

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

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Manual for wildlife conservation in tropical Asia

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WTI: Officer; Wild Policy And Wildlife Trade
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ATREE: Positions for ecologically oriented social
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WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

- Customs and Conservation
- Community Forestry
- Biodiversity conservation in West Bengal
- Mountain Protected Areas Update
- The Environmental Activists' Handbook Vol. II
- Community Managed Forests: Law, Problems,
Alternatives. (A Case Study of Meghalaya)
- Wildlife Reserves of India

UPCOMING

New Journal: Conservation and Society

World Congress on Aquatic Protected Areas

2002 International Seminar on Protected Area
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International Conference on Mountain Development

International Conference on problems in coastal
regions

READER'S RESPONSES

EDITORIAL

Eco Sensitive Zones: What is the potential?

Two new areas in Maharashtra have recently been declared as Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ) under Section 3 (2) (v) of the Environment Protection Act (EPA) - 1986. The *PA Update* has reported the developments regarding ESZs regularly, including this time. It is no coincidence that the two areas so declared, Mahabaleshwar and Matheran, are both important and popular tourist resorts in the Western Ghats, have a substantial forest cover and support good wildlife populations. At the same time these places like many other hill resorts in the country are under severe threat from urbanisation, concretisation, and unplanned, unbridled growth.

If this is not checked or regulated in some way, it will certainly and adversely impact those very attributes that make these places so attractive in the first place. Is there then a viable solution, to ensuring that these hill stations and their environments survive and that business and livelihoods that thrive here are not affected too? It needs a pragmatic outlook and approach and one that needs to address multiple constituencies and stakeholders. In this particular case, as in many similar others, the EPA probably provides that framework for exactly this kind of situation.

Declaring an area an ESZ or an Eco Sensitive Area is an available tool within the present legal and policy framework that has probably not been used enough. It allows for looking at large areas, allows for a multiplicity of human and economic activities to continue, but also allows for

the restriction and complete stoppage of the more drastic and severe problems faced by places like Mahabaleshwar and Matheran. It is not a perfect tool, and just like any other tool has its own respective limitations. However, it certainly offers a space that can and should be used.

And it can be pretty successful too, as has been seen from another area in Maharashtra, the Dahanu taluka which was declared an ESZ (its called Ecologically Fragile Area here) in 1991. Activists and locals admit that protecting this area under the EPA has played a very important role in keeping alive the green cover here and importantly keeping away large scale industrial development that has destroyed surrounding areas. Instrumental in ensuring this has been the work of the Dahanu Taluka Environment Protection Authority (DTEPA), that has the responsibility of the ESZ. Unfortunately now, concerted efforts are being made to get the Authority desolved. This needs to be opposed, and at the same time, efforts needed to be made to increase this protective network.

These attempts are being made, the more notable ones being for a large ESZ covering the western ghats in parts of Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra and a more recent order of the Supreme Court asking for the declaring the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as an ESZ.

In the wildlife conservation context too, it is important to note that the ESZ allows us to legally enforce sustainable land use over larger landscapes, something that is not available within the provisions of the present Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA). An ESZ can be used as a complimentary tool of conservation along with protected areas. This in fact, has even been included in the Wildlife Conservation Strategy 2002 which suggests that lands falling within 10 km. of the boundaries of National Parks and Sanctuaries should be notified as eco-fragile zones under provisions of the EPA. This could be a vital lifeline, particularly for the areas buffering our protected areas and in protecting important migratory corridors.

The ESZ is a valuable tool that we should try and use creatively and certainly more extensively.

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ASSAM

Team studies feasibility to translocate Kaziranga rhinos

An international team of experts conducted a 15 day tour of Assam's protected areas in February this year to study the feasibility of translocating rhinos from Kaziranga to other parts of the state. The team

comprised a biologist from the US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), a member of the International Rhino Foundation, Netherlands, a member of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – Nepal and a research officer of the Assam Forest Department.

The experts were of the opinion that Kaziranga is now overpopulated with rhinos (1552 rhinos were counted here in 1999). The areas being considered for receiving the rhinos include the protected areas of Laokhowa, Dibru-Saikhowa, Orang and Pobitora.

Source: Gitanjali Hazarika. 'Translocate KNP rhinos: foreign experts', *The Sentinel*, 16/02/02.

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

NGOs call to save Kaziranga from encroachments

Several NGOs in Assam including Aaranyak and Nature's Beckon have appealed to the State and Central Governments to take steps to protect Kaziranga National Park from encroachments. It has been alleged that large encroachments by suspected foreign nationals are being systematically encouraged and that this is compromising the integrity of the park.

The NGOs have asked for a number of steps, that include the immediate deployment of the CRPF in the park and the Nambor Reserved Forest, the need for a Central involvement through a judicial inquiry and the resettlement of people of the villages there.

Source: 'Save Kaziranga from encroachment by immigrants: NGOs', *The Assam Tribune*, 05/02/02.

Contact: **Aaranyak**, Ever Green, Samanwoy Path, Survey Beltola, Guwahati – 781028. Tel: 0361-228418 / 222976. Fax: 266087. Email: firozahmed@onlysmart.com; bibhabl@sancharnet.in
Soumyadeep Dutta, Natures' Beckon, Datta Bari, Ward No.1, Dhubri – 783301, Assam. Tel: 03662-31067. Fax: 30076.

Wildlife rescue centre at Kaziranga

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) is setting up the first wildlife rehabilitation centre in the north-eastern region, in the Kaziranga National Park (KNP). The centre is being set up under the Wild Rescue Programme of the WTI. It will be involved in the rescue of temporarily disadvantaged wild animals, which have been injured, maimed, orphaned, sick or have strayed, in addition to those that have been confiscated from animal traders.

The centre is a collaborative project with the State Forest Department and is also being supported

by the Central Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Other institutions and organisations that are expected to be part of the project include the Central Zoo Authority (CZA), the MoEF and the Gauhati University.

Source: 'Wildlife rehabilitation centre at KNP soon', *The Assam Tribune*, 22/01/02.

Contact: **WTI**, PO Box 3150, New Delhi - 110 003.
Tel: 011-6326025/6 / 6325775 / 6. Fax: 6326027

Elephant, cattle treatment camp at Orang, Nameri

The NGO, Early Birds recently organised an elephant treatment and cattle camp at the Rajiv Gandhi (Orang) and Nameri National Parks.

The camp at Orang was organised jointly by Early Birds and the Refinery Employee's Trekker's Guild from January 5-7, 2002. Villagers from Bezimari, Rahmanpur, Misolamari, Phatasimalu and Nalbari surrounding the park benefited from the camp. Cattle were vaccinated against HS+BQ diseases. Elephants (both captured from the wild and those belonging to the FD) were also treated under a project of the US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS). Early Bird has recently been awarded a grant from the USFWS to maintain the health of elephants of five PAs in Assam for a year.

Another similar camp was organised at the Nameri National Park for a three day period starting January 19. Minor operations were also performed on two elephants, one of which had an injury due to a leopard bite while sleeping and the other during capture.

Source: Moloy Baruah. Letters to Kalpavriksh dated 10/01/02 and 16/01/02 and Press Release dated 28/01/02.

'Elephant treatment camp at Orang', *Sentinel*, 14/02/02.

Contact: **Moloy Baruah**, Early Birds, 26, Surujmukhi, PO Silpukhri, Guwahati-781003, Assam. Tel. 0361-666353. Fax: 550158. Email: baruahm@iocl.co.in

Rhino poached in Pobitara, poachers electrocuted

In a first incident of poaching in the Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary in 18 months, a rhino was killed by electrocution on January 8. Its horn was also taken away. A team of six poachers was reported to be responsible for the incident. Ironically two poachers were also killed when they were themselves electrocuted during the incident. Their bodies were found by the forest staff at the location of the incident inside the sanctuary.

Swift action (within 18 hours of the incident). by the police and forest staff resulted in the recovery of the horn from a house in a nearby village and the arrest of two alleged poachers, including a woman. Further follow up action also resulted in the arrest of one Md. Abdul Kalam, allegedly the kingpin in the rhino horn and ivory trade. He is known to have links with buyers at Dimapur and also has strong political backing.

Source: M Firoze Ahmed Email dated 23/01/02
Bibhab Talukdar. Email dated 20/02/02.

Contact: **M. Firoze Ahmed, Bibhab Talukdar**, Aaranyak, see above. Email: firozahmed@onlysmart.com; bibhab1@sancharnet.in

Apathy, encroachments threaten Deepor Beel

Extensive encroachments and unplanned growth of the city of Guwahati has greatly threatened Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary, located just outside the city. The area's natural drainage has also been damaged. In 1989 the Assam Erosion and Drainage Department has assessed the area of the lake to be 55 sq. kms. with 4.14 sq. kms of the core area being declared a wildlife sanctuary. Experts now say the area of the lake has shrunk to only about 10 sq. kms.

The main offenders include the Guwahati – Jogighopa broad gauge railway track that has been routed through the water body, brick kilns and industrial units that have mushroomed in recent times, the Azhara railway station, a part of the Airport Authorities of India's staff housing complex and a nursing home. (Also see *PA Updates* 30, 26 & 25).

Source: 'Apathy endangers wetland', *Statesman*, 30/03/02.

Contact: **Prof. PC Bhattacharjee / Prof. Prasanta Saikia**, Dept. of Zoology, Gauhati University, Guwahati – 781014, Assam. Tel: 0361-636768. Fax: 570133. Email: bhattapc@sancharnet.in
Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury, Ho. Chief Executive C/o The Assam Company Ltd., G Bordoloi Path, Bamuni Maidan, Guwahati 781021 Assam. Tel: 0361-663339. Email: badrul@sancharnet.in

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

BIHAR

SC directs state to pay staff of Valmiki TR

The Supreme Court (SC) has directed the Bihar State Government to pay the salaries of the staff of the

Valmiki Tiger Reserve. It would be recalled that in October 2001, the entire staff of about 150 of the reserve had refused to report to work because salaries had not been paid for 14 months (see *PA Update* 34).

