

# PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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Editor: Pankaj Sekhsaria

Illustrations: Madhuvanti Anantharajan

Produced by: Kalpavriksh

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

**KALPAVRIKSH**, Apartment 5, Shri Dutta Krupa, 908 Deccan Gymkhana, Pune 411004, Maharashtra, India.

Tel/Fax: 020 – 25654239.

Email: pankajs@vsnl.com

Website: www.kalpavriksh.org

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## **EDITORIAL**

### **Balance needed in the tribal bill discussion**

Much opposition has been expressed to the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill 2005 and subsequent version that was prepared and presented by the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) earlier this year. The National Forest Commission (NFC) too expressed its opposition though a notable dissenting note (and

therefore support to the bill) was that of Chipko veteran Chandi Prasad Bhatt.

One of the key concerns has been the impact it will have on forests in the country and on wildlife and protected areas in particular

In the specific case of wildlife conservation, there can be no argument that the Wild Life Protection Act (WLPA) has significantly helped protect India's beleaguered natural wealth and wildlife. It has had spectacular successes and that cannot be denied. What however also needs to be kept in mind is that the WLPA cannot ensure conservation all by itself or by ignoring the larger historical, socio-political – cultural context of the people of the country. Implementation of the WLPA, can at best, be considered one important constituent of the larger conservation objective.

That the mere application of the WLPA does not ensure conservation was painfully demonstrated when the tiger disappeared from Sariska. In other places its implementation has actually impeded conservation initiatives – pushing the Edible Nest Swiftlet in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the brink of extinction by preventing innovative conservation initiatives, by preventing buffalo grazing in the Bharatpur marshes and allowing undesirable changes in the ecosystem and in innumerable cases alienating local populations, denying them basic livelihood rights and creating strong localized anti-conservation sentiment.

The problem arises because large sections of the forest bureaucracy and those supporting wildlife conservation believe that the creation of the wildlife sanctuaries and national parks means that people have to perforce move out. They now believe that the present bill will impede this necessity.

Both are incorrect readings. To begin with, the WLPA itself acknowledges that people have lived and continue to live in forests and protected areas and that they have rights over land and resources. Even the NFC accepts in its recommendations that local people can be allowed rights inside sanctuaries if they are in consonance with conservation objectives. If anything, the bill in discussion will only help make the process of

recording and dealing with rights more rigorous and thereby more just.

The Government figure of forestland under encroachment is 13.34 lakh hectares. This is less than two percent forest area of the country and this is land that will be used for occupation. The overall impact will be larger if one takes into consideration lands needed for development projects in the villages and other rights like those over Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) that are to be granted. Even then, fears suggesting that this will mean everything will be lost are exaggerated

It must also be said, however, that all in not alright with the JPC version of the bill, now called the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill 2006. The bill in its present form, in fact, cannot be acceptable.

There is a problem with removing the upper limit of 2.5 hectares of land to be awarded as there is with extending the cut off date to 2005. If the idea is to support traditional forest dwellers, the earlier cut off date of 1980 would suffice just as well. This will also ensure that opportunistic occupation of forestland by vested interests will be prevented. The present bill also needs to make the beneficiaries and right holders responsible for ensuring conservation like in the earlier version. Duties, rights and benefits need to go together. Development projects allowed under the bill should be subject to appropriate impact assessment and relevant approvals and mechanisms need to be put in place to evaluate and ensure sustainability where resource extraction is involved.

The bill appears to want solutions to all the historical and present problems of tribals and forest dwellers through one single move. This won't be possible unless there is significant course correction in the present paradigm of development – one that willingly sacrifices the lands and livelihoods of millions in its name or guns down tribals for opposing huge projects, like in Kshipur or Kalingnagar. The bill and its enactment notwithstanding, this alienation and destitution of the most marginalized is bound to continue. So will the impact on wildlife and our forest lands.

There is no question about the intent of the bill but some of the provisions that give rise to concern need to be changed before it is approved.

That would be a fundamental requirement if the twin imperatives of, both, conservation and social justice are to be met in unison.

## NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

### ANDHRA PRADESH

#### NBWL clears Polavaram project

The National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) has cleared the Polavaram (Indira Sagar) Irrigation project after considering various aspects related to the submergence of nearly 200 hectares of the Papikonda Wildlife Sanctuary. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Standing Committee of the NBWL in June.

Earlier reports had indicated that nearly 100 hectares would be submerged (see *PA Update* Vol XII, No. 2 & 1).

The NBWL clearance will now have to be approved by the Central Empowered Committee of the Supreme Court. The project would have to also get forest clearance.

Source: 'Wildlife board clears Polavaram project', *The Hindu*, 09/06/06.

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Wildlife, Papikonda Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajahmundry. Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 0883-2478643. Fax: 0883-2476289

#### Major plans proposed for Kolleru Lake development

With the completion of demolition of illegal fish tanks on Kolleru lake as part of Operation Clean Up (see *PA Updates* 55 & 49), various departments including Forests, Revenue, DRDA, Agriculture, Fisheries, the Police, Transco, Tourism, and the pollution control board have proposed a multi crore plan for the development of the lake.

These include the construction of a ring road around the lake, the setting up of cottages, eco-development clubs, tourist resorts, environmental education centers, and a museum to display various species of stuffed birds. Forest officials also suggested the creation of 1,000 artificial islands of one or two acres that would then be planted with *neem*, *neredu* and *thumma* plantations

The State Government had directed the district administration through G.O. Ms No. 120 to go ahead with the demolition of illegal fish tanks to conserve the lake by June 15.

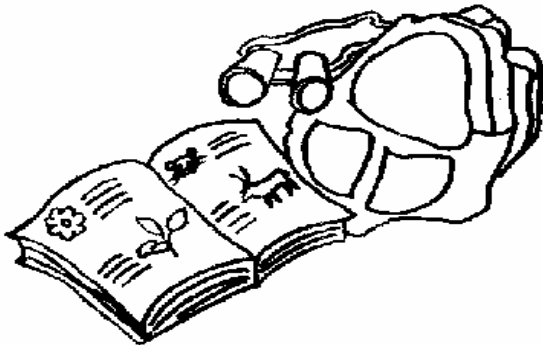
Source: 'Plans to restore Kolleru glory', *Deccan Chronicle*, 17/06/06.

Contact: **DFO**, Kolleru, Dist. West Godavari

**CWLW**, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Aranya Bhavan, Saifabad, Hyderabad - 500004, Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 040-23230561 / 23232668. Fax: 337889

## ASSAM

### International Biodiversity education project in the North East



An international project 'Eastern Himalayan Biodiversity Education for Children' covering Assam and Bhutan is being launched jointly by the US based NGO- GLOBIO (USA), Aaranyak, (India) and Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (Bhutan).

