

# JPAM UPDATE

## News on Action Towards Joint Protected Area Management

No. 19

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#### EDITORIAL

1998 has been the year of poaching exposes. We had, in fact, a good mind to nominate Salman Khan for the Unintended Conservationist of the Year award: his misdeed, and the actions of the Bishnois, made poaching a national issue, and suddenly forest officers, NGOs, the media, and the judiciary seemed to take the matter more seriously than before (not that some of them were not doing

all they could earlier, but their efforts appeared to take on a more effective tone). Whether it will make a major difference in the long run or not is unclear, but at least the nation took notice.

In another flurry of activity, the Ministry of Environment and Forests announced the setting up of two expert committees: one to revise the 1983 National Wildlife Action Plan (NWAP), and the other to recommend rationalisation of boundaries of protected areas all over India (see NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA). Both could be significant for the future of protected areas and for wildlife conservation in India, if the committees carry out their tasks with seriousness and caution.

The 1983 NWAP had set the stage for a series of initiatives on wildlife conservation, including strengthening the PA network and making it more representative of India's natural habitats, expanding conservation education and training, and others. However, it was somewhat weak on how to make conservation more participatory, though one of its outcomes was an effort by the Indian Board for Wildlife to frame an action plan for involving citizens in conservation. This latter document lacked a critical focus on making local communities and other citizens key players in conservation. It is hoped that the new committee will be fully cognizant of current realities in and around our conservation areas (including PAs), and will give communities and citizens a central role, with clear rights and responsibilities.

The exercise to rationalise PA boundaries is as significant. Many of our PAs have been declared with arbitrariness, based on administrative convenience, incomplete knowledge, ignorance of ground realities, or even commercial interest. In Maharashtra, for instance, there are PAs which include considerable human populations inside while leaving out adjacent forest areas which are sparsely populated. Some re-organisation of the boundaries would considerably reduce the people-PA conflicts, while perhaps including important wildlife habitat so far left out.

However, this exercise must be undertaken with great caution. This is especially so, given the current process of settlement of people's rights in PAs (see commentaries in previous *JPAM Updates*), in which some district collectors may be keen to simply knock off large chunks of PAs where the settlement process is too much of a headache for them (see **Stop Press** below). If portions are left out of PAs simply because of human habitation (as was done in the case of Melghat Sanctuary), we may be opening up these areas to more destructive forces which would gobble up both wildlife and local communities.

We have been arguing that instead of this, we should move towards a flexible system of PA categories and zoning, which would authorise sustainable resource use while maintaining jointly determined levels of conservation values. It would have been wiser to have set up this committee after the promulgation of the revised Wild Life (Protection) Act, which, among other things, has two additional categories of PAs (Community Reserves and Conservation Reserves). Many areas, which now run the risk of being left out of the PA network altogether, could have been converted into such categories, where communities would have had control while ensuring conservation.

**Stop-press!** S.P. Sharma reports in the Tribune (19/1/99), that the Himachal Pradesh authorities are proposing partial *denotification* of several PAs: Great Himalayan National Park for a hydro-electric project, and Rupi, Churdhar, and other sanctuaries because they are "heavily loaded with rights of private people"! The latter are in relation to the infamous WWF case, in which the Supreme Court, in which the Court has ordered completion of settlement procedures within one year...with no guidelines for how to go about doing this.(see past issues of *JPAM Update*). This is exactly as we had predicted more than a year ago...in their desire to rid PAs of people's presence, conservationists are ending up destabilising the entire PA network.

## NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

### ANDHRA PRADESH

#### Follow up on mining threat in Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve

In response to a letter from Bittu Sahgal regarding uranium mining in the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve (see *JPAM Update* 18) the Environment Minister responded saying the following: "I have got the matter examined and would like to inform you that such a proposal has been received for clearance from the Government of Andhra Pradesh. However, in consonance with the laid down policy, the State Government has been asked by the Ministry to first obtain approval of the Indian Board of Wildlife, as the proposed area of mining is a part of a National Park."

*Source:* Bittu Sahgal on email dated 16/10/98 on nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu

*Contact:* **Bittu Sahgal**, Sanctuary Asia, 602, Maker Chamber V, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021.

Tel : 022-283 0061 / 283 0081, Fax: 022-287 4380; Email: admin@ecologist.ilbom.ernet.in.  
**P.K. Sen**, Director, Project Tiger, Annexe No. 5, Bikaner House, Shah Jahan Road, New Delhi 110 001.

### **Kolleru Lake threatened**

The Kolleru Lake Bird Sanctuary is being threatened by encroachments, dumping of industrial effluents and increasing salinity due to bunding for fisheries. One of the largest freshwater lakes in the country, Kolleru is spread over an area of 674 sq. km. in the West Godavari and Krishna districts of Andhra Pradesh. The lake was declared a sanctuary in 1976, and is famous for the large number of migratory birds that visit here every year.

*Source:* 'Encroachments Pose Threat to Kolleru Lake' *Newstime*, Hyderabad, 13/07/98.