The Wildlife Trust of India had filed a petition in the SC in the matter. The state government is now reported to have paid the salaries and assured the court that it would rectify its administrative and fiscal systems to avoid a recurrence of the situation.

Source: 'Guards back with tigers', *Down to Earth*, May 15, 2002

Contact: **Ashok Kumar**, WTI, PO Box 3150, New Delhi - 110 003. Tel: 011-6326025/6 / 6325775 / 6. Fax: 6326027 Email: ashok@wildlifetrustofindia.org

DELHI

Bird sanctuary proposed for Wazirabad

The Delhi Development Authority has drawn up plans for the creating of a wildlife safari and a bird sanctuary over an 800 acre area in the Wazirabad area of North Delhi. The plan will be implemented in stages. The first step would be the creation of a Biodiversity Park with the help of the Department of Botany of the Delhi University.

200 acres of land have already been acquired for the biodiversity park and another 600 are to be acquired soon for the safari and the bird sanctuary.

Source: Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar. 'Plans to create bird sanctuary', *The Hindu*, 04/03/02.

GOA

20 turtle hatcheries set up at Agonda

The Goa state government is reported to have set up 20 sea turtle hatcheries at Agonda in the sea turtle nesting season in November and December last year.

Some beaches on the Goa coast are the nesting sites of the Olive Ridley Turtle. Though there are no official protected areas for the nesting turtles, there have been a few non formal and community level initiatives for their protection. This particular initiative had the support of the State Minister for Information, Sanjay Bandekar.

Source: '20 turtle hatcheries set up at Agonda', *Herald*, 17/01/02

GUJARAT

Car rally through Wild Ass Sanctuary prevented

The Vadodara based Motor Sports Association of Gujarat was prevented from organising a car rally that was to pass through the Wild Ass Sanctuary in the Little Rann of Kutch. Called the 'Salt Desert Car Rally', it was scheduled to cover 1500 Kms (another report said that the total distance to be covered was 700 kms) over a period of two days starting February 8. The rally was to enter the Little Rann near Kharaghoda and travel 89 kms in a zigzag fashion inside the sanctuary for about four hours. 70 vehicles were expected to 'zoom through' at speeds touching nearly 80 kmph.

The rally had been granted permission by the Secretary, Forests and Environment of the State government despite strong objection from the State Forest Department which feared a huge risk to the wild ass and other wild animals that are found here.

The Dhrangadhra Prakruti Mandal (DPM) filed a Public Interest Litigation in the Gujarat High Court asking for the preventing of the rally from passing inside the protected area. The petition maintained that according to Section 26A and Section 29 of the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) – 1972, the government did not have the right to permit a car rally through the sanctuary. In response the government agreed before the court that the car rally will not be allowed to pass through the sanctuary, and neither will the participants be allowed to visit the sanctuary in their own vehicles.

On Sunday, February 10, the rallyists were then taken to visit the sanctuary as 'tourists' in two buses that were escorted with jeeps full of forest officials and under unprecedented security.

Source: Raja Bose. 'Unique car rally will test both man and machine, Speed merchants to slug it out in Kutch', *The Times of India*, 08/12/02.

Arun Agnihotri. Emails dated 31/01/02, 03/02/02, & 04/02/02.

Contact: **Arun Agnihotri**, 5, Purohit Colony, Sardarnagar, Vadodara – 390002, Gujarat. Tel: 0265-794174. Email: tufnuttoerk@satyam.net.in

Fire in Gir

A forest fire was reported in the Gir forest in Junagadh district in the second week of February. Though the exact extent of the damage is not known, forest officials said gusty winds led to the spread of the fire that destroyed vast areas. A forest guard also suffered burns and was admitted to the Junagadh hospital for treatment.

Source: 'Efforts on to control fire at Gir', *The Times of India*, 17/02/02.

Contact: **Mahesh Singh**, DCF, Sasan, Junagadh – 363125, Gujarat.

Wells around Gir threaten wildlife

Thousands of wells dug around the periphery of the Gir National Park are fast emerging as a big threat to the wildlife in the region. According to official sources four lions and one leopard died in these wells in 2001-02. Ten other leopards were also rescued from these wells and there are reports of herbivores and other animals falling in too.

With the region being in the grip of a severe drought and the water table falling rapidly, the number of wells (many that never strike water) has proliferated, increasing the risk to the wild animals. Estimates suggest that there might be 6000 such wells in the periphery of Gir east and an even larger number in Gir west. Most of the accidents occur as most of the wells are neither covered nor do they have a parapet wall constructed around them.

Source: News item in *The Times of India*, 10/05/02

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

HARYANA

Wild animal census in state

The Haryana Wildlife Department conducted a state level census of wild animals for a period of 10 days starting April 26, 2002. The census was carried out in the Shivalik forest belt - Kalesar Wildlife Sanctuary and the surrounding areas like the Dappar forest in Yamunanagar and the Morni area in Panchkula, the Aravali forest belt in Gurgaon and Mahendragarh.

34 teams comprising 70 wildlife employees had been specially trained for the census. The census was to have been conducted in June last year, but had to dropped because of early rains in the region.

Further details census are not yet available.

Source: Ruchika Khanna. 'Survey of wild animals from April 26', *The Tribune*, 18/04/02

New sanctuary in Morni; two others denotified

The Central government has agreed to the Haryana Forest Department proposal for the creation of a wildlife sanctuary spread over 4882 hectares (about 12000 acres) at Morni. The area includes Khol Raitan, protected forests in Belwali, Mandana, Asrewali and Bir Ghaggar. Originally the Wildlife

Department had earmarked an area of over 50,000 acres including 14 different *bhojs*, but were asked to shrink the proposal to less than a quarter of that.

The declaration of Morni as a wildlife sanctuary is reportedly being done in lieu of changing the status of two existing sanctuaries – Saraswati Forest, which is spread over an area of 4400 hectares in Kaithal and Kurukshetra districts and Bada Ban in Jind which is spread over 400 hectares. The status of these two sanctuaries is to be changed to that of conservation reserves. (*Eds note: Conservation reserves have been proposed as a new PA category in the proposed amendments to the Wildlife Protection Act. The status of these amendments is not presently clear and therefore it is not known how the areas can be notified as conservation reserves*)

The nod for these changes came from the standing committee of the Indian Board for Wildlife on February 26 during a meeting of the Forest Department officials from various states. The committee met in Delhi in order to decide on the denotification / change of status of as many as 30 wildlife sanctuaries all over the country. Details of which these sanctuaries are or what was discussed / decided in the meeting are not known.

Source: Ruchika Khanna. 'Morni to have wildlife sanctuary', *Tribune*, 10/03/2002.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

MoEF stops road projects through Kalatop-Khajjar WLS

The Union Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoEF) has asked the Himachal Pradesh Government to stop construction of the Dalhousie-Chamba highway as it passes through the Kalatop-Khajjar Wildlife Sanctuary in the Chamba district. Widening of the Chamba-Pathankot highway from Saroo to Gandihar for transportation of heavy machinery equipment for the Chamera HE project has also been stopped for the same reason.

This move of the MoEF has caused resentment in residents of the region. They say it is important to link Dalhousie and Chamba via a shorter route and it has also been a long pending demand to widen the Chamba Pathankot highway which was prone to accidents.

Source: 'Govt. told to stop work on highway', *Tribune*, 24/02/02

JAMMU & KASHMIR

J&K to launch Project Hangul

The J&K government will shortly launch Project Hangul in an attempt to protect this rare deer. The

project will be modeled on lines of Project Tiger and Project Elephant and is to be formulated and undertaken by the Forest Department (FD).

The project would follow a multi-disciplinary approach and envisages conducting a census of the animal, its habitat management, creation of awareness of the threats and the effective enforcement of wildlife laws.

Source: 'J&K to launch Project Hangul', *Tribune*, 13/02/02

Contact: **CWLW**, F D, Manda Deer Park, Manda, Near Hotel Ashok, Jammu - 180001, J&K

JHARKHAND

World Bank survey for Forestry Project

World Bank (WB) teams were reported to have toured parts of Jharkhand in early February as part of the Jharkhand Forestry Project (JFP). One three member team visited project areas that included Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary, Saranda Reserve Forest, Kolhan and Podahat. Two other teams simultaneously visited forest areas of Hazaribagh and Palamau districts. The main aim of the WB mission was to thrash out project details, and both financial and capacity building aspects were being considered. The preparatory phase comprising field study, drafting of the detailed project report, and estimated costs would take about two years and the implementation period of the project is expected to be around five years.

The project aims at facilitating greater public participation in eco-management, generating employment for tribals, improving infrastructure and developing an effective mechanism to achieve sustainable forest growth.

Source: 'World Bank team to survey forests', *Hindustan Times*, 11/02/02

Two elephant deaths in Palamau

Two wild elephants, both females were found dead in the Palamau Tiger Reserve in the month of April. The first elephant was killed due to external injuries. The injuries were suspected to have been caused by poachers as the trunk, nails and jaws of the dead animal were missing.

The second elephant was found dead on April 14 in the Ramdag block of the reserve and the autopsy and pathological tests conducted indicated that 'anthrax' was the cause of death. Blood was also seen oozing out of natural orifices like the mouth, ears and rectum, a main symptom of the disease.

Source: Manoj Prasad. 'Another wild elephant found dead in Palamau', *Indian Express*, 18/04/02.

KARNATAKA

Elephant census in South India

A census of elephants in the four southern states of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh has recently been conducted by the respective states in collaboration with the Asian Elephant Research and Conservation Centre (AERCC) of the Indian Institute of Science. It was the first time that all the four states participated in the census at the same time.

Enumeration of the elephants was done over 30% of the area, and their total number would be found using statistics and extrapolating the number counted.

The last elephant census in 1997 had put the total number of elephants in the region at 15,000 (6000 each in Kerala and Karnataka and 3000 in Tamil Nadu: figures for Andhra Pradesh were not available then).

The final results of the recent census are awaited.

Source: Imran Qureshi. 'Elephant census gets under way', *Indo-Asian News Service*, 07/05/02

3 research projects planned in Nagarhole

The Coorg Wildlife Society (CWS) and the College of Forestry, Ponnampet (CoF-P), under the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, have submitted three research proposals to the Forest Department under the World Bank funded India Eco-Development Project in the Nagarhole (Rajiv Gandhi) National Park.

