. Email: pugmarks@vsnl.com

Elephant conservation project for the NE

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – India has embarked upon a project for the conservation of the elephant on the north bank of the River Brahmaputra. Called the North Bank Landscape (NBL), the project will include the area between the northern bank of the Brahmaputra, the foothills of the eastern Himalayas, Manas Wildlife Sanctuary and the Dibang river. The area comprises about 3000 sq. kms of protected areas and the Kameng – Sonitpur Inter-State Elephant Reserve No.2. Overlapping the Manas / Namdapha Tiger Conservation Unit, the NBL encompasses several WWF Tiger Conservation Project sites and is one of WWF's key sites of the eco-region based conservation strategy. In the long run the project is likely to include 3000 elephants spread over an area of 11,000 sq. kms.

The vision behind the project is to preserve the 14 elephant populations found in the region by maintaining habitat continuity, reducing poaching and other threats and mobilising substantial public and professional support for it.

The implementation of the project started in May, earlier this year and is expected to lead to a comprehensive action plan, prioritising the most urgently needed interventions to counter the threats presently faced. (Also see ASSAM, above)

Source: 'WWF – India undertakes elephant conservation project', *The Assam Tribune*, 08/08/2001.

Contact : **Tariq Aziz** , WWF – TCP, 172-B, Lodi Estate, New Delhi - 110 003. Email: wwftcp@ndb.vsnl.net.in

National Workshop on sea turtle conservation

A national workshop for the 'Development of a National Sea Turtle Conservation Action Plan for India' was held in Bhubaneswar from April 9-10, 2001. The workshop was jointly conducted by the

Wildlife Institute of India (WII), and the Orissa Forest Department with the support of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It was attended by nearly 100 participants including Forest and Fisheries Department officials from most coastal states, academic institutions, and agencies involved in the UNDP sea turtle project

The workshop came out with a series of recommendations on 'Enforcement and Management', Monitoring, Evaluation and Research, and 'Community Based Conservation and Participatory Management'

Source: 'A National Workshop for the Development of A National Sea Turtle Conservation Action Plan for India', *Kachhapa*, July 2001.

Contact: **Kartik Shanker.**, see above

Eviction of tribals from national parks opposed

The National Commission for the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (NCWSCST) has advised the State and Union Governments to frame a prudent policy to allow the tribal people living inside national parks in the country to remain there. This was suggested recently in Mangalore by the Chairperson of the Commission, Mr. Dilip Singh Bhuria.

He said that there was a need to have policies that protected the rights of tribal people which also did not infringe on the laws relating to the protection of the national parks against excessive human intervention.

Source: "Do not evict tribal people from national parks", *The Hindu*, 04/08/2001.

Contact: **Dilip Singh Bhuria**, Chairman, NCWSCST, Vth Floor, Loknayak Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi 110003. Tel: 011-4624714 / 4632298 / 4620435 Fax : 4625378. Email: chairman@ncscst.delhi.nic.in

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

SOUTH ASIA

NEPAL

Rise in illegal beetle trade

The recent arrest of two Japanese men on charges of trying to smuggle 271 pairs of stag beetles from

Nepal has revealed a flourishing illegal trade in these creatures in this Himalayan kingdom.

The Director of the National Park and Wildlife Conservation Department has said that smuggling of beetles from the country has been on the rise for the last two years. The stag beetle is found in the Nepalese mid-hills at an altitude of around 2000m. It is collected by people of all ages and reportedly fetches a price of US\$ 20 per pair.

This is the fourth time in the recent past that beetle smugglers have been arrested in Nepal.

The Japanese are known to have a big fascination for beetles, but till recently the import of all but three foreign species of beetles were prohibited due to fears that the non native beetles would destroy crops and plant life.

All that, however, changed in November 1999, when the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Plant Protection Station approved 31 species of beetles for import into the country. The demand has shot up and smuggling of stag beetles from countries like Nepal has increased greatly. There are even reports that collectors often fell trees to harvest the beetles that inhabit treetops.

Source: 'Illegal beetle trade surfaces in Nepal', *Kyodo News Service*, 07/08/2001.
'Japanese stag beetle boom spawns bug-smuggling surge', *Kyodo News Service*, 17/08/2001.

Contact: **Director**, Dept. of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, PO Box 860, Babarmahal, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: +977-1-227675. Fax: 250850

PAKISTAN

Houbara being hunted to extinction

Large scale hunting and poaching of the Houbara Bustard in its nesting ground in the Balochistan province of Pakistan is rapidly pushing the bird to extinction. The Houbara is found in many parts of Balochistan including the Chagai, Kharan, Lasbela and Zhob districts.