## **ASSAM**

### **Floods devastate many sanctuaries in Assam**

While the devastation caused in the Kaziranga National Park due to the recent floods received worldwide coverage and financial assistance (see *JPAM Update 18*), many smaller sanctuaries that were also ravaged went unnoticed. 14 other sanctuaries, including Pobitara, Orang, Dibru Saikhowa and Burha-Chapori, were badly affected where many roads, bridges and forest camps within the sanctuaries were washed away. Senior wildlife officials have said that financial aid for these sanctuaries is being made available, however it is not known what the extent of this aid is nor the reconstruction activities it is being used for.

*Source:* *Indian Express*, quoted on email from Nalin M. dated 25/10/98 on nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu.

*Contact:* **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Assam, RG Barua Road, (Chandmari), Guwahati 710 024, Assam.

### **Tragedy in Dibru-Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary**

Narayan Sharma, the Range Officer of Guijan Forest Range of the Dibru Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary, was trampled to death by an elephant at the Nalani Forest Reserve near Pangeri, in Tinsukia district. The accident happened on 2 November 1998. A wild elephant in the area had terrorised people, killing some persons. Mr. Sharma was accompanying the expert who was to tranquilise the elephant prior to its capture. However the tranquiliser was not effective, and the elephant became alert and trampled Mr Sharma. The death of Mr. Sharma has been mourned by many in the field of environment and wildlife conservation. He was, in particular, very keen on gaining the support of local communities for conservation, and was helping them with various inputs.

*Source:* E-mail from Krys Kazmierczak on nahistory-india@lists.princeton.edu, dated 2.12.98.

*Contact:* **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Assam (address as above)

## **GOA**

### **Directory of protected areas in Goa**

As a follow-up to the all India surveys on protected areas started by the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi, work has now begun on a Directory of PAs of Goa. The project is sponsored by the Ministry of Environment and Forests through WWF-India. It aims to build up baseline information on the legal, socio-economic and biological components of the five protected areas of Goa, and highlight key management issues. It is expected to be ready by late 1999. Readers with relevant information, are requested to write to either of the following.

*Contact:* **Sunita Rao** at the editorial address.

**Pratibha Pande**, D 112 Rabindra Nagar, New Delhi 110 003. Tel: 011-469 2903.

## **GUJARAT**

### **Flamingoes in Little Rann of Kutch**

Lesser flamingos have been breeding in large numbers in the Little Rann of Kutch including areas within the Dhrangadhra Wild Ass Sanctuary. The large scale nesting, after the annihilation suffered because of the cyclone in June 1998, has surprised ornithologists. Lesser flamingos are known to breed only in the Greater Rann of Kutch, along with the Greater flamingos. Nesting activities of the Lesser flamingo was last seen on a large scale in 1973 in the Greater Rann, but this year's nesting in the Little Rann is reported to be much larger.

*Source:* Shyam Parekh. 'Flamingoes breed as never before in Little Rann' *Times of India*. 14/10/98.

### **Satellite monitoring of forest fires in Gir**

Satellite monitoring will help in locating and hence fighting fires in the Gir forests, including the Gir National Park, home to the world's last surviving population of the Asiatic lion in the wild. Images sent by the Indian Remote Sensing satellites (IRS) will help in the task. The Forestry and Environment Division of the Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad, has completed the vegetation mapping of Gir forests, besides using the IRS images to locate the fires on maps and issue timely fire warnings. This was done on an experimental basis from February 23 to April 25, 1998, with reasonably accurate results.

The hitch however lies in the fact that this cannot be done on a daily basis yet, but the scientists assure that this will be possible in the future. It is hoped that subsequent maps will be more regular and will succeed in avoiding large-scale damage by fire in Gir. The fire affected area in Gir has reportedly come down from 33.5% of the total forest area in 1989 to a mere 3.66% today and it is being hoped satellite warnings will help reduce this even further.

*Source:* Shyam Parekh. 'Eye in the sky helps in monitoring Gir forest fires'. *Times of India*. 8/10/98.

### **Mangroves threatened near Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary**

Over 5,000 ha. of lush mangrove in the West Mangrove Reserved Forest (WMRF), adjoining the Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary is under serious threat. Four large cement companies have requested the Union Ministry for Environment and Forests to dereserve this area for setting up private jetties, use of heavy dredging equipment, establishing power & desalination plants and clinker crushing plants.

The state government too has recommended the dereservation. It has been reported that already 22 large and small cement factories have come up in the area that was earlier dereserved from the Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary. Despite serious protests from ecological groups all over India, and a legal challenge, the Gujarat Government had in 1993 denotified the 766 sq km Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary reducing it to an area of only 444 sq. km.

*Source:* 'Industry threatens to snuff out rare mangrove forest' *Statesman*. 13/07/98.

### **JAMMU & KASHMIR**

#### **Golf course inside national park!**

A golf course is coming up inside the 9.07 sq. km. City Forest National Park, located 5 km. from Srinagar on the eastern bank of the Dal Lake. The Park supports many endangered animals, including Hangul, Himalayan yellow throated marten, Musk deer, and Black bear. An 18-hole golf course adhering to international standards is proposed within the National Park, to be finalised by 1999 at a cost of Rs. 5.5 crore. More than half the work is already reported to be done, and bulldozers, labourers etc. are on the job for the completion of the remaining part of the golf course. It has also been reported that thousands of ancestral graves of local rural inhabitants have been desecrated by these activities.