The total cost of the three projects together is estimated to be a little more than Rs. 2 lakhs.

As part of the research in forest biology, a study has been proposed for the avifaunal diversity of the park. The research on forest management pertains to the assessment of the effects of fire on regeneration and soil properties, while the third one is planned on the ecological study of weeds.

Source: '3 research projects planned in Nagarhole', *The Hindu*, 09/04/02.

Forest fires in Nagarhole

Nearly 884 hectares of forests in the Nagarhole National Park were affected in fires in the park in the end of February. The forests affected included 354 hectares in the Metikuppe range, 332 hectares in the Veeranahosalli range, 178 hectares in the Kallalla range, 12 hectares in the Antarakatte range, two hectares in the Nagarhole range and one hectare in the Anechowkur range of the park. The main damage was however, limited to the ground where dry foliage and withered grass were burnt down. As a result of

the fire the park was closed from February 28 to April 15.

The fires are reported to be the handiwork of anti-social elements, though more details are not known.

Source: 'Nagarhole park closed', *The Hindu*, 01/03/02.

'Forest fire, a handiwork of anti-social elements?', *The Hindu*, 25/03/02.

Ecotourism resort near Dandeli

The Karnataka Tourism Department has finalised a proposal to set up an eco-tourism resort near Dandeli. The project is likely to be executed by private promoters and efforts are on to locate a suitable location for the same.

The Tourism Department would provide assistance to the promoters through the Single-Window Agency for the speedy clearance of the project and will also help procure land for the project at the prevailing market rate. The land would either be sold or leased to the promoters who would be eligible for the incentives available under the new tourism policy.

Some of the activities identified for the tourists include visits to the forests, visits to Syntheri rocks and Kawla caves, viewing of elephants involved in logging operations, cycling, trekking, boating in the River Kali and wildlife viewing.

Source: R Vijaya Kumar. 'Eco-tourism resort to be set up in Dandeli', *The Hindu*, 13/01/02.

Irpu project to affect Brahmagiri WLS

The Karnataka Forest Department (KFD) has taken exception to the recent Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) study pertaining to the Irpu Hydro Electric Project on the grounds that it will have adverse impacts on the ecology and forests of the Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary.

The EIA study had been commissioned by M/s Bhoruka Power Corporation Limited, the proposed builder of the project and was executed by the Bangalore based Institute for Catchment Studies and Environment Management (ICSEM). The proposed project will require 10,318 sq. m. of land and an additional area of 5000 sq. m. is likely to be lost by way of submergence. Of this total area more than 9000 sq. m. is situated within the sanctuary.

The FD has said that the Brahmagiri WLS was the last remaining home of the medium elevation evergreen forests (*Mesua palauquium* type) and that the proposed project would affect the integrity of this threatened habitat. The Shola forests near the Irpu falls serve as a vital water source for the River Lakshmanateertha which serves the Virajpet and

Hunsur talukas. Additionally the forests of the sanctuary also support important populations of endangered fauna like the elephant, Lion tailed Macaque, Nilgiri langur and the Clawless otter.

The FD has further pointed out that construction of the penstock, submergence of the forest lands, noise of the generators, increased movement of project vehicles, and subsequent human settlements would definitely disturb the region and the wildlife here and also violate the recent orders of the Supreme Court.

Source: Jeevan Chinnappa. 'Forest Dept. takes exception to study on Irpu power project', *The Hindu*, 03/04/02

Butterfly park in Bannerghata

The Chief Conservator of Forests and Chairman of the Zoo Authority of Karnataka has said that there are plans for the establishment of a butterfly park in the Bannerghata National Park.

The Union Governments' Department of Biotechnology is reported to have evinced a keen interest in this Rs. 3.62 crores project that is to come up on 12 acres of land in Bannerghata.

Source: 'Butterfly park', *Indian Express*, 25/12/01.

Bandipur closed due to fire threat

The Bandipur National Park was closed to visitors indefinitely from March 11 onwards in view of the forest fires in the neighbouring Mudumalai forests (see below) and stray incidents of fire in Bandipur itself, like in the Gopalswamy forest range.

Source: 'Bandipur forests to be closed from March 11', *Deccan Herald*, 03/03/02.

Contact: **Deputy Director**, Bandipur National Park, Gundlupet, Chamrajnagar 571 111, Karnataka

Illegal quarrying near Ranganthitu stopped

Illegal quarrying in Doddegowdana Koppal, in the vicinity of the Ranganthitu Bird Sanctuary was stopped following efforts of the Bangalore based Institute for Natural Resources, Conservation, Education, Research and Training (INCERT). Following reports of ongoing quarrying in the newspaper *Vijaya Karnataka*, INCERT wrote to the Forest Department asking for the quarrying to be stopped.

Following the complaint, the Senior Geologist from the Dept. of Mines and Minerals, Mandya inspected the site along with the revenue authorities. It was reported that the quarrying was being carried out by a local farmer, who was ignorant

of the issues involved and that the local *tehsildar* had already stopped the quarrying.

An assurance has also been given that frequent visits will be made to the site by officials to ensure that the quarrying activities are not restarted.

Source: S Sridhar. Emails dated 02/02/02 and 20/02/02.

Contact: **S. Sridhar / AN Yellapa Reddy**, INCERT, No. 10, Sirur Park 'b' Street, Seshadripuram, Bangalore – 560020. Tel: 080 – 3364142 / 682. Email: navbarat@blr.vsnl.net.in
Forester, Ranganthitu Bird Sanctuary, Palahalli, Shrirangapatta Taluk, Mandya – 571401, Karnataka

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

KERALA

Fire in Periyar

A large number of trees and vast stretch of bushes in Periyar were reported to have been destroyed in a fire in the last week of February. More details of the fire or the exact magnitude of the damage caused are not yet known.

Source: 'Blaze in Periyar', *Indian Express*, 25/02/02.

SC allows transfer of petitions in Mullaperiyar case

The Supreme Court has recently allowed transfer to itself of a bunch of petitions relating to the issue of the raising the water level in the Mullaperiyar dam in Kerala from 136 ft to 142 ft. in the first stage and then to 152 ft in the next phase.

These include petitions filed by the Janata Party President, Subramaniam Swamy and the Tamil Nadu Government in the Madras High Court, a bunch of petitions pending in the Kerala High Court and the PIL filed by the Mullaperiyar Environmental Protection Forum in the SC itself.

One of the main reasons for opposition to raising the height of the dam is the fact that it will adversely affect large areas of forests and wildlife populations in the Periyar Tiger Reserve. (Also see *PA Updates* 34 & 30).

Source: 'Mullaiperiyar case: SC allows transfer of petitions', *The Hindu*, 09/04/02

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

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

MADHYA PRADESH

Proposals for full / partial denotification of PAs

The State Government has proposed the denotification of at least six protected areas in the state. A cabinet sub committee headed by the Forest Minister, Harvansh Singh, has recommended the exclusion of 40 sq. kms from the Kanha National Park. It has also been proposed that 80 sq. kms of the Fain Wildlife Sanctuary would in turn be added to Kanha. This 'rationalisation' would result in the exclusion from the park of the villages of Bhilwani, Jhapul, Dhaniahor, Mukki, Kadia, Jholar, Ajanpur, Sukhdi, Patua, Chhatarpur, Bhitli, Baina Linga, Role, Janglikheda and Sajalgaon.

678 hectares of the forest area of the Bandavgarh National Park are to be excluded so as to ensure that the villages of Baghdari and Gadhpuri are kept outside the park. 134 hectares and 40 hectares are proposed to be denotified from the Son Gharial Sanctuary and the National Chambal Sanctuary respectively, primarily to facilitate sand mining.

Additionally, the denotification of the Ghatigaon and Karera Wildlife Sanctuaries has also been proposed. (Also see *PA Update* 33).

Source: Deshdeep Saxena. 'State set to change geography of national parks, sanctuary', *Hindustan Times*, 28/05/02

Simha Mitra awards for Kuno staff, villagers

The Madhya Pradesh State Forest Minister, Harvansh Singh recently gave away the Simha Mitra awards to the forest staff of the Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary. The awardees were selected for their role in the rehabilitation of villagers outside the sanctuary and preparation of the Kuno forest for the reintroduction of the lion. Another award was also instituted for the members of the local community. The Rs. 50,000 cash award is to be used to construct a community centre for the displaced villagers.

The awards have been instituted by the NGO, Samrakshan Trust, which has been working on the lion introduction programme here

Source: Arpan Sharma. Press Release, 30/04/02.

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; arpan@samrakshan.org

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

Contact: **Shyam Chainani**, 9 St James Court, Marine
Drive, Mumbai – 400020 Email:
shyam@beag.net

MAHARASHTRA

Forests being opened up for eco-tourism

Starting from March 21, World Forestry Day, the Maharashtra Forest Department has initiated a big scheme for promotion of ecotourism in the forests of the state.

Instructions have been issued to all divisions of the state FD to identify tourist spots within forest areas for the purpose. As a first step the Forest Development Corporation was allowed to take over the forest guest houses at Kolsa and Sillari in Totladoh in Pench Tiger Reserve for providing accommodation facilities to the tourists.

Melghat Tiger Reserve launched its own website www.melghattiger.com that gives information of the conservation history and the ecology of the park. Some steps were also initiated to promote tourism in the park.

It is also proposed to create a nodal cell in every division in the state to promote ecotourism in a big way, while at the forest-circle level, the Conservator of Forests is supposed to oversee, plan and implement the projects.

It is not yet known how the scheme is progressing and what response it has received.

Source: 'State to open forests for eco-tourism', *The Times of India*, 15/02/02.
Madhav Gokhale. 'Eco-tourism could end up a paper tiger', *Indian Express*, 23/02/02.
Neil Pote, 'State goes on eco-tourism trip', *The Times of India*, 23/03/02
Press Note from the Forest Dept. 08/04/02

Study committees set up for Mahabaleshwar Eco-Sensitive zone

Three study committees and a technical panel were constituted recently to prepare reports regarding the Mahabaleshwar – Panchgani Eco-Sensitive Zone. They were constituted as a joint meeting of the regional planning board and the Central Government's High Powered Committee.