The mission of the three year project is to have, both, an immediate and a long-term impact on reshaping local perspectives about the wildlife, resources and cultures for children in the immediate vicinity of the Manas NP in Assam, the Black Mountain NP in Bhutan as also regional urban areas

Source: 'Biodiversity Education without borders', Aaranyak E-newsletter April – July 2006

Contact: **Bibhab Talukdar**, Aaranyak, Samanwoy Path (Survey), PO Beltola, Guwahati – 781028, Assam. Tel: 0361-2636768 / 266087. Fax: 266087. Email: [bibhab1@sancharnet.in](mailto:bibhab1@sancharnet.in)

### Guwahati solid waste for Deepor Beel

The move of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) to dump the city's municipal solid waste (MSW) in the Deepor Beel Wildlife Sanctuary has drawn protests from a wide range of individuals and groups.

The decision of the GMC was made in response of a Gauhati High Court order directing the Corporation to shift its dumping site from Sasal by July 7 following a controversy. The new site now chosen is Boragaon which is an integral part of the wetland and dumping began here from July 7.

The dumping site at Boragaon is also very close to the sites of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Science and Technology (IASST) and the proposed sites of the Assam Institute of Management (AIM) and the ARTFED Working Women's Hostel.

Source: 'GMC's new site to hit Deepor Beel', *The Assam Tribune*, Sunday, 09/07/06.

### Award for Manas Maozigendri Ecotourism Society

The Manas Maozigendri Ecotourism Society (MMES) has been awarded the Anirudh Bhargava-INTACH Environmental Award for the year 2005

The MMES has been working in parts of the Manas National Park and has been able to reduce poaching and illegal felling of trees inside the park. Acting as volunteers, its members patrol the park and also play host to tourists at a venue they have developed.

(Also see *PA Updates* 60, 56 & 54)

Source: 'Eco-tourism body chosen for award', *The Assam Tribune*, 23/05/06.

Contact: **Director**, Manas NP, PO Barpeta Rd. Dist. Barpeta – 781315, Assam. Tel: 03666 – 261413. Fax: 232253 / 260253  
Email: [abhijitrabha@hotmail.com](mailto:abhijitrabha@hotmail.com)

### Blasting resumed in Kaziranga – Karbi Anglong elephant corridor

Blasting in the stone quarries located in the Kaziranga – Karbi Anglong elephant corridor was reported to have resumed in the month of

June. As a result depredation by the wild elephants started here again A herd of wild elephants numbering around 40 attacked several houses at Rong Bong Gaon No. 4 under the Numaligarh outpost in Golaghat district recently. One school student was also killed.

Strong protests earlier (see *PA Updates* Vol XII, Nos. 2&1; Vol. XI, 6; Vol XI, Nos. 5&4) had forced the state government to stop the blastings at Bihara. An Elephant Task Force was also formed to enquire into the matter. Their report is still awaited and meanwhile permissions for blasting were given again.

Source: 'Resumed blastings cause surge in elephant depredation', *The Assam Tribune*, 15/05/06.

Contact: **Director**, Kaziranga NP, PO Bokakhat, Dist. Golaghat – 785612, Assam. Tel: 03776-268095(O), 268086(R)

### Proposal for airport near Kaziranga



Bangkok Airways is reported to have expressed interest in setting up an airport near the Kaziranga National Park. The Bangkok based airlines made the suggestion for the airport and other infrastructure for tourists during Chief Minister, Tarun Gogoi's recent visit to Thailand.

The Airline has also indicated that it might be interested in linking Kaziranga with other national parks in the state and the north-east region to promote the tour circuit as the 'Assam Safari'.

The CM has said that the Assam Government was ready to provide land near Kaziranga for the airport if a formal proposal was received from the airline as it would help boost tourism in the state.

In a subsequent development, Assam Forest and Tourism Minister, Mr. Rockybul Hussain presented a memorandum in the first

week to July to Union Tourism Minister, Ms Ambika Soni during her visit to Guwahati. It included a request for the construction of an airstrip near Kaziranga and a helipad at Majuli. The memorandum also requests an allotment of Rs Five crore for renovation and modernization of more than a hundred forest Inspection Bungalows in the state so that they could be used for tourism purposes.

Source: 'Bangkok Airways keen to set up airport near Kaziranga', [http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/181\\_1702379,00020016.htm](http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/181_1702379,00020016.htm)  
'Soni announces steps to boost NE tourism', *The Assam Tribune*, 05/07/06.

### Manipur Bush Quail re-sighted in Manas

The Manipur Bush Quail has been re-sighted in the grasslands of the Manas National Park by a team including Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury, Deputy Commissioner, Baksa District and Deputy Director of Manas National Park, Ritesh Bhattacharya. The bird was reportedly spotted in the Panbari Range of the park 75 years after its last confirmed sighting.

The bird was last seen in Assam nearly 99 years back, when some specimens were collected from the Mornai Tea Estate (now in Kokrajhar district) for the British Museum, American Museum of Natural History and Bombay Museum of Natural History between 1905 and 1907.

A pre-1932 sighting of Manipur Bush-Quail in the Imphal Valley by a British officer J C Higgins is believed to be the last of this species in the world.

The Manipur Bush-Quail is a 'restricted range' species as its global range is confined in two adjoining small areas, between north Bengal and northern bank of Brahmaputra and between the hills on the southern bank of Brahmaputra and Manipur. However, it was once speculated that the bird also occurred in neighbouring Bangladesh, although no sighting was recorded there.

Source: 'Rare bird sighted after 75 years in Assam', *Deccan Herald*, 25/06/06.

Contact: **Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhary**, Ho. Chief Executive C/o The Assam Company Ltd., G Bordoloi Path, Bamuni Maidan, Guwahati 781 021 Assam E-mail: badru1@sancharnet.in  
**Director, Manas NP**, see above

### **Guwahati Wildlife Division not fully operational yet**

The newly formed Guwahati Wildlife Division (GWD) has not been able to begin work fully as some of the areas allotted to it, like the Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary have not yet been transferred from the territorial division.

The GWD that was constituted in January, earlier this year, presently has Pobitora and Deepor Beel under its jurisdiction. The transfer of staff from the territorial division too has not been completed and the division, therefore, has not been able to prepare the managements plans. The division will be addressing issues of encroachment as also those of human-animal conflict.

Source: 'Wildlife unit in area, staff quandaries;' *The Statesman*, 27/06/06.

**Chief Wildlife Warden** – Assam, Rehabari, Guwahati – 781008, Assam. Tel: 0361-2566064. Fax 2547386

## **CHANDIGARH**

### **Functions banned at Sukhna Lake**

In a move aimed at providing a better habitat for migratory birds, the Chandigarh Administration has decided to ban holding functions and ceremonies at Sukhna Lake as it causes a lot of littering and sound pollution.

The Deputy Commissioner has been asked to meet concerned groups and decide an alternative site for these ceremonies and functions. The enforcement agencies have been asked to take strict action against those causing littering and sound pollution in an around the Lake.

Fixed and covered dust bins at the Lake would replace the swinging and open bins as they are damaged by dogs at night causing litter and nuisance to early morning walkers.

To further boost the roosting facilities for migratory birds and promote eco-tourism, more

water bodies will be developed in the reserve forests here and an aquatic park is also to be established.

It has also been decided that the Environment Department will conduct students tours to the Sukhna Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, Botanical Garden and other reserve forest areas for the purpose of imparting environmental education.