*Source:* Neelu Sharma in a letter to *JPAM Update*; Vikramjit Singh. 1998 'Graves make way for golf course' *Indian Express*. 16/10/98.

*Contact:* Neelu Sharma, 31 B/D Gandhinagar, Jammu (Tawi) 180 004, Jammu & Kashmir.

### **MAHARASHTRA**

#### **Tiger Safari set up in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park**

A Tiger Safari was inaugurated in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park on the 20th of November by the Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray. The safari is spread over an area of 50 acres, surrounded by a ten feet high wired fence in Krishnagiri, the tourist zone inside the Park. The safari has 6 tigers, including two white tigers. The Chief Minister of Maharashtra announced that the state would donate Rs.1 crore through the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) to the Safari that would cost about Rs.80 lakhs a year for maintenance.

Earlier, in the month of October a petition was filed in the Mumbai High Court by the animal welfare organisation 'Ahimsa', seeking to restrain the Sanjay Gandhi National Park from using its land for conducting any non-forest or commercial activity such as setting up of an open air theatre, tiger safari, tourism zones, guest houses, botanical gardens and construction of roads. Following the petition the National Park authorities had put off the inauguration of the Tiger Safari within the National Park for about a month. The final outcome of the case is not known.

It is a wonder that state governments which otherwise complain about lack of funds for conservation programmes, find such large amounts for what is surely not a high priority conservation

activity. The whole affair sounds more like a political gimmick (projecting the Shiv Sena's symbol rather than the real tiger and its plight) than a serious conservation programme.

*Source:* 'Tiger Safari at national park challenged' *Indian Express*. 7/10/98.  
'A new Tiger Reserve to come up near Nagpur' *Indian Express*. 21/11/98

*Contact:* **DFO**, Sanjay Gandhi Rashtriya Udyan, Borivilli (E), Bombay 400 066, Maharashtra.

### **Pilgrimage in PAs to be controlled**

On the occasion of Mahashivratri, 14<sup>th</sup> February 1999, lakhs of pilgrims will visit sites within Maharashtra's PAs such as the Sanjay Gandhi National Park and Bhimashankar Sanctuary. In the past, this has caused considerable damage, through littering, noise, fuelwood use, etc. This year, the Forest Department, Anthropological Survey of India, and district authorities, have decided to restrict entry points, and prohibit pilgrims from carrying plastics, radios, cigarettes/bidis, etc. Certain areas, such as the Kanheri caves in SGNP, will have special restrictions. These steps were initiated at the suggestion of some Mumbai and Pune based NGOs.

*Source:* Anon. 1999. 'Restrictions for visitors to Kanheri Caves on Shivratri'. *Times of India*. 13/2/99.  
Deshmukh, V. 1999. 'Bhimashankar dumps plastic'. *Pune Newslines, Indian Express*. 12/2/99.

## **ORISSA**

### **Bhitarkanika under threat**

Deforestation and poaching is adversely affecting the Bhitarkanika Sanctuary, the world famous home of nesting Olive Ridley turtles, the salt water crocodile and many migratory and resident birds. The Dangmal Forest Range has recorded the killing of about 125 animals (including 111 deer) in the last few months. According to a senior forest official, this number too may be far off the mark, adding that the Forest Department has been handicapped by covert support extended to illegal settlers and the prawn mafia.

No attempt has been made to evict the estimated 25,000 illegal settlers and prawn farms from the Sanctuary area despite a series of court orders and pressure from environmentalists worldwide. As a result the 380 sq km forest cover (including the 120 sq km mangrove forests, the second largest in the country after Sundarbans in West Bengal) has reduced drastically at an average rate of three sq. km. per annum. During the previous Janata Dal regime, revenue officials

reportedly set afire a forest block for the migrants to settle.

Earlier, in a petition filed by the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Orissa High Court issued an order restraining the state government from leasing out forest land and water bodies or allowing aquaculture in the Bhitarkanika Sanctuary. The government was further directed to ensure that all the trawlers operating in the area use turtle extrusion devices, that no trawlers are allowed to enter the Gahirmatha (nesting) area, and encroachers are evicted. The state of implementation of these orders is not known.

*Source:* Anon. 1998. 'High Court restrains Orissa government from leasing out forest land', *Business Standard*. 08/09/98.  
Rajaram Satapathy. 1998. 'Orissa sanctuary falls prey to poachers'. *Times of India*. 13/11/98.

### **Migratory birds flock to Nalaban Sanctuary**

Migratory birds have been flocking to the Nalaban Bird Sanctuary within the Chilika lake in large numbers since October. A census conducted in the winter of 1997-98 recorded about 2 million birds in the lake, which is also a Ramsar site (a wetland of international importance). Wildlife officials have pointed out that the water level in the lake was higher this year, following dredging of the mouth of the lake and of the channel connecting it with the sea. This has caused an increase in the salinity level of the lake water and ornithologists are studying the behaviour of birds in the changed circumstances.

In another report, the Chilika Bachao Andolan President Banka Behary Das, alleged that the prawn mafia continues to operate in the lake despite the state government's reported claims that it would not allow illegal prawn farming under the Coastal Regulations Zone (CRZ) provisions. In fact the state government had destroyed the prawn operations inside the lake two years ago following the landmark decision of the Supreme Court which banned intensive and semi-intensive farming within the CRZ. These have however been reconstructed and encroachments have also gone up in the last one year.