The committees will be submitting reports on the implementation of the revised regional plan while taking into account the limitations and constraints in the development of the two hill stations after these were declared as eco-sensitive in January 2001 (see *PA Update* 30 & 34).

Source: Nandkumar Dhavalikar. 'Fresh move to preserve Mahabaleshwar's ecology', *The Times of India*, 04/02/02.

Matheran declared as eco-sensitive zone

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has declared the hill station of Matheran and its surroundings as an eco-sensitive zone. The notification was issued on February 6 and it upholds an earlier Supreme Court ban on all vehicles inside Matheran except for an ambulance and a fire engine, and on new hotels in the hill station.

The Supreme Court had earlier, in its order dated July 11, 2001 directed that the Matheran plateau be declared eco-sensitive under the Environment Protection Act (EPA) – 1986. The order had come in a petition that had been filed in 1995 by the Matheran Bachao Samiti (see *PA Update* 32).

It was also announced that a new master plan for the Matheran ESZ will be drawn up within two years and that there will be no change in the meantime in the existing land use pattern and building bye-laws in the hill station.

Matheran is the second hill tract in the state to get protection after the Mahabaleshwar – Panchgani plateau which was notified as an ESZ on January 17, 2001 (see *PA Update* 30).

In a further development, the MoEF has appointed an expert committee to frame guidelines to determine what makes a hill station environmentally sensitive and important enough to merit preservation. This, it is hoped will help in the process of other areas being identified and notified as ecologically sensitive.

Source: Gunvanthi Balaram. 'Matheran declared eco-sensitive zone', *The Times of India*, 22/02/02.
Vaishnavi C Shekhar. 'Hill stations may find it easier to get protection', *The Times of India*, 30/03/02

Population rise in wildlife in Western Ghat sanctuaries

A recent census conducted by a committee of Conservators and Deputy Conservators of Forests has shown a major increase in the population on wild animals in four wildlife sanctuaries in the Western Ghats. The sanctuaries are the Radhanagari, Koyna, Chandoli and Sagarshwar Wildlife Sanctuaries. The animals counted include the tiger, leopard, bison, barking deer, mouse deer, sloth bear and blackbuck.

Source: Neil Pote. 'Population of wild animals in western ghats on the rise', *The Times of India*, 04/04/02.

Contact: **DCF (WL)**, Chandoli/ Radnagari WLS,
Forest Department, Kolhapur 416002,
Maharashtra

Leopard attacks on the rise around Sanjay Gandhi NP

Leopard attacks on children in and around the Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Mumbai have been on the increase in the recent past. At least 11 such attacks were reported in the first three months of this year.

A combination of depleting prey base inside the park and the increased human settlements and encroachment around the park are said to be the main reasons for this. Leopards are not known to attack humans. Wildlife experts point out that none of the 11 reported attacks have been on adults and that this is proof that all the attacks have been accidental. However, they have also expressed apprehension that the leopards that had been captured for human attacks are now being released back into the forests.

Source: 'Encroachments, depleting prey behind panther attacks', *The Times of India*, 30/03/02.

Kolhapur Forest Division gets Rs. 2.16 crores

The Kolhapur Forest Division has been sanctioned Rs. 2.16 crores for a period of five years for afforestation and eco-development of the forest villages. The funds are going to be released directly by the Central government to the Forest Development Agency (FDA).

Rs. 79 lakhs have been allocated for Rs. 2001-2002, out of which the first installment of Rs. 40 lakhs was to be released in the month of April. Out of the 510 forest villages on record in Kolhapur, the division plans to develop 36 villages in the first year's pilot project.

25% of the allocated amount under this scheme can be used for the development of the forest villages through water harvesting structures like check dams for irrigation and drinking water purposes, digging of wells, creation of roads, construction of sheds for schools, installation of energy saving and energy alternative devices, and rural electrification through solar power.

Source: 'Kolhapur forest division to get Rs. 2.16 crore', *The Times of India*, 26/03/02.

10 yr. management plan for Radhanagari, Sagarshwar and Chandoli sanctuaries

The Forest Department has approved a 10 year management plan for the Radhanagari, Sagarshwar and Chandoli Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Kolhapur Wildlife Division. The plan is aimed at providing

fresh impetus to ongoing work on wildlife protection, eco-restoration and development projects with specific emphasis on tourism.

The FD expects a substantial financial assistance from the Centre under these management plans wherein the thrust would be on categorising wildlife sanctuaries into four program specific zones.

Source: Vishwas Kothari. '10-yr plans for three sanctuaries okayed', *Indian Express*, 04/04/02.

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

MANIPUR

Poachers caught in Loktak

Members of the Sangai Protection Forum (SPF) based in the Keibul Lamjao National Park apprehended two poachers from the park on April 10. Two of their accomplices however managed to escape. The Forum had given them two weeks time to surrender, but it is not known what happened.

The poachers were reported to be hunting *sangai* in the park. Local organisations including the SPF and the Meira Paibi (women's) organisation issued a people's punishment for the poachers who were caught. They were ordered to remain within their homes from April 26 to May 26 and not to venture outside at all.

Source: Salam Rajesh. Email dated 29/04/02.

Contact: **Salam Rajesh**, Sagolband Salam, Leikai.
PO: Imphal-1, Manipur. Tel: 0385-222395,
Email: salamrajesh@rediffmail.com;
salraj_imp@yahoo.com;
salraj_imp@yahoo.com.

MEGHALAYA

No elephant census due to funds paucity

The plan of the Meghalaya Forest Department to conduct an elephant census in the state in March earlier this year, could not be implemented due to paucity of funds.

A sum of Rs. 4.21 crores as Central assistance under Project Elephant has been received by the state till 2000-2001. Rs. 3.85 crores had been spent. However schemes for Rs. 36 lakhs that was left over and an additional amount of Rs. 30 lakhs that was released in the year 2001-2002 have not yet been sanctioned by the state government.

It has been reported that 22 villagers were killed and another 17 injured in elephant depredations

till 2001-2002. A recent survey has indicated that 28% of the villagers wanted the total removal of elephants from their areas.

Source: 'Elephant conservation suffers in Meghalaya' *The Hindu*, 13/04/2002

MIZORAM

LPG for villages around Dampa Tiger Reserve

About 1000 families in 12 villages around the Dampa Tiger Reserve have been provided with LPG cylinders by the Government of Mizoram. The main aim of the programme is to wean the villagers away from use of wood as fuel and thereby reduce the pressure on the forests of the reserve. It is hoped that nearly 10,000 families in the 20 odd villages surrounding the park will be provided with gas cylinders in the next couple of years.

The cylinders have been provided under the Rs. 35 lakhs, Central Government funded ecodevelopment programme. The ecodevelopment programme in Dampa was started in 1995

Source: 'LPG to rescue the tiger', *The Sentinel*, 20/04/02

'Mizoram distributing gas cylinders to save tigers', *Indo-Asian News Service*, 23/04/02

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Forest Department, Government of Mizoram, Aizwal- 796 001 Mizoram.

NAGALAND

Village declares itself a no-hunting zone

The Village Council of Changtongya village in the Mokokshung district of Nagaland has declared the village as a no-hunting zone. The council resolved that no one would be allowed to kill wild animals or use poisons for fishing here and those found violating these rules would be penalised.

It was also resolved to plant wild fruit trees in the forest and jhum areas. The council decided that the moratorium on hunting would be for five years initially, and would be extended further if animal and bird populations increase. It was also clarified that the ban was on hunting for commercial purposes or for sport and that seasonal hunting with 'limited opportunity' may be permitted.

Source: 'Nagaland village declared no-hunting zone', *The Sentinel*, 29/01/02.

ORISSA

Prawn gheries in Bhitarkanika to be demolished

The Orissa High Court has ordered that all the illegal prawn cultivation structures (locally known as *gheries*) in the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary should be demolished. The court passed this order in response to a petition filed by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - India and has asked the state government to submit a detailed plan for the same.

Earlier in 1999 too, the court had passed similar orders for the removal of the illegal *gheries*. Some had been demolished by the government and some were destroyed by the super cyclone of 1999

However since the prawn business is a very lucrative one, a large number of *gheries* are alleged to have been constructed again.

Source: Jatindra Das. 'Demolish prawn cultivation structures to protect turtles: court', *Indo-Asian News Service*, 16/03/02.

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

Villagers to protect mangroves in, around Bhitarkanika

A number of Self Help Groups (SHG) who have taken on the responsibility for the protection of the mangrove forests in the region have mushroomed in and around the Bhitarkanika National Park. The MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) is also involved in the project in the area.

The main reason for this is said to be the large scale devastation caused by the super cyclone that hit the Orissa coast a couple of years ago. Villagers here have realised that the magnitude of the damage was much worse because of the destruction of the mangrove forests. They also feel that other problems like salt water intrusion into their wells, and depletion in fishery resources are also related to the mangrove destruction.

Source: 'Orissa villagers realise mistake, to protect mangrove forests', *Economic Times*, 06/01/02

Tourism boom killing Chilka dolphins

At least 15 Irrawady Dolphins are reported to have been killed in the last two years by propellers of tourist boats in Chilka. The boat engines have long propeller shafts jutting out of the stern of the boats and these are the biggest threats. Whenever a dolphin group is sighted, the tourists boat rush towards them and encircle the entire group. An estimated 1000 such

boats use the lake and also pollute it with oil and lubricants leaks.

The boats not only kill the dolphins through propeller hits, but also affect their breeding cycle by causing too much noise and disturbance. Three dolphin deaths were reported in January 2002. The estimated population of the extremely rare dolphins here is only about 50 (see *PA Update* 29) and the fact that they are slow breeders, indicates that the present trend is a dangerous one.

Chilka is supposed to be only the second lagoon after Songkhla in Thailand where these dolphins are found. In Chilka they are sighted primarily between the stretch spanning the outer channel and the new mouth which encompasses Satpada.