The Nag valley in Kharan, which is an important breeding ground for many rare bird species including the Houbara, is also a good hunting ground for the poachers. It is estimated that nearly 3000 Houbara Bustards are killed in Balochistan province alone. Even birds in the Gut Wildlife Sanctuary are not spared. Established over an area of 1600 sq. kms., it is the prime habitat of the bird near the town of Yakmach in the Chagai district.

One of the prime reasons for the decline in numbers are the hunting permits given each year to the Arabs who hunt the bird with their falcons. In turn many development projects like an airport, hospital and roads have been initiated in the region

by them, particularly dignitaries from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Source: 'Rare Houbara birds gradually die out in Pakistan', *Indo-Asian News Service*, 07/09/2001.

INTERNATIONAL

Conference on Conservation of Marine Turtles of the Indian Ocean and South East Asia

A Conference on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles of the Indian Ocean and South East Asia was held in Manila, Philippines from June 19-23, 2001. Delegates from 21 countries participated in the meeting that was organised under the auspices of the Convention on Migratory Species.

The meeting was held to conclude the best possible conservation and management plan to achieve the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Conservation and Management of sea turtles in this region. 8 countries including Australia, Comoros, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and the USA signed the MoU, which came into effect for the signatory states on September 1, 2001. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) will host the MoU secretariat at its regional office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok.

Source: 'Conference on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles of the Indian Ocean and South East Asia', *Kachhapa*, July 2001.

Society of Wetland Scientists' Ramsar Support grant program invites proposals

The Society of Wetland Scientists (SWS) is soliciting proposals for their Ramsar Support Grant Program, which was established to advance Ramsar Convention objectives, including the selection, designation, management, and networking of Ramsar sites; and the promotion of Ramsar's Wise Use guidelines. Two to four projects are funded each year at a level of US \$5,000 on a competitive basis as reviewed by a 4-member Evaluation Committee.

Only applicants working on Ramsar-related activities in countries that are on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development–Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) List of Aid Recipients are eligible to receive grants under this program, and priority is given to applicants from countries below the threshold for World Bank loan eligibility. SWS will only consider funding projects that will be completed in one calendar year.

Proposals and end products must be in English. Last date for the receipt of proposals is November 1, 2001.

Contact: **Eric Gilman**, SWS International Chapter,
C/o National Audubon Society Living
Oceans Program, 2718 Napuaa Place,
Honolulu, HI 96822 USA. Tel:
808.988.1976. Fax: 808.988.1440. E-mail:
egilman@lava.net Website:
www.sws.org/regional/international/Ramsar
.Support.Framework
Wetlands International - Asia Pacific,
3A39, Block A, Kelana Centre Point,
SS7/19 Petaling Jaya, 47301 Selangor,
Malaysia. Tel: +60-3-704 6770. Fax: +60-3-
704 6772 Email: wiap@wiap.nasionet.net
Web site: www.wetlands.org

OPPORTUNITIES

Field researchers needed for Uttar Pradesh project

Field researchers are needed for the following two projects in Uttar Pradesh

1. An assessment of the dynamics of NTFP dependencies in selected PAs of protected areas of Uttar Pradesh
2. Study on the status and impacts of tourism in selected protected areas of Uttar Pradesh

The duration of the project will be 10 months and would involve field work of 6-8 months. Candidates with a post graduate degree in Biological Sciences will be preferred.

Contact: **Prachi Mehta**, Envirosearch, 6, Snehal,
26/80 Sahwas Society, Karve Nagar, Pune
411052. Maharashtra. Tel: 020- 4007895:
Email: prachim@vsnl.com

Director for ATREE Eastern Himalayan Program

The Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) has advertised for a person to lead its Eastern Himalaya Programme based in Bagdogra, West Bengal. The focus of the programme is on natural resources management through education, development of micro enterprises, policy research and networking with agencies in the government and non-government sectors.

Qualifications: A doctorate degree in natural or social sciences with 3-5 years of field experience. Exceptional candidates with Master's degree and with 8 – 10 years of relevant experience may also be

considered. Preference will be given to those with some prior experience in the region.

Contact: **Director**, ATREE, 659, 5th A Main Road,
Hebbal, Bangalore 560024, Karnataka. Tel:
080- 3533942, Fax: 080-3530070 Email:
director@atree.org.