The Chandigarh Administration had constituted a committee under the chairmanship of the Finance Secretary-cum-Secretary, Environment and Forest, Mr S.K. Sandhu, to advise on the promotion of better habitat for migratory birds and to upgrade the overall ecology of the Sukhna Lake.

Source: 'Admn bans functions at Sukhna Lake', *The Tribune*, 01/07/06.

Contact: Chief Wildlife Warden, Chandigarh, Town Hall Building, Sector 17-B, Chandigarh. Fax: 0172-2705828

## **JAMMU & KASHMIR**

### **Fall in argali populations in Hemis NP, other areas**

A recent study in the Hemis National Park, the Gya-miru area and the Tsokar Basin in Ladakh has shown a sharp decline in the population of the argali, one of the prime prey species of the snow leopard.

The main reason for this decline is said to be growing livestock population in the region as also the guard dogs who accompany the domestic herds and are known to prey on young argalis.

The study was partly funded by the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI).

Source: 'Primary Snow leopard prey species under threat', *Warden Alert*, Vol IV, No. 1, April 2006

### **PIL for closure of cement plants around Dachigam**

A law student from Srinagar has filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeking the closure of 13 cement plants around the Dachigam National Park. It says that large amount of

emissions from the limestone mines and cement plants including silica, asbestos, sulphuric acid and nitrogen dioxide among others were seriously endangering the hangul and its habitat.

The petitioner has invoked Article 21 of Constitution and also said that the pollutants were over the maximum prescribed limits under the law. Disciplinary action and prosecution have also been sought against the erring officials who granted the No Objection Certificates for the plants.

The cement plants are located in the Khanmoh-Khrew-Ladhu area that is said to have been declared a State Conservation Reserve over 60 years ago. The area is also contiguous to Dachigam National and forms a corridor between Dachigam and the Aru Wildlife Sanctuary.

Source: 'PIL seeks closure of cement plants in wildlife reserve area',  
<http://www.greaterkashmir.com>, 19/07/06.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Dachigam NP, C/o.  
Chief Wildlife Warden, J&K State Tourist  
Reception Centre Srinagar – 190001. Tel:  
0194-2492627

## **KARNATAKA**

### **IFS officers to replace State wildlife officers**

The Karnataka government has decided to upgrade the non-cadre posts at six wildlife divisions, to cadre posts. Consequently, posts of deputy conservators of forests (DCFs) at wildlife divisions - Bhadra, Bandipur, Bannerghatta, Kanakapura, Shimoga and Kudremukh will henceforth be held by officers of the Indian Forest Service (IFS), instead of State Forest Service (SFS) officers, as at the present.

The final decision came after a long wait as the government was said to be sitting on the proposal for three years owing to 'intense pressure' from the State forest officers, who argued that they would lose the opportunity of serving in wildlife divisions. Those officers of the SFS who have been withdrawn from wildlife postings, may now be entrusted with the task of heading the Social Forestry divisions.

Source: 'IFS officers may replace State Wildlife officers', *Deccan Herald*, 24/05/06.

### **Modern weapons for forest, wildlife staff**

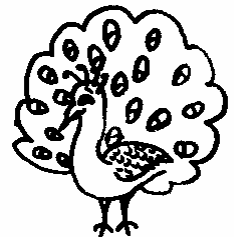
The Karnataka Government is reportedly importing 200 advanced fire arms from the United States for forest and wildlife staff. The decision was taken at a recent meeting chaired by the State Forest Minister. These 200 guns are in addition to the already imported 100 Slide Action Guns (SAGs), also from the US, for equipping the Forest Department in the wake of recent incidents of poaching and timber smuggling.

The government was impressed with the feedback that the guns were easy to operate. These had been distributed among the wildlife divisions and Naxal prone areas. The state government, reportedly had great difficulty getting the import licence for the guns from the Centre

Source: 'IFS officers may replace State Wildlife officers', *Deccan Herald*, 24/05/06.

### **Bankapura Peacock Conservation Reserve**

The State Government has declared an area of 139.10 acres at Bankapura village in Haveri district as the Bankapura Peacock Conservation Reserve. A press release from the Principal Chief



Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) said that the declaration had been made after consultation with local communities and concerned government departments

Source: 'Peacock sanctuary at Bankapura', *The Hindu*, 09/07/06.

### **Training on WLPA for police officers**

The Forest and Crime Investigation Department (CID) cell in Karnataka has proposed a seven-day training programme in the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA), for police personnel of rank of sub-inspectors and above. Proposed by KSN Chikeroor, Inspector-General of Police (Forest and CID Cell), the training is aimed at creating

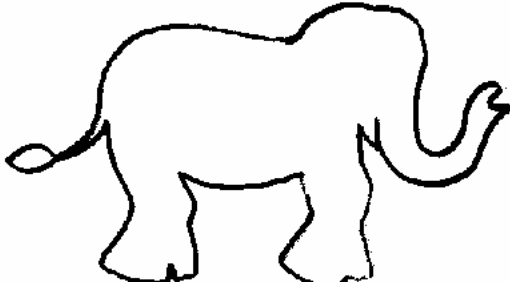
awareness among officers on the powers vested in them by the Act. Clearance from the IGP (Training) was being sought for the purpose.

While the initial training program would be organised at the Karnataka Police Academy, Mysore, it is to be subsequently held at the various range headquarters across the state

As part of the course, police personnel would be taught about the provisions of the Act, including aspects about investigation. They would also be made aware of various aspects of the illegal wildlife trade which is thriving in several parts of the state.

Source: Jaideep Shenoy, Special training on Wildlife Protection Act for police officers', *The Hindu*, 26/06/06.

## 20 wild elephants from Hassan to be translocated to Bhadra WLS



The office of the Deputy Conservation of Forests, Hassan Division has formulated a Rs. 79 lakh proposal to translocate 20 wild elephants from here to the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary. These elephants have caused widespread damage to crops in the region and nine people have been trampled to death in the last three years. The proposal is said to be the outcome of a high-level meeting conducted by Minister for Forests, Ecology and Environment, C Chennigappa on June 14 in Hassan.

Six short measures have also been proposed to deal with the problem. These include erecting a 60 km solar fencing and digging of a trench along the forest boundary to prevent elephants from entering into private lands; providing more vehicles, arms and walkie-talkies to the forest staff to act swiftly; construction of 43 check-dams and five nala bunds and removal of silt in various tanks in the forest to ensure drinking water for wild elephants; increase compensation to

relatives of those who die in elephant attacks and to those who are disabled permanently, and to farmers for crop loss. The Forest Department here has already paid a compensation of Rs. 57.6 lakh for both, deaths and crop damage, in the last three years.

An analysis of the problem indicates that the elephants were moving from the adjacent Kodagu and Mysore districts to Alur, Sakleshpur and Arkalgud taluks of Hassan district. Construction of dams across the Cauvery and the Hemavathi from 1974 to 1982 had resulted in submergence of elephant habitat in Kodagu and Mysore districts. Flowering of bamboo which is a staple food for elephants also led to its drying up in large areas. Droughts for three successive years had further compounded the problem. The clandestine manufacturing of illicit liquor in forest areas is said to be another reason attracting elephants here.