Occasionally the dolphins get trapped in fishing nets as well, but such cases are rare and the fishermen are known to immediately release the animal back into the water. The dolphin is considered to be sacred and there is the belief in the local fishermen that saving a dolphin ensures a better fish catch.

80% of the tourism trade and earnings in Chilka are based on the dolphin, and serious attempts are needed to find a solution to the present problem.

Source: Ashutosh Mishra. 'Tourist boom killing Chilka dolphins', *The Pioneer*, 01/02/02.
Biswajit Mohanty. Email dated 09/05/02
Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty**, see above.

Mining threat to Kuldiha WLS

The Honorary Wildlife Warden of Balasore. Mr. JM Harichandan has written to the Orissa State Forest Minister opposing the proposed mining activities in the periphery of the Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary and Elephant Reserve. He has said that all the prospecting licences and mining leases given to private parties should be cancelled.

Source: 'Mining activities risky for Project Elephant', *Indian Express*, 26/12/2001
Contact: **Jayant Mardraj Harichandan**, HWLW, Balasore, Nilgiri House, E/21, BJB Ngr. Bhubaneswar – 751014, Orissa. Tel: 0674-432218. Email: jayantnilgiri@rediffmail.com

CAG finds irregularity in functioning of Chilka Development Authority

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has pointed out that there are irregularities in the functioning of the Chilka Development Authority (CDA).

The CAG report said that the 10th Finance Commission had granted Rs. 27 crores for the

preservation of the Chilka lake, but only 30 lakhs were earmarked in the approved consolidated plan of action for the lake. The amount which was to be used for the improvement of road networking in the area was then hiked to Rs. 4.70 crore by the governing body of the CDA without the requisite approvals from the interministerial committee.

The report has further pointed out that of the 4.70 crores, 0.85 crore was lying unspent in the public works account of the Khurda Roads and Buildings Division.

Source: 'Fund Scam?', *Down to Earth*, 15/05/02.
Contact: **AK Patnaik**, Chilka Development Authority, BJ-45, BJB Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Orissa. Fax: 0674-434485. Email: ajitpatnaik@hotmail.com Website: www.chilika.com

Crocodile population up in Bhitarkanika

According to the wildlife census report for 2001, the crocodile population in the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary has gone up to 1285 from 1098 last year. The census was conducted by the Rajnagar Mangrove and Forest Division in four ranges – Chandbali, Kanika, Rajnagar and Jambu (in the Mahanadi delta). It was also reported that as many as 33 nestings were identified during the course of the census.

While this is an indication that the crocodile conservation and breeding program has been a success, there is concern over the growing cases of crocodile attacks on villagers in the region (see *PA Updates* 32, 33 & 34). The reasons for this are said to be the increase in the number of the animals as also the fact that they are swimming across to rivers outside the sanctuary as these are safer for egg laying.

A study has been commissioned to look into the implications of the rapid rise in the crocodile population here.

Source: Siba Mohanty. 'Orissa Wildlife Dept. has one croc too many to handle now', *Indian Express*, 16/01/02.
Contact: **DFO**, Bhitarkanika NP, At/PO Rajnagar, Dist. Kendrapada – 745225. Orissa. Tel: 06729-72460/64. Fax: 06727-20775

New sanctuary proposed in Barbara forests

The Orissa Forest Department has proposed the creation of a new wildlife sanctuary in the Barbara Forests that are spread over nearly 400 sq. kms near the Chilka lake. The forests form an important catchment for Chilka.

Recent surveys by the Puri Forest Division and the Orissa Wildlife Society have revealed good wildlife populations here. Tigers too have been

reported. The Barbara forests were a prominent tiger area in the past and as many as five tigers have been shot here in a single day as per permits issued during the British rule.

Large scale degradation and deforestation here was stopped after 1993, following the deployment of CRPF jawans to deal with the timber mafia. This has helped a lot in the regeneration of the forests and the return of the wildlife populations.

Source: Biswajit Mohanty. Email dated 09/05/02
Contact: **Biswajit Mohanty**, see above.

Casuarina plantations ruin turtle nesting sites on coast

Prolific casuarina plantations along the Orissa coast is upsetting the beach and coastal ecology including important sea turtle nesting sites like the Gahirmatha coast, the Devi river mouth and the Rushikulya river mouth. Natural sand dune formation, which is a natural phenomenon along the Orissa coast has also been prevented by this. Casuarina has been indiscriminately planted even on the beach right upto the High Tide Line (HTL) in a number of areas. The plantations have resulted in a noticeable shift in turtle nesting trends here, as the turtles reportedly avoid these 'forested' beaches.

These casuarina forests were first created after the last major cyclone that hit the Orissa coast in 1971. They have however failed to serve their purpose, which was the protection of the coastal villages from cyclonic winds. This was evident during the 1999 super cyclone when the entire casuarina belt was destroyed and rendered useless. However, fresh plantations were started again in 2000 and 2001, on the Chilka, Puri, Konark and Kujang coasts.

Operation Kachhapa and the Wildlife Society of Orissa have protested against the creation of these forests and have called for immediate expert studies to assess their environmental impact

Source: Biswajit Mohanty. 'Casuarina forests ruin turtle nesting beaches in Orissa', Email dated 13/05/02.

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

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

PUNJAB

Ropar, Kanjli wetlands declared Ramsar sites

The Ropar and Kanjli wetlands have been included in the Ramsar list by the Ramsar Conservation Bureau,

Switzerland. With the inclusion of these two, India now has eight wetlands that have been declared to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

The Ropar wetlands in the Shivalik foothills were formed with the construction of the barrage over the Sutlej in 1952 while the Kanjli wetlands were formed in 1870 with the construction of a head regulator near Kanjli village on the Kali Bein rivulet in the Kapurthala district.

Source: Vishal Gulati. 'Global status for Ropar, Kanjli wetlands', *Tribune*, 02/02/02.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Forest Department, Punjab, SCD 2463-64, Sector B-C, Chandigarh.

TAMIL NADU

Eco-awareness programme at Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary

The Forest Department has launched an eco-awareness programme at the Koonthankulam-Kadankulam Bird Sanctuary in the Nanguneri taluka of Tirunelveli district. This would be part of the formation of eco-groups under a 'green –core' programme undertaken by the District Collector in all schools in the district.

Programmes would be conducted regularly at the sanctuary to provide information on the arrival of the migratory birds, their nesting habits etc. A shed had been constructed at the site for the purpose. The Centre is also reported to have sanctioned an amount of Rs. 6.38 lakhs under a wildlife scheme for various development works at the sanctuary.

Source: 'Eco-awareness programme at Koonthankulam bird sanctuary', *The Hindu*, 26/02/02

NEERI to conduct eco study of Sethusamudran Project

The Union Ministry of Shipping has shelved its plan to appoint a consultant through global bidding for undertaking a detailed feasibility study of the Sethusamudran ship canal project, and has instead asked the Nagpur based National Engineering Environment Research Institute (NEERI) to conduct a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the project. The EIA would be done at the cost of Rs. 1 crore and is to be conducted within six months.

NEERI had earlier also conducted a study of initial environment examination (SIEE) of the project.

The Sethusamudran Canal project involves the widening of the Pamban channel to facilitate the movement of coastal ships of the size of 3000 tonnes.

The project runs through the Gulf of Mannar National Park and there has been opposition to the project on the grounds that it will adversely impact the marine environment of the region. (Also see *PA Updates 25 & 22*)

Source: P Manoj. 'Neeri to conduct eco study on Sethusamudran scheme', *The Hindu*, 06/03/02.
'Centre's assurance on Sethusamudran project', *The Hindu*, 20/03/02.

Major fire in Mudumalai

Major fires in the last week of February are reported to have damaged at least 400 hectares of forest in the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary. As a result of the heat from the fires, large number of wild animals including elephants and deer were seen on the main highway cutting through the sanctuary.

Officials suspected vandalism, and it is suspected that a large number of reptiles may have been charred to death. Local people have said that such devastation by fire had not been seen in this region in recent years.

Shortage of funds had resulted in only 50 fire watchers being employed on a temporary basis as against the need of at least a 100. Forest officers said that those who did not get the seasonal employment could have been involved in lighting the fire and that there was also an urgent need for sophisticated fire fighting equipment in the park.

The park had been closed to visitors since the beginning of March and was opened again on April 16, following an improvement in the situation.

Source: D Radhakrishnan. 'Bush fires raging in Mudumalai sanctuary', *The Hindu*, 26/02/02.
D Radhakrishnan. 'Steps to contain bush fires in sanctuary', *The Hindu*, 27/02/02.
'Mudumalai sanctuary to reopen today', *The Hindu*, 16/04/02.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Mudumalai WL Sanctuary, Forest Department, Mahalingam Bldgs, Coonor Road, Udthagamandalam- 642 001 Tamil Nadu

Elephant falls in silted dam near Mudumalai; dies

An adult female elephant fell into a heavily silted check dam at Semmanatham near Mavanhallah, abutting the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary. The Forest department tried rescuing the animal with the help of *kunkis*, but were not successful. The elephant died the next day.

Source: 'Elephant falls into silted dam, dies', *The Hindu*, 29/04/02

Elephant population up in Anaimalai

A recent elephant census conducted by the personnel of the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary (IGWS) shows that there is growth in the elephant population in the Anaimalai ecosystem. This system includes the IGWS and parts of the Palni hills (in Tamil Nadu), the Parambikulam WLS and Nelliampathy Hills, Chinnar and Eravikulam WLSs (in Kerala).

The census was conducted towards the end of February by experienced staff members of the IGWS along with the anti-poaching tribal watchers. The total number of elephants counted was 408 with a male to female ration of 1:10.

Source: VS Palaniappan. 'Elephant population growing in Anaimalai', *The Hindu*, 16/03/2001.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden, Indira Gandhi WLS**
178, Fisheries Dept. Road, Govt. Timber Depot, Pollachi 642 001, Tamil Nadu.

Stray dogs, garbage, speeding vehicles threaten deer, blackbuck in Guindy NP

The blackbuck and spotted deer populations in the Guindy National Park and surrounding areas are facing problems from garbage dumping, stray dogs and speeding vehicles.