Research Fellowship in Andhra Pradesh

Applications have been invited for one Junior Research Fellow for two years for a project on 'Inventorisation of Faunal Resources in National Parks'. The fellowship which is tenable for three years is at the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Hyderabad and is for undertaking field studies / survey / research (Taxonomy/ Ecology) as per the guidelines for national parks around the city. Individuals below the age of 28 with an MSc. Degree in Zoology are qualified to apply. Last date for applications in November 5, 2001.

Contact: **Officer-in-Charge**, ZSI, Freshwater
Biological Station, 1-1-300/B, Ashoknagar,
Hyderabad – 500020, Andhra Pradesh.

Faculty Positions In Environment-Development Studies

The Institute for Social & Economic Change (ISEC) and the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore (ISEC-ATREE) Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Environment and Development (CISED) has advertised for recruitment of scholars as Core and Visiting Faculty.

Core Faculty: Candidates would typically have a Ph.D., and a strong track record of research on issues that lie at the environment-development interface. They are expected to have a strong inclination and interest in interdisciplinary research and teaching on environmental issues in the South Asian context.

Visiting Faculty: Candidates could have qualifications as above or could be persons with a more activist or policy-making background who wish to spend some time away from their ongoing activities to reflect, write, debate and advise on issues in an academic setting.

The deadline for receiving applications is November 15, 2001.

Contact: **Dr. Sharachchandra** Lele Coordinator,
CISED ISEC Campus, Nagarabhavi
Bangalore – 560072, Karnataka. Tel: 080-
321-7013 Fax: 080- 321-7008 E-mail:
slele@isec.kar.nic.in

WHAT'S AVAILABLE ?

- Kuty, Roshni. *Community based conservation of sea turtle nesting sites in Goa, Kerala and Orissa*, Kalpavriksh, September, 2001.

This is a report based on a one year study that was jointly funded by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government Of India (GOI) with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, as nodal agency. It documents the community initiatives in Olive Ridley Turtle conservation at Tembwado in Morjim in Goa and attempts by the fisherfolk community in Kolavipaalam in Kerala. in conserving Olive Ridley nesting beaches.

The report also chalks out a plan for people's participation in the conservation of Rushikulya mass nesting site in Orissa.

Contact: **Roshni Kuty**, at the editorial address.
Email: roshi73@rediffmail.com

- Subramanian, KS. & Vlassoff, Dr. M. *Population Pressure and Biodiversity: A Case Study of Keoladeo National Park*, UNFPA, New Delhi, Undated.

This recent publication of the United Nations Population Fund India seeks to highlight the threat posed by rapid population growth to bio-diversity in India in the macro context.

Contact: **UNFPA**, 55 Lodhi Estate, New Delhi 110003.

- Kadekodi, GK. et al. *Root Causes of Biodiversity Losses in Chilika Lake*, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi & Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research (CMDR), Dharwar, 1999.

This monograph looks at the rapid expansion of commercial agriculture, particularly prawn culture in the Chilika lake and its direct and indirect contribution to the decline of the lake's fisheries and world renowned bird population. Changes, both in India's economic policies and in global markets too have caused a rapid rise in the price of prawns leading to the abandonment of traditional fishing patters in favour of aquaculture.

Contact: **Gopal Kadekodi**, CMDR, DB Rodda Road, Jubilee Circle, Dharwad – 580001, Karnataka. Tel: 0836-745273 / 447639.

Fax: 447627. Email: cmdr@bgl.vsnl.net.in-

- Rawal, RS., & Dhar, U. *Protected area network in Indian Himalayan region: Need for recognising values of low profile protected areas*, *Current Science*, 2001

This paper reviews the existing state of protected areas in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) and identifies the various gaps therein. It highlights the existing disparity in ranking the importance of PAs and discusses the potentials of low profile PAs in the region through a detailed review of the biophysical values of the lesser known Askot Wildlife Sanctuary in Kumaon.

Contact: GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Kosi Katarmal, Almora --263643, Uttaranchal.
Email: udhar@nde.vsnl.net.in

- Venkataraman, Meena. *Conservation and Tribal Communities: A study of the Paliyars of the Palni Hills*, Unpublished, 2001.

A study of the Paliyar tribals was undertaken in order to understand their dependency on the forest resources, socio-economic status and their cultural identity. Data on 17 settlements across the Palni hills covering a population of over 1000 was collected. The study examined the question as to whether the proposed Palni hills sanctuary would erode on the identity and livelihood of the Paliyars and if there are any issues of conflict?