The department was likely to capture these 20 elephants in Kattapura and Doddabetta forest area with the help of experts after the monsoon.

Source: '20 wild elephants to be translocated', *The Hindu*, 29/06/06.

Contact: **Dy. Conservator of Forests**, Bhadra Wildlife Division (Bhadra Tiger Reserve), Chickmagalur – 577101, Karnataka. Tel: 08262-234904/230751. Fax: 08262-232799 / 235385 DCF (S&D)

**Chief Wildlife Warden - Karnataka**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 18<sup>th</sup> Cross, Malleshwaram, Bangalore – 560003, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3341993 / 3345846. Email: pccfwl@vsnl.com

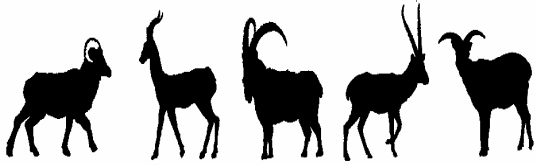
## KERALA

### International conference on mountain ungulates at Ervikulam NP

The Fourth World Conference on mountain ungulates is being held in September in the Ervikulam National Park. This is the first time the conference is being held in Asia and will be hosted by the High Range Wildlife and Environment Preservation Association.



It is expected to examine the recent developments in research and conservation of mountain ungulates worldwide and help focus attention on mountain grassland ecosystems like in Ervikulam.



The first world conference on mountain ungulates was held in Camerino, Italy, in 1989 followed by the second conference at St. Vincent, Italy, in 1997 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> in Saragossa, Spain, in 2002.

Source: K.S. Sudhi. 'Mountain ungulates meet in Munnar', *The Hindu*, 30/06/06.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Eravikulam NP, P.O. Munnar, Munnar, Kerala. Tel: 04865-230487

### **Various threats to the Vembanad-Kole Wetlands**

Studies conducted by the Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) and the Kerala State Council for Science Technology and Environment (KSCSTE) have reported serious threats to and degradation of the Vembanad -Kole Wetlands, a Ramsar Site.

Several hectares of the lake in Kochi region have been reclaimed for constructing residential apartments, roads and bridges. Areas where large scale human intervention was spotted included Palluruthy, Edakochi, Kumbalam, Nettoor, Panangad, Thevara, Konthuruthi, Pachalam, Vaduthala and Chittoor.

The State Environment Report prepared by the KSCSTE says that frequent incidents of mass mortality of fishes have become common in the Vembanad and Ashtamudi lakes. The presence of radioactive waste materials too has been reported from certain areas. The report also says that the fish resources of the backwaters and estuaries are depleting at an alarming rate. The annual fish landing from Vembanad backwaters was 16,000 tonnes during the late seventies. Now it has declined to merely 7,200 tonnes.

Fish varieties such as *thirutha*, *kanampu*, *poomeen*, *kalanchi*, *chempally*, *karachemmeen* and

*prachil*, once reported to be exceedingly common in the Kerala water bodies, have almost disappeared. Pearl Spot (*karimeen*), the signature fish of Kerala is also said to be declining in the Vembanad backwaters.

Source: G Krishnakumar. 'Wetlands in peril', *The Hindu*, 27/06/06.

Contact: **Dr. B Sreekumar**, President, Kottayam Nature Society, Srinilayam, Near Union Club, Kottayam - 686001, Kerala.  
Email: ktm\_bskumar@sancharnet.in

### **MADHYA PRADESH**

#### **Cash incentive for protection of Lesser Floricans in Sailana WLS**

A new and innovative scheme of cash incentives for the protection of the Lesser Florican is reported to be working very well in and around the grasslands of Sailana Wildlife Sanctuary in the Ratlam district.

The scheme involves rewarding farmers with incentives of up to Rs. 5000 for giving information about the bird and also protecting its eggs. A total of Rs. 89000 has been paid to 23 farmers in about a year as part of the scheme. Another Rs. 60000 was also spent in creating awareness about the scheme in villages in the area.

The creation of the sanctuary in 1983 to protect the bird had resulted in alienation of the people who owned the lands and there were reports of the birds being killed and of eggs being destroyed to avoid attracting the attention of the Forest Department. The FD says that from nine birds in 2004 the number of birds at Sailana has now gone up to 26.

A similar scheme in Sardarpur WLS in the Dhar district has however not worked as well, but the success in Sailana has prompted the FD to work now towards popularizing it here as well.

Source: Milind Ghatwai. 'Cash incentive scheme gives endangered bird fresh lease of life', *The Indian Express*, 27/06/06.

Contact: DFO, Ratlam. Tel: 07412-235179

## **National parks to be opened for night tourism**

The Madhya Pradesh State Government is considering a proposal to allow night tourism in nine national parks in the state. Presently the visiting hours for PAs in the state is from 6 am to 6 pm. A government circular to this effect is being issued shortly with respect to Kanha, Panna, Pench, Bandhavgarh and Satpura National Parks.

The facility of tents for night camping would be provided to tourists near the security check posts.

Source: 'National Parks to be opened at night hours also', <http://www.centralchronicle.com>, 26/07/06.

## **MP Govt. seeking nod for sand mining in Chambal WLS**

The Madhya Pradesh Government is making efforts to seek the Supreme Court's permission to allow for sand mining in part of the 435 km stretch of the Chambal Sanctuary that lies within the State. This was recently disclosed by the State Forest Minister in the assembly while discussing a Call Attention Motion in the matter.

The State Wildlife Board has recommended the exclusion from the sanctuary of an approximately 10 km portion near Piparai. The Government is hoping that earmarking specific area for sand mining will help avoid conflict between villagers and those engaged in wildlife protection. It was pointed out that all Government agencies were trying to check illegal sand mining, but said the problem was very old and intricate.

Since March 2004, 63 cases of illegal sand mining had been registered here and 56 trucks have also been seized.

Source: 'Govt to seek SC nod for sand mining in Chambal', *The Pioneer*, 21/07/06.

Contact: **DFO**, National Chambal WLS, Morena Division, Morena, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 07532-226742. Fax: 07532-227367/234188

## **American NGO might help in swamp deer conservation in Kanha NP**

The Madhya Pradesh Government is reported to be seeking financial assistance from an American NGO 'Safari Club International' for the protection

of *barasingha* (swamp deer) found in Kanha National Park. The information was provided in the State assembly recently by Forest Minister Himmat Kothari.

The minister also added that the NGO, which is registered in America under the US law, has already offered to provide a grant to the Chief Wildlife Warden of Madhya Pradesh this year for the purpose.

Source: 'Govt to seek American NGO's help to protect barasingha', *The Pioneer*, 19/07/06

Contact: **Director**, Kanha Tiger Reserve, Mandla, 481661 Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 07642-250760(O), 250761(R). Fax: 251266, 250830

**CWLW, MP**, Van Bhawan, Tulsi Nagar, Bhopal 462003, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 0755-2557371/ 2550391.