In the neighbouring Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) campus, free roaming stray dogs have been the major cause of deaths. Compounding of the problem is also attributed to the putting up of chain link fences in the area. Wildlife enthusiasts have suggested the removal of the chain link fences and a solution to the problem of the dogs as important, if the matter is to be resolved.

Source: P Oppilli. 'Blackbuck, spotted deer face threat from community dogs', *The Hindu*, 16/03/02

Training project for managing elephant reserves

The Tamil Nadu Forest Department (FD) has launched a project to impart training to the field staff for the managing of elephant reserves and for handling pachyderms. The programme costing Rs. 23 lakhs has been taken up by the US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) and is to be implemented by the Coimbatore Circle of the FD in association with AVC College in Mayiladuthurai.

The programme includes imparting training of ecological aspects such as vegetational studies, carrying capacity, food habits, seasonal movements, home range and breeding & social organisation. Each programme would be spread over two weeks with theoretical and practical sessions.

Source: VS Palaniappan. 'Forest staff to be trained in managing elephant reserves', *The Hindu*, 24/12/01.

UTTARANCHAL

Trains' speed in Rajaji to be reduced

A decision to reduce the speed of trains running through the Rajaji National Park was taken recently in a meeting held between the Forest Department and the Railway authorities. A large number of elephants have been killed in the recent past due to speeding trains in the park, and one of the solutions being suggested was to reduce the speed of the trains.

The Park authorities had suggested that the speed be reduced to 20 kmph in the Haridwar to Motichur section and this suggestion has been accepted. It was also decided that between Haridwar and Doiwal stations, one member of the park's staff would travel in each train and would be seated in the engine along with the driver to assist him in passing through the park area.

However, more recent reports suggest that both the suggestions have not been implemented. The Divisional Railway Manager, Northern Railway who was had taken keen interest in the suggestions was transferred before anything could be implemented.

Source: 'Train's speed to be reduced in Rajaji National Park', *The Hindu*, 18/03/02.

Contact: **Director**, Rajaji NP, Shivalik House, Dehradun – 248001, Uttaranchal.
Divisional Railway Manager, Northern Rlys., Moradabad – 244001, Uttar Pradesh.
Tel: 0591-411519. Fax: 429885

Train injures another elephant in Rajaji

An elephant calf was injured on the night of January 24 in the Rajaji National Park in a train accident between Haridwar and Motichur Railway Stations. The mother did not allow anyone to come near the calf and this prevented any attempt to provide some treatment to the calf. The mother needed to be tranquilised for this, but this was not possible as the only vet in the region, with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) was in Delhi to attend the Republic Day parade (where elephants participated).

The incident has pointed to the great need for state forest departments to be well equipped with qualified vets and equipment and expertise like one related to the use of tranquiliser guns. If some facility of this kind would have been in place, there was a chance that the life of the injured calf could have been saved.

Source: Ashok Kumar. Email dated 26/01/02.
Nirmal Ghosh. Email dated 27/01/02.

Power line from Tehri to cut through Rajaji

A committee set up by the Supreme Court in November 2001 to study the impact of an 800 MW transmission line of the Tehri project on the Rajaji National Park recently submitted its report. The committee has recommended that the power line be shifted eastwards, close to the Haridwar Dehradun Road, to exclude elephant habitat. It pointed out that the elephant corridor was already highly disturbed with two highways, two railway lines, three existing power lines and industries such as BHEL and IDLP.

The Committee that had the task of exploring the possibility of an alternate route with least impact on the national park, however noted that, 'The length of the power line had already been built right upto the entry point on the north and south side and therefore the situation was **fait accompli**.'

The Committee studied four alternate routes and came to the conclusion that the one originally suggested had to be modified a little to minimise damage. The other three considered were either through the core area of the park, involved defence land, or meant disrupting an area of rich biodiversity and wildlife area.

Local NGOs have also alleged that nearly five lakh trees would have to be cut for these transmission lines.

Source: Sonu Jain. 'Elephants to just hang on', *Indian Express*, 20/02/02.

Elephant electrocuted near Rajaji

A tusker was killed after it got electrocuted and fell into a water tank in Haridwar district just outside the Rajaji National Park (RNP). The incident happened in the month of February.

The elephant had strayed into the village adjacent to the park and got entangled in the wires that the villagers use to illegally tap electricity from the power lines. Illegal tapping of power in the region is supposed to be common and the authorities have not shown a willingness to deal with the problem.

Eight elephants are now reported to have died in Rajaji in the last few months. Some of these deaths are due to natural reasons, while others are due to causes like electrocution and train accidents (see *PA Updates* 34, 32, 25, 23, 21 and 20)

Source: 'Power thefts unabated in Rajaji National Park', *The Hindu*, 18/02/02.

Contact: Director, Rajaji NP, see above

SC asks for re-alignment plan for road through Corbett

The Supreme Court has asked the Uttaranchal state government to submit to the centre its new plan

realigning the proposed Garhwal-Kumaon link road to avoid its passing through the Corbett Tiger Reserve. The counsel for the state informed the court that the new plan ready and that it was awaiting approval from the Chief Minister .

The order had been issued in the first week of March and the state had been given two weeks for the same. Information of the latest developments is not available. (Also see *PA Update* 30).

Source: 'Give Corbett road report: SC', *The Times of India*, 08/03/02.

Contact: **LAW-E**, 409, Lawyer's Chambers, Supreme Court, New Delhi – 110001. Tel: 011-3070029. Email: lawe@bol.net.in
Field Director, Corbett Tiger Reserve, Ramnagar –244715, Nainital, Uttaranchal. Tel: 05947 – 85489. Fax: 85376

Election official row in Corbett

Corbett National Park officials were recently involved in a row with the election observer for the Kotdwar constituency. The observer, Ramesh Chandra Pandey entered the core zone of the park without taking the permission of the park authorities. When stopped and made to return back, he threatened the staff with suspension and also lodged a police complaint in Kotdwar, charging the forest officials with disrupting election work. A case was then registered against the forest staff under Sections 341 and 353 of the IPC.

Mr. Pandey was on his way to Dhikala inside the park to take count of the eligible voters there for the February 14 polls. He chose to take the shorter route through the core zone (without the permission of the park authorities) rather than take the legitimate route via Ranikhet Road and the Dhangarhi gate.

The situation was however diffused when the Election Commission was approached and convinced to prevail upon the concerned official not to harass the management of the Tiger Reserve.

Source: Ajay Suri. 'Ousted from Corbett', EC observer files FIR', *Indian Express*, 28/01/02.
Nirmal Ghosh, Emails dated 29/01/02 and 06/02/02

Contact: **Director**, Corbett NP, see above
Nirmal Ghosh, Email: tigerfire@yahoo.com

Ivory haul in Uttaranchal

In an important breakthrough to the spate of elephant poaching in Corbett and Rajaji National Parks (see *PA Updates* 33 and 30) the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) and the Uttaranchal Police

seized two huge ivory tusks (measuring four and a half feet each) and a leopard skin near Laxman Jhoola in the first week of December. Four people were also arrested.

The operation was carried out in a remote forest area bordering the Corbett and Rajaji NPs.

Source: Press Release by the WPSI, 05/12/01.

Contact: **Bindia Sahgal**, WPSI, E-71, Greater Kailash Part I, New Delhi 110 048. Tel: 011 - 6213864 / 6292492. Fax: 011 - 646.4918 Website: www.wpsi-india.org; Email: wpsi@vsnl.com
Brijendra Singh, 28, Sundar Nagar, New Delhi - 110 003

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

UTTAR PRADESH

US to fund Indo-Nepal corridor study

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has cleared funding for an Indian study on the Indo-Nepal wildlife corridor.

The study is to be conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and will concentrate on the 32 km stretch on the border that connects Royal Bardia National Park in Nepal to the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in India.

Source: Mohit Dubey. 'US to fund study on Indo-Nepal corridor soon', *The Times of India*, 09/03/02.

Contact: **Satya Ranjan Sinha**, WII, PO Box 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun – 248001, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-640111 – 15. Fax: 640117

Tiger census based on DNA 'typing'

In a pioneering move – first to be undertaken anywhere in the world, the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, is to conduct a tiger census in UP on the basis of DNA typing. Permission for this has also been granted by the UP Forest Department (FD).

Under this new technique, samples of the scats of the tigers would be picked up from tiger inhabited areas like Dudhwa TR, wildlife sanctuaries of Katarniaghat, Suhelwa, Ranipur, Kishanpur, and Sohagibarwa and the forest areas of Pilibhit. The DNA pool would then be studied to make accurate forecasts.

The new method has been taken up on an experimental basis in Andhra Pradesh and is likely to be also tried in Arunachal Pradesh.

Source: Mohit Dubey. 'Big cats census gets big boost', *The Times of India*, 12/03/02.

Contact: **RL Singh**, CWLW, -UP, 17, Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow – 226001, Uttar Pradesh.
Tel: 0522-283864. Fax: 283868
Lalji Singh, Director, CCMB, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

Rhinos migrate from Nepal to Pilibhit Forests

Six rhinos from Nepal are reported to have migrated into the Lagga Bagga block in the Pilibhit Reserve Forest on the India side of the Indo-Nepal border. Though such migrations are not uncommon, the animals return after a short stay on this side. This time however the animals stayed back and a female even birth to a calf in the month of February.

Source: Tariq Hasan. 'Pilibhit forest home to six Nepalese guests', *The Times of India*, 04/02/02.

WEST BENGAL

Farraka barrage creates new land in Sunderbans

The enhanced sediment carrying capacity of the Bhagirathi river due to the tremendous discharge from the Farraka barrage is resulting in the formation of new land in the Sunderbans region. A study conducted by the School of Oceanographic Studies of the Jadavpur University has said that the coastline on the Indian side of the Sunderbans is increasing at the rate of 112 hectares per year.

This has resulted in the formation of new islands, which subsequently get a tree cover (thereby increasing forest cover) and the control of saline ingress into the ground water here.

Source: Chitra Siddhartha. 'Farakka barrage pushes Sunderbans coastline out of sea', *The Times of India*, 22/05/02.