Contact: **Meena Venkataraman**, AERCC, CES, Indain Institute of Science, Bangalore-560012, Karnataka. E-mail- mvenkataraman@hotmail.com; meena@ces.iisc.ernet.in

UPCOMING

National Workshop on Community Conserved Areas

Kalpavriksh in collaboration with Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal Winrock- India and Indian Social Institute (ISI), New Delhi is organising a three - day workshop on "Community Conserved Areas in India: Issues and Prospects". This workshop will be held at IIFM Bhopal from November 21 -23, 2001.

Contact: **Neema Pathak**, at the editorial address

Workshop on 'Conservation, Propagation, Utilisation and Marketing of Medicinal Plants'

This workshop is being organised to assess the current efforts and develop a better understanding of the issues involved in developing a future strategy for "Conservation, Propagation, Utilisation and Marketing of Medicinal Plants" primarily focusing on arid and semi-arid regions of India. The workshop will be held from November 5-7, 2001 in Udaipur, Rajasthan. (Earlier the workshop was scheduled for October 5-7, but has now been postponed by a month)

The workshop will include a field visit to a research farm, and a herbal garden. During the visit, the participants will have an opportunity to interact with knowledgeable rural health healers in a village workshop setting. Interested field workers, researchers, academicians, forestry professionals, health practitioners, non-government organisations and development policy planners have been invited to participate.

Contact: **Dr. Nihal C. Jain**, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Aravalli Afforestation Project, Udaipur -313001, Rajasthan. Tel: 0294 529553 / 522534 Fax: 523076. E-mail: ncjain@bppl.net.in

Workshop on People's Control over Natural Resources

A North - Indian Workshop on 'People's Control over Natural Resources' and the Wildlife (Protection) Bill is being held from October 6-8, 2001 in Udaipur. Organised by the ASTHA Sansthan, Udaipur, it will discuss issues related to water, the Land Acquisition Act (LAA), the 5th Schedule of the Indian Constitution and the Samata Judgement, the Indian Forest Act (IFA) and the Wildlife (Protection) Bill.

Contact: **Bhanwar Singh Chadana**, ASTHA, 39 Kharol Colony, Udaipur - 313004, Rajasthan. Tel: 0294 - 451348 / 451705 / 451391. Fax: 451391. Email: astha3@vsnl.com

International Conference on Eco-Restoration

The National Institute of Ecology (NIE) in association with the Society for Ecological Restoration (USA) - Indian Chapter, the International Society for Tropical Ecology (ISTE) and the Indian Society for Agricultural Sciences (ISAS) is organising an international conference on 'Eco-Restoration' in New Delhi from January 14-28, 2002. The main objectives of the Conference are:

1. To review the existing knowledge on ecological, socio-economic and environmental dimensions of

degradation of land and water resources, especially in the developing countries;

2. To document eco-restoration approaches with case studies in different countries

3. To review the impacts of government policies on eco-restoration of degraded environments;

4. To provide a sound scientific basis for developing appropriate policy framework for eco-restoration in developing countries

5. To identify areas of interdisciplinary research relevant to eco-restoration of land and water resources.

Contact: **Narayan Desai**. Email: nrd167@hotmail.com

National symposium on 'Elephant Conservation, Management and Research'

A National Symposium on 'Elephant Conservation, Management and Research' is being organised from Dec. 16-20, 2001. Organised jointly by Project Elephant, MoEF, GOI, the CWLW, Uttaranchal and the Wildlife Institute of India, the symposium is being held at Chilla in the Rajaji National Park.

Contact: **Dr. Sushant Chowdhury**, WII, see above. Email: sushant@wii.gov.in
AS Negi, CWLW, Uttaranchal, see above

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

PA UPDATE MATTERS

Information needed / Back issues available

It is constantly an attempt to make the PA Update as comprehensive as possible and cover PAs from all parts of the country. Information in terms of reports, newspaper cuttings etc. are most welcome and

readers are requested to keep sending us information regularly.

A set of 10 back issues of the PA Update (Nos. 20 – 29, April 1999 to February 2001) is now available in a single hardbound volume. It is available for Rs. 150/- (One hundred and fifty only). Please add an additional Rs.20 for postage and handling and Rs. 20 in case of an outstation cheque.

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

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PA Update 33 was prepared and edited by Pankaj Sekhsaria. Some 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.indianjungles.com>;

<http://home.att.net/~spiderhunters/attachments.htm>;

www.cee.envirodebate.org

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

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