## **MANIPUR**

### **Field kits for staff of Keibul Lamjao NP**

Six deserving forest guards at the Keibul Lamjao National Park were recently given field kits containing a rucksack, raincoat, jacket, water bottle, ground sheet, sleeping bag, and a torch as an incentive for their dedication at work.

The idea had been mooted by Mr. Salam Rajesh, a member of the State Board for Wildlife and the support was provided by the Wildlife Trust of India as part of its Rapid Action Project. The kits were distributed by the Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and the Deputy Conservator of Forest (Parks and Sanctuaries).

Source: 'Manipur forest guards get field kits'. [http://wti.org.in/html/news/2006/060704\\_manipur.html](http://wti.org.in/html/news/2006/060704_manipur.html)

Contact: **DCF**, Keibul Lamjao NP, Sanjenthong, Imphal - 795 001

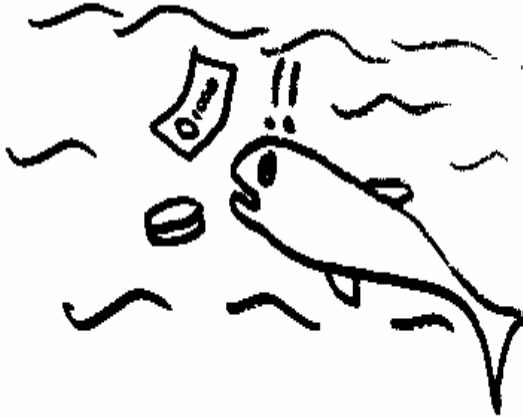
**Salam Rajesh**, Sagolband Salam, Leikai. PO: Imphal-1, Manipur. Tel: 0385-222395. Email:

salamrajesh@rediffmail.com;  
salraj\_imp@yahoo.com;  
salraj\_imp@yahoo.com

**Chief Wildlife Warden - Manipur,**  
Sanjenthong, Imphal - 795001, Manipur.  
Tel: 03852 - 220854 / 285385

## ORISSA

### Rs. 3.90 crore tourism plans for Chilika



An estimated Rs. 3.90 crores are being spent to develop Satpada and Chilika into attractive tourist destinations.

Special facilities with an outlay of Rs. 10 lakhs are being created at Satpada for dolphin watching. About Rs. 15 lakhs has been earmarked for buying air boats with a six passenger capacity, while Rs. 25 lakhs are to be spent for two air conditioned, house boats. An additional Rs. Six lakhs is to be spent for lighting up the Satpada Park. Similar projects are being undertaken at Nalabana too. Binoculars are being bought and Rs. 10 lakhs is to be spent for a watchtower here.

Similarly, six islands shall be developed by spending Rs.15 lakhs. Another Rs. 15 lakhs are to be used for the construction of six jetties, which are likely be of the floating type. Underwater cables are being laid from Barkul to Kalijai to provide electricity, lighting and development of picnic spots and

The Rambha Water Sports Complex, will be developed at a cost of about Rs. 20 lakhs. Other expenses to be incurred include the following: Rs. 25 lakhs - water ski boat; Rs.27 lakhs para-sailing boat; Rs. 20 lakhs - water surfing set; Rs.15 lakhs; Rs. 25 lakhs - water scooter; Rs. 33 lakhs - speed boats.

Source: 'Speaker reviews tourism issues at Satpada and Chilika', *The Samaj*, 22/06/06.

**Contact: DFO (WL),** Chilka, 1865/66 Nuasahi  
Nayapalli (near Sub PO),  
Bhubaneshwar – 751012. Orissa.  
Email: bravo\_123@satyam.net.in  
**AK Patnaik.** CDA, BJ-45, BJB  
Nagar, Bhubaneshwar, Orissa. Fax:  
0674 – 434485. Email:  
ajitpatnaik@hotmail.com Website:  
www.chilika.com

### VIP visits affecting conservation, protection work in Bhitarkanika

Forest staff of the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary is reported to have sought the intervention of the State Chief Wildlife Warden to deal with the increasing load of VIP visits to the park, particularly to the Dangmal Forest Rest House.

They have pointed out that these VIP visits divert the personnel from assigned official responsibilities as they have to offer hospitality to these high-profile guests. Important functions such as forest protection, routine official work, vigil for wildlife poaching, prawn dyke demolition, crocodile and turtle conservation and mangrove regeneration projects have therefore taken a back seat.

A forest officer said that the routine vigil and patrolling during this year's turtle nesting season had come to a grinding halt on countless occasions due to the rush-in of VIPs.

Since October last year more than two dozen VIPs have made their way to the Dangmal guesthouse, mostly to execute official file works. Many politicians, particularly from the ruling parties have also been visiting and putting an additional burden.

Source: 'VIPs on visit, animals on run', *The Statesman*, 04/07/06.

**Contact: DFO,** Bhitarkanika NP, At/PO  
Rajnagar, Dist. Kendrapada – 745225.  
Orissa. Tel: 06729-72460/64. Fax:  
06727-20775  
**CWLW– Orissa,** Plot No. 8, Shahid  
Nagar, Bhubaneshwar – 751007,  
Orissa. Tel: 0674- 2512502 / 2513134 /  
2515840. Fax: 512502

## RAJASTHAN

### Visitor interpretation center at Keoladeo NP

The Governor of Rajasthan, Smt. Pratibha Patil recently inaugurated the Salim Ali Visitor Interpretation Centre at the Keoladeo National Park (KNP). The Government of Rajasthan, WWF – India and the corporate house Swarovski have collaborated in the conceptualization and implementation of the project.

The centre has four exhibition halls and an auditorium. (Also see *PA Updates* 50, 43 & 39).

Source: S Vidya. 'HE Governor of Rajasthan inaugurates first-of-its-kind 'Salim Ali Visitor Interpretation Centre' at Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, *Panda*, Issue I, 2006

Contact: **Director, Keoladeo Ghana NP**, Forest Department, Bharatpur- 321 001 Rajasthan. Tel: 05644-22777(O), 22824(R). Fax: 05644-22864

### Sariska not fit for tigers

A study conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India for the Ministry of Environment and Forests has said that Sariska is presently not fit for the introduction of tigers. It had been suggested earlier that Sariska could be re-stocked with tigers from some other part of the country

The study has reported that Sariska lost almost 11 square km of forest cover in the last few years. (Also see *PA Updates* 57 & 55)

Source: 'Sariska not fit for tigers', *The Telegraph*, 28/06/06.

### Shifting of Sariska villages

The process of moving out two of the 11 villages inside the Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary is reported to start soon. These are the villages of Kankawadi and Bhagani, which according to a 2003 survey have 120 and 20 families respectively. The proposal is to move out the settlers, who survive on diary farming and cattle rearing, to areas in the nearby Thana Gazi tehsil, in Alwar district itself.

The Forest Department (FD) has reported that the villagers had agreed to move out. Logistics

were being worked out and help had been sought from the district administration and local NGOs.

Authorities have sanctioned Rs.70 lakhs for this relocation process and the FD is hopeful that the Sariska could be made a national park once the entire relocation, or a substantial part of it is completed.