*Source:* 'Chilka lake under threat from prawn mafia' *The Observer of Business and Politics*. 19/09/98  
'Birds Crowd Orissa Sanctuary'. *Times of India*. 15/10/98.

*Contact:* **Banka Behary Das**, Orrisa Krushak Mahasangh, 14, Ashok Nagar, Bhubaneswar 751 009, Orissa. **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Govt. of Orissa, Plot No. 8, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar 751 007, Orissa.

## RAJASTHAN

### Demoiselle cranes in people's protected area

Demoiselle cranes have been reported in large numbers again this year from Khinchan village, 40 km from Jodhpur. Villagers of this tiny hamlet in the Thar desert have traditionally been protecting the cranes that have been coming here for ages. The birds, which are locally known as *kurja*, are treated as guests and feasts are hosted in honour of their arrival.

The birds are known to cause a lot of damage to standing crop, but no harm is caused to them. The villagers explain that they are compensated by the annual remittances they receive from a section of their kinsmen, specially the Oswal Jain community, who have migrated to other parts of the country and set up successful business enterprises. Meticulous records are kept of the remittances of each contributor, who is then mailed a proper receipt.

*Source:* P. Bhandari. 1998. 'They strive to protect cranes in this village'. *Times of India* 23/10/98.

### Siberian cranes arrive in Bharatpur

A pair of Siberian cranes was observed for the first time this winter in the Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur on 11th Nov. 1998. A Sarus crane pair with two chicks had a territorial dispute with the migrant pair, following which the Sibes moved to another part of the park. In 1997 the Siberian cranes had arrived in the Park on 17 November and the year before the arrival date was 16 November.

Simultaneously, the five year effort to save these cranes suffered another setback in July last year. One of the three survivors of a group of reintroduced Siberian cranes died after being rescued from a village near Alwar in Rajasthan. Village folk, who had never seen a Siberian crane before, reportedly set their dogs on the unfortunate bird. When they caught the bird, it was dubbed a 'spy' and 'bird bomb': It carried a radio transmitter on its leg. Two of its other mates are missing, presumed dead.

*Source:* Dave Ferguson on email dated 18/11/98 on nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu. 'On The Edge', Ecology Watch, *India Today*. 31/8/98.

*Contact:* **Shruti Sharma**, Director, Keoladeo Ghana National Park, Bharatpur, Rajasthan.

### Public hearings at Jamva Ramgarh Sanctuary and Sariska Tiger Reserve

Two protected areas of Rajasthan -- Jamva Ramgarh Sanctuary and Sariska Tiger Reserve (consisting of a national park and a sanctuary) -- were witness to a unique event on 20-21 December, 1998. The villagers of the area, in association with the local NGO Tarun Bharat Sangh, and the Indian People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Environment, organised a public hearing on various issues related to these PAs. Justice G.S. Gupta, former Chief Justice of Himachal and of Tamil Nadu, presided over the hearings.

The issues about which villagers, forest officials, and NGOs deposed, included mining, impact of the PAs on local livelihoods, wildlife destruction, crop damage by wild animals, and conflicts between PA authorities and local people. Villagers argued that they should be allowed to remain staying inside the PAs, and they would in turn help to protect forests and wildlife. The forest officials agreed that villagers would continue to stay inside, except in the national park, and that the settlement of their rights would take their livelihood needs into full consideration.

A public hearing is obviously not the forum for immediate resolution of long-standing conflicts and tensions, but it can be a powerful first step. Justice Gupta's report is awaited, but already the hearings may have served a purpose: at Jamva Ramgarh, for instance, the categorical statement by the forest officials that no-one was going to be displaced from the Sanctuary, came as a pleasant surprise to villagers who had feared displacement.

A brief report prepared by Ashish Kothari, one of the members on the panel of persons invited for the hearings, can be obtained from the editorial address. For the detailed report, under preparation, contact the following:

*Contact:* **Rajendra Singh**, Tarun Bharat Sangh, Bhikampura-Kishori, via Thanagazi, Dist. Alwar 301 002, Rajasthan. Tel: 01465-25 043.

**Indian People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Environment**, Jain High School, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, 84, Samuel Street, Dongri, Mumbai 400 009, Maharashtra.

## UTTAR PRADESH

### Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary threatened

The endangered Swamp deer and some other species of the Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary are facing a serious threat due to the illegal cutting of *khair* (*Acacia catechu*), rosewood, and sandalwood trees, and the extraction of *Typha*

grass. *Typha* grows on swampy ground and has an average height of 5 to 6 feet which is ideal for the Swamp deer. This grass is being illegally extracted as it is used as a raw material by the paper mills.

In September 1998, the Wildlife Warden of the Meerut-Agra region, R.D. Pathak, had seized two truckloads of *Typha* grass in the Muzzafarnagar and Meerut area and lodged an FIR under the Wild Life (Protection) Act. Photocopies of the permits that were recovered revealed that they had no date of issue or the validity period. Also, while the permit holder is allowed to cut not more than 22 quintals, Mr. Pathak alleged that more than 100 times that amount had been illegally extracted.