Loudspeakers banned in Sunderbans

The West Bengal government has taken a decision to ban loudspeakers in the Sunderbans. The State Pollution Control Board has issued a notification to this effect and strict action has been promised against the violators. A public awareness campaign in this regard has also been planned.

The notification is mainly directed at the picnickers who visit here in large numbers and are known to play loud music on their music systems.

Source: 'No more music to disturb tigers', *The Asian Age*, 21/02/02

Contact: **Field Director**, Sunderbans Tiger Reserve, PO Canning, Dist. South 24 Parganas 743329, West Bengal

Tiger census in Sunderbans

A tiger census was conducted in the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve from December 7 to 14, 2001. More than 300 people participated in the operations. They were divided into various teams that were equipped with fibreglass vests and helmets. Some officials were armed with rifles and firecrackers as a precautionary measure against tiger attacks. One census official was killed by a tiger in the 1995 census whereas 18 people, mainly fisherfolk, died in tiger attacks in 2000.

The census operation used the pugmark method, for which it came under some criticism.

284 tigers were counted in the last census in the Sunderbans in 1999 and reports suggest that about the same number were also counted in the 2001 census.

Source: Nalin M. Email dated 07/12/01.

'Tiger Count in Sunderbans', *Tigerlink*, February 2002.

Train kills another three elephants in North Bengal

Three wild elephants were killed in the month of February when the Intercity Express from Siliguri to Alipurduar ploughed into a herd of elephants in the Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuary. Two animals, both sub adults, including a tusker were killed on the spot on February 7. The third, a female died a few days later on February 11.

In the past one and a half years seven elephants have been killed on this railway track that runs through dense forests including Buxa Tiger Reserve, Gorumara National Park and the Mahananda and Chapramari Wildlife Sanctuaries. These accidents and elephant fatalities are only expected to increase as work is going on for the conversion of this meter gauge track into a broad gauge one. (Also see *PA Updates* 34, 32 & 29).

Source: Debasis Sarkar, 'Elephant hit by train dies', *The Times of India*, 12/02/02.

Contact: **Ujjwal Bhattacharya**, CF (WL, North), West, Bengal Forest Dept., Aranya Bhawan (Near Court), Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, Tel: 03561- 25627(O) 25596 (R), Email: ujjwal_b@yahoo.com
WWF I, West Bengal State Office, 5th Floor, Tata Centre, 43, Jawaharlal Nehru Rd. Calcutta – 700071, West Bengal. Tel: 033- 2889530. Fax: 2883761.

Openbill storks in Raigunj Bird Sanctuary being killed for their eggs

There are reports that Openbill storks are being killed in the Raigunj Wildlife Sanctuary in the North Dinajpur district of West Bengal for their eggs, which are then sold in the nearby markets.

The 1.3 sq. kms sanctuary is also called the Kulik Wildlife Sanctuary after the Kulik river that flows along the sanctuary's eastern and northern boundaries. A low boundary wall, proximity to the NH 34 and inadequate security measures are said to be the reasons for increased killings of the storks. Additionally an increase has also been reported in the cutting of the trees in the sanctuary.

Source: 'Human greed threatens Asian openbill storks', *Hindustan Times*, 12/11/01

Contact: **Arunayan Sharma**, NS Road, In Front of TOP, Malda – 732101, West Bengal. Tel: 03512-51114. Email: s_arunayan@rediffmail.com

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

6th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights

The 6th National Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights was held on February 23-25, 2002, at Bongaigaon, Assam. The Consultation was jointly organised by Nature's Foster (Bongaigaon), Green Heart's Nature Club (Kokrajhar) and Kalpavriksh (Pune), under the auspices of the Conservation and Livelihoods Network (CLN). It brought together wildlife conservationists and researchers, forest and civil administration officials, social and human rights activists, rural development workers, law experts, educationists, and others.

A substantial portion of the discussions was around issues related to the North Eastern region of the country and this was also reflected in the statement that was issued by the Consultation.

For the full statement and other details:

Contact: **NK Dey**, Nature's Foster, 815B, BRPL Township, P. O. Dhaligaon, Bongaigaon - 783385, Assam. Tel: 03664 - 41431(R) / 41029(O). Email: naturesfoster@indiatimes.com
Pankaj Sekhsaria, at the editorial address

Four new areas proposed Project Tiger

The Union Minister for Forests and Environment, while recently answering a question in the Rajya Sabha said that the MOEF had received proposals for the inclusion of four new protected areas at Tiger Reserves within Project Tiger.

These are as follows: Satkosia Gorge & Baisipada Wildlife Sanctuary – 988 sq. kms, Orissa; Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary – 1580 sq. kms, Chattisgarh; Chandoli Wildlife Sanctuary 364 sq. kms, Maharashtra and; Wan, Ambabarwa, Narnala Wildlife Sanctuary – 350 sq. kms, Maharashtra.

Source: Rajya Sabha Question No. 3372. Answered on 26/04/02

Web database on marine mammals strandings / sightings

An attempt is being made to start a web-based Indian marine mammals strandings and sightings network. The aim is to strengthen the relatively meagre knowledge available today on Indian marine mammals and to protect them.

For suggestions and details

Contact: **Kumaran Sathasivam**. Email: k_sathasivam@hotmail.com

Satellite system to detect forest fires

A satellite based system to detect forest fires in the country is being installed at the Forest Survey of India (FSI). It is one of the series of satellite systems owned by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the United States and is equipped with an advanced very high resolution radiometer (AVHRR) for fire detection and monitoring. The system can provide data for a small area for the entire country four times a day.

According to a study conducted by the FSI in 1995, 2.31% of the total forest area in the country was found to be affected by forest fires between February and June every year.

Source: 'Satellite system in Dehradun to detect forest fires in country', *The Times of India*, 30/03/02.

National Animal Mortality Database

A web based National Animal Mortality Database (NAMOD) can now be accessed at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rajnat>, which is the home page of Rajasthan Naturalists (RAJNAT).

Information that will be available on the site includes accidental deaths, poaching of wild animals, seizures of skins / hides, live birds and animals etc. It is hoped that this will provide some clues regarding

decimating factors, effectiveness of wildlife information network and wildlife laws implementing agencies.

The site is still not very comprehensive and work is going on. To begin with the main emphasis is on information from Rajasthan.

Contact: Dharendra Devarshi, 490, Krishna Nagar, Bharatpur 321001, Rajasthan, India, Tel: 05644 - 29519. Email: ddevarshi@hotmail.com

SOUTH ASIA

UNDP project for Sunderbans in India & Bangladesh

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has prepared a project draft for the joint management of the Sunderbans in India and Bangladesh. The draft envisages the setting up of a trust fund to attract global donors for the preservation of these forests. A board of trustees comprising senior government officials from the two countries and representatives of the UNDP has been proposed. A joint panel that will review and monitor the joint management program, comprising officials from West Bengal and Bangladesh may also be set up.

It is being hoped that this joint initiative by the two countries will resolve transborder problems such as illegal fishing, poaching of tigers, smuggling of wildlife products and collection of tiger prawn seeds. Steps will also be taken to develop alternative livelihoods through participatory forest management, improve the information gathering systems and infrastructure and give intense training to the managers of this World Heritage Site.

The draft has been put forward to the two national governments for approval and once that is done, the UNDP is likely to sanction a grant of US \$ 3 million for the project.

Source: 'UNDP aid likely to preserve Sunderbans', *Statesman*, 17/05/02.

BANGLADESH

Regional biodiversity workshop held in Sunderbans

A regional biodiversity management workshop for the Sunderbans World Heritage Site was held in Dhaka on 1-2 December 2001. 40 participants from India and Bangladesh as well as representatives from the UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA and the FAO attended. It was decided that UNESCO would be responsible for designing interventions for

community based alternative livelihoods and skill development as related to eco-tourism and heritage sites. It would also support a training needs assessment of all stakeholders.

The UNFPA would provide inputs for linking biodiversity preservation to containing population growth rate in areas surrounding heritage sites through activities related to health and family planning and information for women and girls. FAO will be responsible for providing alternative livelihoods and skills development in the domain of forestry, fisheries, sustainable agriculture and food security, aquaculture and mariculture.

Source: 'Biodiversity management workshop in Sunderbans', *UNESCO Newsletter*, December 2001.

NEPAL

Four nation clean up of Mt. Everest

A four nation Asian team is to clean Mt. Everest of mounds of oxygen cylinders, plastic, food cans, ropes and tents left behind by other climbers. The team will have 29 members from Georgia, Japan, Korea and Nepal. They will try to clear 1.5 tons of garbage between Camp Two at about 6400 m and South Col at 7900m. The collected garbage will be transported to Korea and Japan where it will be publicly displayed to build awareness about the trash on Everest. A similar clean up operation had also been conducted earlier on Mt. Everest, where 4.3 tons of garbage was removed from upto an altitude of 7985 m (see *PA Update* 32).

Source: 'Clearing the trash', *Down to Earth*, 15/05/02

INTERNATIONAL

RSPB grants available for research

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)'s International Research Unit has grants available for upto US \$ 1400 to support research on bird species identified as 'at risk' in Threatened Birds of the World.

Projects to be considered include: surveys for species for which there are currently no known sites, surveys of data deficient species and surveys and research on species listed as critical that have not been the subject of recent research or conservation action.

Contact: **Paul Donald**, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG 19 2PB, UK. Email: paul.donald@rspb.org.uk

Manual for wildlife conservation in tropical Asia

The New York based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with the support of the US government and WWF- US is preparing a manual for wildlife researchers, managers and conservationists in tropical Asia, titled, 'Monitoring Tigers and Their prey'.

The manual is being edited by Dr. Ulhas Karanth along with James Nichols, PK Sen and Vinod Rishi. It draws heavily on the experience of the long running WCS funded Tiger Conservation Project (TCP) in Nagarhole and Kudremukh National Parks and the Bhadra WLS.

Source: Alladi Jayasri. 'Manual being prepared for wildlife conservationists', *The Hindu*, 26/02/02.