The two villages to be included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of relocation are Umri and Kraska. (Also see *PA Updates* 57, 56 & 50)

Source: Sunny Sebastian. 'Shifting of villages from Sariska sanctuary begins', *The Hindu*, 07/06/06.

Contact: **Director**, Sariska Tiger Reserve, Sariska, Alwar – 301022, Rajasthan. Tel: Tel: 0144-241333 (O)

## SIKKIM

### Nathula opening could boost wildlife trade

Conservationists and those dealing with issues of wildlife trade have expressed concern that the opening of the Nathu La trade route between Sikkim and China could boost this trade as it was once an important entry point to Tibet for the same.

The concerns were expressed during a Wildlife Enforcement Sensitisation Workshop that was organized jointly by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and attended by representatives from the Police, Army, the Indo Tibetan Border Police and the State Forest Department.

Those speaking at the workshop include Mr. Ashok Kumar of the WTI, Mr. Dipankar Ghose of the WWF and Brigadier, Deputy GOC, 17<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division who explained how the army was engaged in wildlife protection.

The speakers emphasized the need for strict enforcement measures at the border post as also trained, sensitised enforcement personnel with the right equipment.

Source: 'Shot in the arm for smugglers', *The Statesman*, 24/06/06.

Contact: Wildlife Trust of India, A-220, New Friends Colony, New Delhi. – 110065. Ph. 011-26326025/6

**Chief Wildlife Warden**, Government of Sikkim, Forest Secretariat, Deorali, Gangtok, - 737102, Sikkim. Tel: 03592-222330 / 222978(O) / 222578(R). Fax 03592-222978 / 226368

## TAMIL NADU

### Protection measures strengthened for Gulf of Mannar NP

The Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park (GMMNP) authorities are reported to have strengthened measures for the protection of the area with the financial support of the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve Trust

As a part of this all the 21 islands that comprise the national park will now have watchers round the clock. Of the total of 31 such watchers, 14 will take care of areas under the Tuticorin Range. The Kilakarai and Mandapam ranges will have eight and nine watchers respectively.

A campaign to raise awareness about the park and the marine system was also being started.

Source: C Jaishankar. 'Fight against poaching to save marine species', *The Hindu*, 15/07/06

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Gulf of Mannar NP, Collectorate Compound, Ramanathapuram – 623503, Tamil Nadu.

### Major tourism plans, including for PAs

The Tamil Nadu Government is in the process of drawing up elaborate plans for development of tourism in the state, including in protected areas. As part of the master plan being developed efforts are underway to identify and develop tourist destinations and circuits in a systematic manner. Steps were being initiated to improve infrastructure facilities at Thanjavur, Madurai, and Kanyakumari to match international standards.

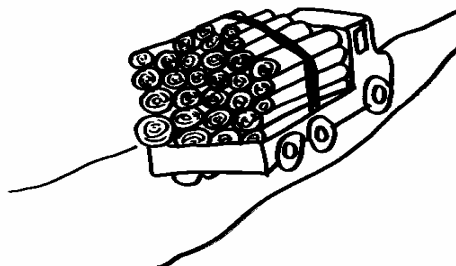
Areas that will see major thrust include Heritage tourism and Health tourism.

As far as nature based tourism is concerned, a Rs. One Crore project is on the anvil to promote Pichavaram as a major eco-tourism center and steps are also being taken to promote

Mundunthurai and Kalakkad (in Tirunelveli) as major eco-tourism destinations.

Source: 'Plans for promotion of eco-tourism', *The Hindu*, 09/07/06.

### Illegal transport of timber from Indira Gandhi WLS



The Forest department has ordered an inquiry into an alleged scam in issuing permits for transporting timber from Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary. The Ranger of the Forest Timber Depot, Pollachi, is suspected to have issued 200-250 unauthorised permits to timber merchants/saw mills since 2004 despite lacking 'territorial jurisdiction.' Thousands of sq. ft. of illicit and unaccounted timber valued at between Rs 30 and 40 lakh was legalised because of such permits. The Ranger is under suspension pending inquiry for various other charges too.

The Ranger is said to have flouted orders of circle-level officers but the Principal Chief Conservator's (PCCF) office came to his rescue. Correspondence relating to the issue reveals that the PCCF's office cancelled, within three days, the transfer of the Ranger ordered by the Conservator of Forests, Coimbatore Circle, in March. The Conservator's explanation that the transfer order was well in accordance with rules and failure to implement it would lead to manipulation of evidences was overruled.

It has also been found out that the Pollachi Wildlife authorities did not lodge an FIR and failed to execute the arrest warrant against some sandalwood smugglers. Subsequently, the smugglers were arrested by the Kerala Forest Department. Even the non-bailable warrants (NBWs) against them were kept pending and no enquiry was made to find discrepancy in the quantity of sandalwood seized.

Source: G Satyamurty. 'Probe ordered into Forest department scam', *The Hindu*, 28/06/06.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Indira Gandhi WLS, 178, Fisheries Dept. Road, Govt. Timber Depot, Pollachi 642 001, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 04259 - 225356

## UTTAR PRADESH

### MLA's reign of terror in Kishanpur WLS

An MLA from the ruling Samajwadi Party, Arvind Giri, and his henchmen are reported to have terrorized the forest staff of the Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary. It is alleged that they had muscled their way into the forest guest house here in early April and used it for two nights as a hide-out to hold hostages held during the sugarcane cooperative society elections. They were also said to have indulged in drunken revellery here.

The Forest Department (FD) staff subsequently booked Giri under Sections 27, 51, 52 (disturbance of wildlife habitat) of Wild Life Protection Act. On April 28, Giri allegedly came to Kataiya forest range with his cronies and threatened the staff with dire consequences if they didn't withdraw their report.

Later, on May 15, wildlife authorities nabbed poachers in Jhadital – which is prime swamp deer habitat

The MLA's men, this time headed by the gram pradhan of Pipariya, gheraoed the residence of the Deputy Director and forcibly released the men. They also beat up Forest Ranger and Deputy Forest Ranger. Later the police also slapped a case against the forest staff under the SC/ST Act. Subsequently, on May 20, local villagers were instigated against the forest guards who were held hostage till the police force reached the spot to seek their release.

Two forest guards also sustained head injury in the melee. The Federation of Forest Association, Dudhwa has said the MLA and his men have been terrorising the field staff of the tiger reserve and trying to trespass and damage the swamp deer habitat of Jhaditaal. They have demanded that the investigation be handed over to an impartial investigating agency.

The Kheri Police finally agreed to lodge an FIR against the MLA only on May 25, after the Dudhwa field staff association served an ultimatum.

Source: Manjari Mishra. 'SP MLA's reign of terror', *The Times of India*, 28/05/06.

Contact: **Director**, Dudhwa National Park, Dist. Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 05872-252106. Fax: 05872-252106

## WEST BENGAL

### Tussle over revenue from Raiganj Wildlife Sanctuary

A conflict has broken out over the issue of revenue collection from the Raiganj (Kulik) Bird Sanctuary and the recently constructed Raiganj Kulik Park between the Bahin Gram Panchayat (BGP) and the North Dinajpur Zilla Parishad (NDZP) authorities.