A survey conducted by the Zoology Department of the Aligarh University has reported that the breeding of the animals in the Sanctuary has been affected because of the increased extraction. It has recommended a complete ban on the cutting of *Typha* for commercial purposes. A big mafia gang which is reportedly operating in the area has extensive political, bureaucratic and underworld contacts, which has ensured the continuing of the illegal activities.

*Sources:* D.S. Kunwar. 1998. 'Mafia Targets Sandalwood, Rosewood trees'. *Times of India* 26/10/98.  
S. Raju. 1998. 'Sanctuary to Mafia may Cost Wildlife Deer'. *Hindustan Times* 30/10/98.

*Contact:* **Zoology Department**, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh 202 002, Uttar Pradesh

## NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

### Teesta canal proposal dropped

The proposal for the Joghripoga-Teesta-Farakka Link Canal which was to bring water to the Hoogly river to 'flush its silt load' has been dropped. However the associated power project has been cleared. The proposal has been dropped after the recommendations of Dr. S Bhowmik, Additional Director in the Ministry of Environment and Forests. In the Pre-feasibility Report (PFR) dated May 12 1998 he commented:

"considering the location of the proposed project in biologically rich ecosystems and the alignment of the canal through the Buxa Tiger Reserve, Gorumera National Park, Jaldapara and Chapramari Sanctuaries and Reserve Forest areas of Ripu, Dhunchi, Moraghat, Diana, Upper

Tandu and Apanchand, we are *prima facie* of the view that the project may not be environmentally sound.

The proposed canal virtually bifurcates the protected areas which are home to large numbers of Schedule I animals like the tiger, leopard, elephant, and rhino. Moreover the habitat also harbours large number of smaller vertebrates and invertebrates which are facing extinction. The microflora and fauna are indigenous to this locality. In view of the above, it is being suggested that this proposal for bringing water to the Farakka may be dropped."

*Source:* Bittu Sahgal on email to nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu dated 4/10/98

*Contact:* **Dr. S Bhowmik**, Additional Director, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi 110 003. Tel: 011-436 1316.

### Two new protected area categories in the amended Wildlife Act

The Central Government has proposed to introduce two new categories of protected areas under the national wildlife legislation, and is preparing action plans for the forest wildlife and environment sectors, to be implemented over the next 15 to 20 years. This was stated by the Union Minister of Environment and Forests Mr. Suresh Prabhu at the 6th World Wilderness Congress held recently in Bangalore. The two new proposed categories are the Community Reserve and the Conservation Reserve.

*Community Reserves* would provide a legal recognition of voluntary wildlife conservation efforts by certain communities, such as the Bishnois in western parts of the country and some tribes in the north-east region. *Conservation Reserves* would allow conservation of identified natural resources in designated areas along with sustainable utilisation of the resources by local communities. However, these categories would only apply to new areas without affecting existing national parks and sanctuaries.

*Sources:* Email from Nalin M. on nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu, quoting an article from *Indian Express*, and subsequent discussions.

See also Bhatt, S. and Kothari, A. 1997. Protected Areas in India: Proposal for an Extended System of Categories. In Kothari, et.al. (eds.) *Building Bridges for Conservation*. IIPA, New Delhi.

*Contact:* **S.C. Sharma**, Addl. IGF (WL), Ministry of Environment and Forests, Paryavaran Bhavan,

CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi 110 003. Tel: 011-436 2285; Fax: 011-436 3918.

**Ashish Kothari**, at the editorial address.

### **Intervention in WWF Supreme Court case**

As reported in past issues of *JPAM Update*, the ongoing case on protected areas filed by WWF in the Supreme Court has caused a great deal of confusion in many parts of the country. This is because the Court's orders to all state governments to complete settlement of people's rights within one year, has in the case of many PAs resulted in a series of ad hoc, arbitrary actions by the district administration and forest officials.

People in most areas have mistaken the settlement notices to be orders for eviction. In other cases, District Collectors have appeared inclined to simply recommend a deletion of substantial portions of a PA rather than take on the headache of settling rights within it. In yet other cases, unrecorded rights (especially related to forests, such as collection of medicinal plants for home use) are not being taken into consideration at all while in some the people themselves are asking for denotification of the PA.

These and other anomalies are being pointed out in a proposed intervention by a number of groups working in PAs. This intervention is being filed by Kalpavriksh, SETU, Satya Shodh, Ekta Parishad, Astha, Shramjivi Unnayan, Society for Sustainable Development, T.N. Front for Adivasi Self-Rule, Sambhav Social Service Organisation, Samaj Parivartana Samudaya, Coorg Organisation for Rural Development, Nagarhole Budakattu Janara Hakku Sthapana Samithi, Visthapan Roko Andolan, and Samata.

The intervention petition argues that the settlement procedure is arbitrary and conflicting with constitutional rights, and seeks a more systematic, participatory process which would both safeguard the livelihood rights of local people as also ensure their participation in conservation of wildlife.

*Contact:* **Farhad Vania/Sanjay Upadhyay**, Kalpavriksh, B 25 Defence Colony, New Delhi 110 024. Tel: 011-683 7921 (Farhad); 011-247 7375 (Sanjay).