Contact: Ulhas Karanth, Wildlife Conservation Society, India Programme, 403 Seebo Apts, 26/2 Aga Abbas Ali Road, Bangalore - 560042, Karnataka. Tel: 080-5591747 / 5591990. Email: ukaranth@vsnl.com

OPPORTUNITIES

Community Mobiliser, Education coordinator for project in Sheopur, MP

The Samrakshan Trust has invited applications for a community mobiliser and an education coordinator for their project in the Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh

Community Mobiliser: The candidate should be a Masters degree holder in any discipline, preferably in Social Work and should possess the ability to work in difficult physical conditions, and deal with a wide variety of people and interest groups

Education Co-ordinator: The candidate should have relevant training and/or field experience in this discipline.

Very good knowledge of Hindi is essential for both the positions

Contact: **Asmita Kabra**, Samrakshan Trust, E-314, Anandlok Housing Society, Mayur Vihar Phase I, New Delhi 110091. Tel: 011-2795088, 2751907, 3715385. Email: asmita@samarakshan.org
Website: www.samarakshan.org

Officer; Wild Policy And Wildlife Trade Control Programmes

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) has announced an opening for an Officer in its Wild Policy and Wildlife Trade Control Programmes. The Wild

policy programme aims at studying policy and legal issues relating to Wildlife conservation in India and CITES. The Wildlife trade control programme assists enforcement authorities and maintains a wildlife mortality and seizure database.

The position is based in Delhi but will involve travel to locations where ongoing activities may take place. A Masters Degree in Wildlife Sciences is preferred, but candidates from other disciplines will also be considered provided they have excellent knowledge of wildlife issues and a demonstrated track record in conservation.

Contact: **Director Administration**, WTI, C-644, Second Floor, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110065. Email: wti@wti.org.in; wti@wildlifetrustofindia.org.

ATREE: Positions for ecologically oriented social scientists/economists

Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) has invited applications from motivated and highly qualified social scientists trained in economics or other social science disciplines for the following positions.

1. Social Scientist: The applicant would have a PhD or equivalent publications in sociology, anthropology, political science or related discipline, with demonstrable research experience in applying an interdisciplinary social science approach to ecological and environmental issues.

2. Environmental Economist: The applicant should have a PhD or equivalent publications in economics, with a focus on environmental and/or resource economics.

Qualifications for both positions: Familiarity with public policy, legal, and governance issues associated with conservation of biological resources and management of natural resources. The applicant is also expected to provide inputs to ATREE's ongoing programs on land-use change, community based conservation, integrated forest management, environmental education, and rural development

Contact: **The Director**, ATREE, 659, 5th A Main Rd, Hebbal, Bangalore 560024, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3533942 / 3530069 Fax: 3530070, Email: director@atree.org or info@atree.org; Web: www.atree.org

WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

- Pant, Ruchi. *Customs and Conservation: Cases of Traditional and Modern Law in India and Nepal*. Kalpavriksh and IIED, 2002

This is the latest publication from Kalpavriksh and IIED in the series of case studies and papers on the theme of Community Based Conservation (CBC) in South Asia.

The book brings out that most often statutory laws are thrust upon the ongoing arrangements in the field where binding obligations already exist. Such statutory laws create several problems related to pluralism as they are most often not in harmony with the existing ethos and culture of the region.

The book concludes with suggestions to bridge the gap between the statutory provisions and the regulations that have been framed by the local communities to conserve their biological resources.

Contact: **Kalpavriksh**, at the editorial address

- *Community Forestry*

This is a new journal that has been launched as a forum for information sharing, debate and discussion on the various issues related to community forestry.

Contact: Community Forestry, RCDC, 424, Saheednagar, Bhubaneswar – 751 007, Orissa. Tel: 0674 510985. / 517897. Fax: 509237. Email: rcdcbsr@sancharnet.in

- *Biodiversity Conservation in West Bengal*

Published by the Wildlife Wing, Directorate of Forests of the Govt. of West Bengal in 2000, this publication carries comprehensive information on various aspects of biodiversity and wildlife in the state.

The publication is made up of 14 chapters that include topics like Conservation Strategies, Census of Wild Animals, Ecodevelopment activities, Project Tiger, Project Elephant, India Ecodevelopment project in Buxa and the UNDP sub-programmes in Jaldapara WLS.

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

- *Mountain Protected Areas Update*

Published jointly by the IUCN and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), this is a regular newsletter that carries information on mountain protected areas (MPAs) from around the world.

Contact: **Lawrence Hamilton**, WCPA Mountain Theme, Islands and Highlands, Environmental Consultancy, 342 Bittersweet Lane, Charlotte, Vermont 05445, USA. Tel / Fax: 802 425-6509. Email: hamiltonx2@mindspring.com

- Dutta, Ritwick. *The Environmental Activists' Handbook Vol II*, Environmental Justice Initiative, New Delhi, 2002.

The second volume of 'The Environmental Activists' Handbook is a compilation of environmental laws and includes High Court and Supreme Court cases. The thrust of the second volume is International Environmental Conventions. Full texts and summaries of the conventions are included. The handbook is intended to equip lawyers practicing on environment and human rights issues, activists, NGOs, researchers and students interested in environmental law.

The case laws covered include those on mining, tribal rights to forests, waste, vehicular pollution, mega-projects, patents, coastal regulation zone and noise. The Environmental Activists Handbook Volume I was published in 2000 and can also be procured from the author.

Contact: **Ritwick Dutta**, EJI, 65, II nd Floor, Masjid Road, Jungpura, New Delhi – 110014. Tel: 011-4319856 / 4316922. Email: eji@vsnl.net; ritwick1@vsnl.com

- Dutta, Ritwick. *Community Managed Forests: Law, Problems, Alternatives. (A Case Study of Meghalaya)*. Socio Legal Information Centre, Mumbai, 2001.

This is the first of the occasional paper series brought out by Environmental Justice Initiative (EJI), (formerly known as EHRLI). The study highlights the problems and legal issues involved in Community Managed forests with respect to areas governed under Schedule VI of the Indian Constitution. The study focuses on the North Eastern State of Meghalaya and suggests some alternatives to the current situation.

Contact: **Ritwick Dutta**, see above.

- Monga, Sunjoy. *Wildlife Reserves of India*. India Book House, Mumbai, 2002.

This book covers 48 national parks, sanctuaries and tiger reserves of the country in detail. There is a listing of the key species found in each of these reserves and additionally there is information such as the best time for visiting, climate details, maps,

accommodation listings and distances from various important places near the reserves.

Contact: **Sunjoy Monga**,
Email: sunjoymonga@vsnl.com

UPCOMING

New Journal: Conservation and Society

This is a new, interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal exploring interactions among societies, the environment and development. The editor of the journal is Dr. Kamal Bawa, while Vasant Saberwal is the Assistant Editor. It will be published by Sage publications and the two themes that have been identified for the initial issues include 'people and wildlife' and 'community management of resources'.

Contact: **Dr. Kamal Bawa**, C/o ATREE, No . 659,
5th A Main, Hebbal, Bangalore – 560024.
Tel: 080-3533942. Fax: 3530070. Website:
www.conservationandsociety.org.

Vasant Sabherwal. Email:
vsaberwal@hotmail.com;
moving@del2.vsnl.net.in

World Congress on Aquatic Protected Areas

The World Congress on Aquatic Protected Areas (APAs) is to be held from 14-17 August, 2002 in Cairns, Queensland in Australia. The Congress is to be divided into five sections: Who and what are the beneficiaries of APAs ? How to design and select APAs? Success factors in the implementation and management; and measuring performance.

Contact: OzAccom Conference Services. Tel: +61 7
38541611.
Email: apa2002@ozaccom.com.au.
Website: www.ozaccom.com.au/apa2002.

2002 International Seminar on Protected Area Management

This is a well known seminar offered by the Universities of Montana, Idaho and Colorado State with the US Forest Service International Office, for senior level managers and policy makers. The Seminar is to be held from August 8-24, 2002 in Missoula, Montana, USA

Contact: **James Burchfield**, The Bolle Centre for
People and Forests, University of Montana.
Missoula, Montana 59812-1224, USA.
Email: jburch@forestry.umt.edu

Web:
www.fs.fed.us/global/is/ispam/welcome.htm

International Conference on Mountain Development

Will be held in Chengdu, China from October 15-19. The Conference is being hosted by the Institute for Mountain Disaster and Environment.

Contact: zhangning@imde.ac.cn

International Conference on problems in coastal regions

The 4th International Conference on Environmental Problems in Coastal regions is to be held from September 16-18, 2002 in Rhodes, Greece.

The conference will focus on monitoring, analysis and modelling of coastal regions to prevent, alleviate or minimise environmental problems.

Contact: Website:
<http://www.wessex.ac.uk/conferences/2002/coastal02/>

READERS RESPOND

Lavkumar Khacher...

I have been having very serious doubts about the way we are going about with our wildlife and wilderness area management. Some earth shattering changes have got to be brought about since one cannot but develop a high degree of cynicism in dealing with the government and serving on its committees.

I read with disgust the news that Rs. 200 crore management plan for Gujarat's 21 sanctuaries and 4 national parks has been approved. The interested public must be shown these management plans as otherwise much of the money literally is wasted and whatever management is carried out causes great harm to the area sought to be managed.

A galling example is that of the Porbandar 'Bird Sanctuary'. This sanctuary was primarily notified to ensure that the thousands of lesser flamingoes gathering there through much of the year continue to do so. On my recent visit to Porbandar (March 5), I specially went to see the flamingoes. There was not a single flamingo in sight and the sanctuary was inundated by some one meter or more deep sewage. The breathtaking spectacle had shifted outside the sanctuary area. What share of the Rs. 200 crores is earmarked for management and infrastructure development of this glaring example of ignorance?

On the other hand GEER Foundation has demonstrated a remarkable management strategy for the Hindolghadh Nature Education Sanctuary near Jasdan in Rajkot district. Perhaps, this sanctuary needs to be used more to 'educate' IFS officers than school children. It is management of small areas that immediately shows up whether correct or incorrect actions are taken.

Before a single paisa is given to Porbandar its management plan needs to be thoroughly reviewed. Perhaps, other sanctuaries too need to be critically examined.

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<http://www.indianjungles.com>;

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

www.cee.envirodebate.org

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