While the BGP authorities say that they have right over the revenue since the sanctuary is located in the gram panchayat area, the NDZP authorities have said they should be getting the revenue since the park was constructed by the funds collected from different heads of the district.

The district administration is reported to have Rs 35 lakh for the construction of the park. The money came from various sources including the Border Area Development Project, MP Local Area Development Fund, Uttar Banga Unnayan Parishad, Rastriya Samavikash Yojana, National Food For Work and MLA Local Area Development Fund.

The park near the bird sanctuary is to be shortly inaugurated and officials were hopeful that the dispute over revenue collection would be sorted out by then.

Source: 'Tussle for Kulik revenue', *The Statesman*, 20/06/06.

Contact: **DFO (Raiganj WLS)**, Raiganj Social Forestry Division, P.O. Karnajora, Dist. North Dinajpur, West Bengal. Tel: 03523 - 252647(O), 253139(R). Fax: 03523-252647

### Confusion about jurisdiction over East Kolkata wetlands

Confusion has arisen over which agency has legal jurisdiction over the 12,500 hectare Ramsar Site of the East Kolkata Wetlands. The State Pollution Control Board (PCB) has

so far been the custodian of the wetlands, but now there is confusion with the setting up of the East Calcutta Wetlands Authority, that is yet to become functional.

While the Environment Minister of the state has said that complaints related to the wetlands can be lodged in either of the two, PCB members have said that some of their orders are under judicial scrutiny and their authority in the matter is being questioned and debated.

NGOs, on the other hand, have pointed out there is no clarity about the institution that will deal with matters related to the wetlands. The lack of clarity is being exploited by alleged violators who had been ordered earlier by the High Court to shift out their stone cutting and motor – garage units from the wetlands. They have been arguing that the PCB has no say now in the matters here.

Source: Jayanta Basu. 'Wetlands or no-man's land', *The Telegraph*, 06/07/06.

Contact: **WWF- I**, West Bengal State Office, 5th Floor, Tata Centre, 43, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Calcutta 700071, West Bengal. Tel: 033 – 2889530. Fax: 2883761

### **Questions about expensive anti-poaching camps in Buxa**

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), West Bengal has raised questions about the money spent on setting up of the four anti-poaching camps in Buxa Tiger Reserve (BTR) – West. This follows the PCCF's visit to the area in May in response to complaints lodged by a section of the forest employees.

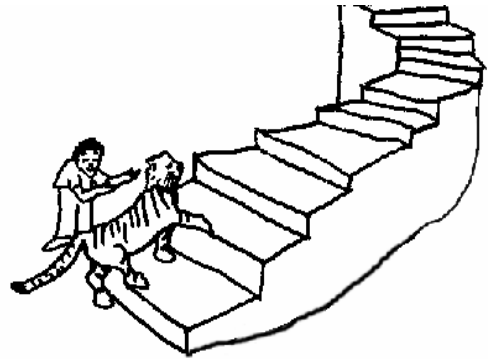
In a letter to the Director of the park, the PCCF has pointed out that more than Rs. Five lakhs were spent on each of these camps whereas similar work had been done in Jaldapara for only Rs. 25,000. The letter also took objection of the action of the Divisional Field Director (West), to distribute ration among the on-duty staff, which is said to be illegal.

Questions were also asked about unnecessary spending on the construction of the Hatipota Rest House as well as the lack of transparency in the digging of a pond in Nimati West beat, where the beat officer concerned was unaware of the project.

Source: Shankar Mukherjee. 'Forest funds wasted', *The Telegraph*, 05/07/06.

Contact: **Field Director**, Buxa Tiger Reserve, P.O. Alipurduar, Dist. Jalpaiguri - 736 122. West Bengal. Tel: 03564-256333 /255979. Fax: 03564-255577

### **Steps to prevent tiger human conflict in Sunderbans**



The Forest Department has proposed a number of steps to reduce human – tiger conflicts in the Sunderbans, particularly to keep tigers out of human habitations.

A 63-kilometre nylon net fencing has been put up to separate villages from the forest areas. Villages deemed prone to tiger attacks have been secured with a double net fencing. Four new squads with six specially-trained men have also been created to rescue tigers that enter villages. Last year there was only one such team. The teams have been given boats and equipment to carry out rescue operations. Additionally people have been barred from entering the core area of the tiger reserve for fishing and collecting honey.

The Sunderbans' Project Tiger authorities have said that 15 tigers were spotted in the villages in the past five years, especially during low tide. For the first time in the history of the Sunderbans, no tiger was killed last year.

Source: Rajib Chatterjee. 'Nets as a shield against tigers in Sunderbans', *The Statesman*, 06/07/06.

Contact: **Director**, Sunderbans Biosphere Reserve, Bikash Bhavan, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, North Block, Salt Lake City, Kolkata - 700091, West Bengal. Tel: 033-3211750. Fax: 3211529

## **Controversy over Tiger numbers in Sunderbans**

Data analysis of the 2004 tiger census in the Sunderbans by the Kolkata-based Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) using newly developed software has put the number of tigers here at just 75, way below the official number of 249.

The ISI report is yet to be made public, but it has already initiated a major controversy. The ISI had been assigned by the West Bengal government to develop software to process field data on tiger pugmarks. Analysing 1044 pugmarks collected in the 2004 tiger census, the ISI software rejected 314 as overlaps or duplicates. Some of the duplicate pugmarks were reportedly found hundreds of kilometers apart.

The Forest Department has claimed that there are serious problems with the software, which in any case, is still in its development stage. FD officials have said that this was only a test run of the software and they were not even fully aware of the data that had been used.

Source: Sourav Sanyal. "Controversy over tiger population in Sunderbans" *NDTV*, 19/07/06.

**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](mailto:wildlife@cal.vsnl.net.in)

### **NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA**

## **National Survey of wild red jungle fowl**

The Wildlife Institute of India with the support of the Wildlife Trust of India and the Delhi University will be shortly undertaking the first national survey to identify the exact number of pure Red Jungle Fowl (RJF) for the purpose of launching a management and conservation plan for the birds.

The survey that will cost Rs. 15 lakhs will take two years. Over 15 birds from each state will be captured, their hair, blood and tissue samples taken and then matched to the genetic make-up of their ancestors in order to identify whether they

are pure wild RJFs or the mixed variety. Permissions for the survey and related work have already been received from most states. The work will be first initiated in Himachal Pradesh, the North-East, Bihar, West Bengal, and Jharkhand.

The other collaborating institution is the Central Avian Research Institute.

The decision to undertake the survey was taken at the recently concluded National Board for Wildlife meeting held under the chairmanship of PM Manmohan Singh.

Source: Kounteya Sinha. 'Govt. finally wakes up to save red jungle fowl', *The Times of India*, 28/06/06.

Contact: **Wildlife Institute of India**, PO Box 18, Chandrabani, Dehradun – 248001, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-2640111 – 15. Fax: 2640117.