### **Petition on people's rights in PAs**

A case has been filed by CORD and others in the Supreme Court, based on hearings carried out by the Indian People's Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights (IPT) at Sitanadi Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh and Nagarhole National Park in Karnataka. The petition argues for the continuation

of people's rights in forest areas and PAs, and for a stop to all displacement.

*Contact:* **Sarbani Sarkar**, Centre for Law and Environment, 15B Gangaram Hospital Road, New Delhi 110060. Tel: 011-5744002.

### **New green norms for the location of industry**

The Government of India has framed new rules prescribing the location criteria for setting up a new industrial project or for the expansion of an existing one. The new rules are a radical overhaul of the existing Siting Rules of 1985. Under these changes, setting up of new units of industries listed in Annexure I of the Siting Rules (broadly covering 29 categories of industries for which environment impact assessment is mandatory) stands barred if it is sought to be located within a 7 km belt from the periphery of areas listed in Annexure II of the Siting Rules. These include wetlands such as the Dal and Chilka lakes, notified national parks, sanctuaries as well as core zones of biosphere reserves.

Setting up of new units and expansion of existing industries listed under Annexure I, will only be permitted in a 7-25 km belt from the periphery of notified wetlands, parks, sanctuaries and biosphere reserves. However, permission to do so will only be granted if following an assessment, it is found that the activities will not impair the environmental interest of the area.

*Source:* Sagar, S.P. 1998. 'New green norms on plant location' *Business Standard*, New Delhi, 03/09/98.

*Contact:* **K. Roy Paul**, Addl. Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi 110 003. Tel: 011-436 1308.

### **WWF Tiger Conservation Programme**

The World Wide Fund for Nature has expressed interest in implementing its new tiger conservation programme in the Eturnagaram, Kinnerasani, and Pakhal Sanctuaries in Khammam, Warangal and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh, and in the Biligiri Ranganaswamy Temple (BRT) Sanctuary in Karnataka. The WWF Tiger Conservation programme has identified the Andhra areas as they already have an ongoing cattle compensation scheme in these PAs. According to Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh, Director and Regional Coordinator WWF (Tiger Conservation), Andhra Pradesh is the only state in the country promptly paying compensation to owners whose cattle are killed by tigers.



BRT Sanctuary has been included partly because it is surrounded by the forests of Talamalai and Madumalai, thereby enhancing the scope for establishing a tiger corridor. Herbivore population in the area as well as availability of water is not a problem and the project has decided to bestow an initial grant of Rs. 14 lakhs to the area for infrastructure development.

*Sources:* Venkat Nagesh on email dated 19/11/98 on nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu. 'WWF wants tigers to roar in Khammam' *Deccan Chronicle* quoted on email from Nalim M. dated 17/11/98 on nathistory-india@lists.princeton.edu.

### Obituary

The former Chief Justice of the Gujarat and Kerala High Courts, Justice P.S. Poti, died recently of a heart attack in Delhi. He had a distinguished career as a judge and subsequently as an advocate in the Supreme Court. Apart from some significant judgements, which favoured the rights of poor people fighting for justice, Justice Poti played a major role in the attempts at the resolution of the dispute between the local residents/migrant human populations and the Park authorities in the Rajaji National Park. At the behest of the Indian People's Tribunal on Human and Environmental Rights he spoke to a wide range of affected people and officials and produced a report that attempted to balance the twin needs of wildlife conservation and people's livelihood security in the Park and surrounds. The report is considered a milestone in Rajaji's checkered history and has also become some kind of a model to follow for other similar investigations related to protected areas in the country.

### Six new Tiger Reserves

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests has decided to create six new tiger reserves during the remaining period of the 9th plan. Bhadra Sanctuary in Karnataka and Pench National Park in Maharashtra have already been identified, while the other four will be announced soon. The government has also decided to more than double the yearly allocation for Project Tiger from Rs 8 crores last year to Rs.17 crores for 1998-99. It has already been decided that the allocation for project Tiger for the 9th plan period would be Rs.75 crores as against Rs.40 crores for the preceding plan.

The Ministry has also obtained financial clearance for providing special security forces to counter what are called insurgents and extremist elements in 6 tiger reserves: Manas in Assam, Palamau and Valmiki in Bihar, Nagarjunasagar in Andhra Pradesh, Indravati in Madhya Pradesh, and Bandipur in Karnataka. It has also been decided to divert the Jaipur-Alwar highway around the Sariska Tiger Reserve, for which Rs. 3.5 crores have been allocated.

All these decisions were taken in the recently held 35th meeting of the re-constituted Steering Committee of Project Tiger, chaired by the Union Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr. Suresh Prabhu.

*Source:* Satyen Mohapatra 1998. 'Ministry gets financial clearance for forces in six tiger reserves' *Hindustan Times* 30/10/98. 'Government will create six new tiger reserves' *Times of India*. 3/11/98

### Revision of National Wildlife Action Plan

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests has set up an expert committee to revise the 1983 National Wildlife Action Plan (NWAP). The NWAP currently contains sections on establishing and managing a protected area network, rehabilitating endangered species, protecting wildlife in multiple use zones, captive breeding, wildlife education, research and monitoring, and collaboration with voluntary organisations.

The committee, under the chairmanship of Shri B.G. Deshmukh, is supposed to produce a draft revised version by early 1999. However, this leaves it little time to carry out any larger consultative process, or indeed go into a detailed assessment of the implementation, over the last 15 years, of the existing NWAP. Readers may want to send suggestions to the Committee, c/o the address below.

*Contact:* **Suresh Chugh**, Asst. IGF (WL), Ministry of Environment and Forests, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110 003. Tel: 011-436 4593.

### Rationalisation of protected area boundaries

Another committee has been set up by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, to suggest the rationalisation of boundaries of national parks and sanctuaries across India. For several years, ecologists and social activists have pointed out that in very many cases, the boundaries of protected areas have been created more on arbitrary, administrative, or other considerations, rather than ecological ones. In addition,

considerable amount of conflict has been created with local communities because in several PAs, areas with little ecological value and tremendous human dependence have been included in the PA, while others with little dependence and high wildlife value has been left out.

The committee is supposed to look at these issues. However, its time frame, three months, leaves one wondering how serious a job it can do. Boundary issues are extremely complicated, and any hasty process can create further problems.

*Contact:* **S.C. Sharma**, Addl. IGF (WL), (as above, under Two new PA categories...)

### **National Workshop on Ecodocumentation**

With the objective of synthesising and sharing the widespread efforts at ecodevelopment being carried out in India's protected areas, the

Wildlife Institute of India organised a 3-day workshop on "Ecodocumentation", 24-26 November, 1998. The workshop brought together critics and supporters of ecodevelopment, in an open and detailed dialogue. About 30 papers were circulated, forming a valuable reference base for further work on this subject.

Draft recommendations include the need to go towards co-management of PAs and of the ecodevelopment process, to ensure ecological sustainability in development programmes, and to safeguard PAs against destructive commercial threats. A full report is under preparation, and the papers may be collated into a publication.

*Contact:* **B.M.S. Rathore**, Wildlife Institute of India, Post Box 18, Chandrabani, Dehra Dun 248 001 Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0135 640 112 / 5. Fax: 0135-640 117; Email: wii@wii.gov.in.

### **Field Coordinators Needed**

Applications are invited for Field Coordinators to work on the process of resettlement and rehabilitation of villagers from the Palpur Kuno Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh. Palpur Kuno is targeted for a major lion relocation project, due to which villagers are being moved out. The relocation is apparently voluntary, according to a couple of researchers who have worked intensively in the area. These researchers have built up a project proposal for a year's further work, which will involve community mobilisation through information dissemination, building local capacity, networking etc. Field Coordinators will be required to stay in the field full time, for an initial period of one year. Candidates should be graduates, or more, in any subject.

*Contact:* **Asmita Kabra**, IIPA, Indraprastha. Estate, New Delhi 110 002. Tel: 011-371 5385; Email: asmitak@vsnl.com.

**Arpan Sharma**, c/o College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, 38 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020, Maharashtra. Pager: 96 021 81301; Email: dcwbyy.dcwltld@gems.vsnl.net.in.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **NEPAL**

#### **Workshop on World Heritage Convention**


A three day workshop 'Conserving Himalayan Heritage: The Role of the World Heritage Convention', was held in Kathmandu in the first week of September 1998. The workshop was organised by the Nepal National Commission for UNESCO and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, in co-operation with IUCN and UNESCO. The prime objective of

the meeting was 'to review the protected areas of the Himalayas and identify potential sites which could be nominated as World Heritage sites in each of the global eco-regions'.

On the occasion, the Nepal government also appealed to UNESCO to enlist Shey Phoksundu National Park as a World Heritage site. Spread over an area of 3,555 sq. km., this is the largest national park in Nepal.


*Source:* Anon. 'Enlist Phoksundo Park in World Heritage Site List'. *Kathmandu Post*, Nepal. 01/09/98.

## WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

-  WCPA/IUCN. 1998. *Regional Action Plan for Protected Areas in South Asia*. World Commission on Protected Areas, South Asia, New Delhi.


Formulated after an extensive review process initiated in 1994, this document presents a framework action plan for protected area planning and management in the seven South Asian countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

*Contact:* **Kishore Rao**, Regional Vice-Chair, South Asia, World Commission on Protected Areas, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110 003. Tel: 91-11-436 0957; Fax: 91-11-436 3918; Email: krao@envfor.delhi.nic.in.

-  *Proceedings of the Workshop on Biodiversity conservation in Maharashtra: Vision Beyond 2000*, Nagpur, September 3-5, 1998. Maharashtra State Forest Department.

A compilation of the proceedings and the recommendations of the workshop entitled Biodiversity Conservation in Maharashtra: Vision Beyond 2000, which largely focused on protected areas (see report in *JPAM Update 18*). The overall message from the recommendations is somewhat ambiguous, but there are important elements of a more participatory approach to PA management than is currently the case.


*Contact:* **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Govt. of Maharashtra, Jaika Building, Civil Lines Nagpur 440 001, Maharashtra.

-  Ganeshiah, K.N. and Uma Shaanker, R. (eds.). 1998. *Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary: Natural History, Biodiversity and Conservation*. Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore, and Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra (VGKK), Chamrajnagar.

This is an attractively brought out compilation of papers on various aspects of the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Sanctuary: geology, floral and faunal diversity, history, overview of traditional health practices, farming and socio-economic factors influencing the Soliga tribal-forest relationship, and initiatives of community based conservation. BRT's status as one of India's most researched PAs is well reflected here.


*Contact:* **ATREE**, 11, 4<sup>th</sup> Main, 1<sup>st</sup> Stage, M.S.H. Layout, Anandnagar, Bangalore 560 024, Karnataka. Tel: 91-80-353 0069; Fax: 91-80-353 0070; Email: ganesh@atree.frlht.ernet.in.

**VGKK**, BR Hills, Chamrajnagar 571 441, Karnataka. Tel: 91-8226-84 025.

-  *The Wilderness News Letter*, Quarterly Newsletter published and edited by the Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Nagpur, Maharashtra.

This publication covers news items and small features in Marathi and English on various issues of wildlife and forests. The editors have invited readers to send in articles for publishing

*Contact:* **Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Nagpur**, Vali Manzil, Mohan Nagar, Kamptee Road, Nagpur 440 001, Maharashtra. Tel: 0712-528 953; Fax: 0712-552 518.

-  Ghate, Rucha. *Andhari Tiger Sanctuary (Maharashtra): A Case for People's Participation in the Management of Protected Areas*. *Indian Forester*, 124(10), October 1998.

Rucha Ghate, a researcher from the Nagpur University and associated with the NGO Shodh, has made a strong plea for involving local communities in and around the Andhari Sanctuary (part of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve) in its management.

*Contact:* **Rucha Ghate**, Department of Economics, Nagpur University, 50 Puranik Layout, Bharat Nagar, Nagpur 440 001, Maharashtra.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Melghat Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra

An interesting assessment of Melghat Tiger Reserve's tribal residents has been made by P. Srivastava, DCF East Melghat Forest Division. In a paper titled "Minimum Forest Produce Needed by Tribals (Physical and Financial Limit Determination), A Study in East Melghat Forest Division, Amravati Dist., Maharashtra", Mr. Srivastava has shown that per capita requirements of forest produce amongst the tribals *have not increased since the 1930s*. He calculated that the overall annual contribution of such produce was worth about Rs. 2.70 crores.

On the basis of this report, we had enquired from Mr. Srivastava, whether there was overexploitation of resources because of overall rise in population

(even if per capita needs may not have increased), as conservationists and some forest officials were claiming. His response (dated 14 October, 1998):

"As regards the carrying capacity of Melghat forests. ... purely from the Working Plan document, if the issue is looked at, I am sure no-one can dispute about the ongoing extraction by the tribals of forest produce being within the carrying capacity. Population decidedly has gone up, but in the absence of any data... I am not in a position to correlate their inter-relation cogently. The present status in no manner gives any indication to show adverse impact upon forest. Fear expressed by conservationists is more imaginary than real. Population since 1930 would definitely have gone up, however the existing carrying capacity would surely sustain their needs, as the productivity per hectare far exceeds their demand.

Yes, while doing so revenue returns by the Government would surely recede. But, as the National Forest Policy unambiguously recognises *bona fide* needs of the tribals to form first charge on forest produce, I do not foresee any meaningful opposition. Henceforth, harmonious relation between tribals and forest produce is more a matter of reality rather than a theoretical contention.

Impact on biodiversity is immensely difficult to assess, therefore I would not risk reacting to that. I am sure, similar survey in relation to many more relevant forest produce would be needed (for) any coherent inference to be reached."

Other readers may wish to respond to Mr. Srivastava's claims. His views imply that the Forest Department's argument to relocate tribals from Melghat, stating that they are putting negative pressure on the area's wildlife, is questionable.

Contact: **P. Srivastava**, DCF East Melghat Forest Division, Forest Department, Amravati 2, Maharashtra.

### **Pench Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra**

In *Update* 17 (July 1998) we had carried an item on Pench National Park, with the news that

implementation of an agreement between local villagers and the Forest Department, to relocate the residents of Totladoh (an irrigation colony inside the Park), was being delayed by the government. We got the following response from Shree Bhagwan, Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Nagpur (letter No. 2(c)/1997/C.No.158/1026, dated 17 September, 1998):

"Pl. refer to your publication *JPAM Update* of July 1998. Under the caption "Slow Movement on Alternatives in Pench National Park", the local NGOs claim that the concerned authorities were apathetic and indifferent is not understood by me. As per my information the local NGOs have only contacted Wildlife Wing of the Forest Department for every activity of the Government. As you are aware that Wildlife Wing is only one element in Government activities and as per announcement by Hon'ble Minister at point No. 3 employment is to be provided by the Revenue Department, outside the National Park to the affected people under the EGS. As per EGS Act people in need of job should get themselves registered in Tahsil office in prescribed proforma. After that it becomes responsibility of the State to provide job within 8 km of the areas or with the camping facilities within 15 days.

As per my information local NGOs have not made impact on the mind of the people to complete this formality. If this formality is completed and either local NGOs or people contact concerned Tahsil office, they are bound to be provided with job under EGS.

Regarding point No. 2 as per my information Fishery Department has issued a letter for willing persons to contact, but it has not been done either by people or NGOs. I feel solving any problem requires steps from both the sides, if action is only expected from one side then no problem can be solved."

This letter has been sent to the concerned NGOs with a request for a response, but none has been received so far.

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

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