## **Cabinet approves Wildlife Crime Bureau**

The Union Cabinet recently gave its approval for making further Amendments in the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2005 pending in the Rajya Sabha.

A press release issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has said that the enactment of the Bill with amendments would facilitate implementation of the urgent recommendations of the Tiger Task Force appointed by the Prime Minister and which had been accepted for implementation.

It is hoped the changes would strengthen conservation of tigers and other endangered species of wild animals through effective combating of wild life crimes by constituting the Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau.

Source: 'Amendments in the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2005', Press Release, MoEF, 20/07/06.

## **Diclofenac to be phased out**

The Central Government has finally taken a decision to phase out the veterinary drug Diclofenac that is considered to be the primary



cause of large scale vulture mortality in the past few years.

The Drug Controller of India is reported to have written to all states to stop the veterinary use of the drug. The letter was sent in May after the approval of the Central Health Ministry and states have been given three months for the phasing out.

Licenses granted to manufacture Diclofenac formulations for veterinary use are to be withdrawn and the use of a safer drug Meloxicam has been suggested. The Department



of Animal Husbandary and Dairying and the Ministry of Agriculture too have already issued directives to state veterinary departments not to purchase Diclofenac.

Source: Jay Mazoomdar. 'Govt. to phase out diclofenac, sets deadline', *The Indian Express*, 23/05/06.

Contact: **Dr. Asad Rahmani**, Director BNHS, Hornbill House, Shahid Bhagat Singh Marg, Mumbai 400 023 Maharashtra. Tel: 022-2821811. Fax: 2837615. Email: bnhs@bom3.vsnl.net.in

### Six new Ramsar sites

India has designated six new wetlands to the Ramsar Convention list of wetlands of international importance.

These include the Hokera Wetland and Surinsar-Mansur Lakes in Jammu & Kashmir, Chandertal and Renuka Lake in Himachal Pradesh, the Rudrasagar Lake in Tripura and the Upper Ganga River in Uttar Pradesh.

This brings the total number of Ramsar sites in India to 25.

Source: 'India highlights New Ramsar sites on World Wetlands day', *Panda*, Issue I, 2006

### 11 tiger reserves show loss in forest cover

A recent report of the Forest Survey of India (FSI) based on imageries from IRS-1C and IRS-1D satellites has indicated that five of India's 28 tiger reserves have lost significant forest cover (seven to 45 sq. kms) in the last few years. These are Nameri TR (decrease of 45 sq. kms) and Manas TR (11 sq. kms decrease) TRs in Assam, Dampa (decrease of seven sq. kms.) in Mizoram, Buxa (22 sq. kms decrease) in West Bengal, and Indravati (11 sq. kms) in Chhattisgarh. The report noted that forest cover also decreased by upto four sq. kms each in six other tiger reserves during the five-year period between 1997 and 2002. These are Bandipur-Nagarhole, Dudhwa-Katarniaghat, Kanha, Pakhui, Palamu and the Sunderbans TRs.

The report that was released by the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in the last week of June at the meeting of the National Board for Wildlife. had been commissioned by the Project Tiger directorate after the tigers in Sariska were wiped out. The report says that the reserves are under threat from human habitations within and outside the reserve, encroachment and cattle grazing. It also shows that the loss of forest in the 10 kilometres radial distance from the periphery of the reserve was quite significant.

Buxa tiger Reserve has shown more decrease in forest cover during 2000-2002 mainly due to flooding of the river flowing through it. Decrease in forest cover in Nameri, Manas, and Indravati Tiger Reserves has been attributed to illicit felling and encroachment, while the main cause was shifting cultivation in Dampa and Pakhui Tiger Reserves.

In the case of the Dudhwa-Katarniaghat TR, the report says that the meandering course of River Mohana appears to be the major cause of decrease in forest cover, while the ebb erosion in Mayadweep island is likely reason for the decrease in Sunderbans Tiger Reserve.

Those ducking the trend of shrinking forest cover include Bandhavgarh, Corbett, Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam, Namdapha and Valmiki Tiger Reserves where the forest area has increased by up to 7 sq kms.

Source: Yoga Rangatia, 'Sanctuaries shrinking, poised to die after tribal Bill', *The Pioneer*, 28/06/06.

'Tiger reserves fast losing forest cover', *Deccan Herald*, June 29.06/06.

Aarti Dhar. '11 tiger reserves have lost forest cover', *The Hindu*, 11/07/06.

Contact: **Dr. Rajesh Gopal**, Director, Project Tiger Annexe No.5, Bikaner House, Shah Jahan Road, New Delhi 110 001.  
Email: [dirpt-r@hub.nic.in](mailto:dirpt-r@hub.nic.in)

### Call for papers – 'Invertebrate diversity and conservation of the Western Ghats



The Centre for Insect Taxonomy and Conservation (CITAC), Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bangalore, along with the Western Ghats Invertebrate Research and Conservation Group- a network of invertebrate researchers of the region – is bringing out an edited volume "**Invertebrate diversity and conservation of the Western Ghats**", that proposes to provide an overview of on going studies on the diversity, ecology, evolution, behaviour and conservation of invertebrates of the Western Ghats.

The editors have invited manuscripts covering the following broad thematic areas: Status review of taxa; Ecological studies; Behavioural ecology; Invertebrates and Ecosystem function; Invertebrate conservation; and Invertebrates in conservation education.

Contact: **Priyadarshan Dharma Rajan**, (ATREE).  
No. 659, 5th A main, Hebbal, Bangalore – 560024. Tel: 080- 23530069 /23533942 /23638771. Fax: 080-23530070. Email: [priyan@atree.org](mailto:priyan@atree.org).  
Web: [http://www.atree.org/idc\\_wg.html](http://www.atree.org/idc_wg.html)

## SOUTH ASIA

### NEPAL

#### Alarming decline in rhino and tiger populations in Bardia

An assessment jointly conducted in May 2006 by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), IUCN and staff of the Royal Bardia National Park (RBNP) has revealed a significant fall in tiger and rhino populations in this area that has been under the control of the Maoists. The area became accessible for surveying only after the recent ceasefire here.

Since 1986, 70 rhinos have been translocated to the RBNP, but only three were found in the Babai Valley during the survey. Similarly, of the thirteen tigers reported from the area between 1998-2001, the survey team found evidence of only three. The main cause of this decline is said to be the poachers who took advantage of the absence of anti-poaching patrols here.

While on the survey, the team also apprehended two poachers armed with locally made muzzle guns. Four weapons and a large cache of ammunition were seized along with more than 660 pounds of smoked *sambar*, spotted deer, barking deer, and four-horned antelope. Almost all the guard posts inside the Babai valley were also found to be destroyed.

The Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and the Nepal Army have now agreed to conduct regular anti-poaching patrols in the park. New anti-poaching posts are also to be soon established inside the park.

Source: 'Alarming decline in Nepals rhinos and tigers in former Maoist stronghold'  
WWF release dated 02/06/06.

### PAKISTAN

#### Large area of Hingol NP for defence

The Pakistan government is said to have agreed to hand over a significant area of the

Hingol National Park, the largest in the country, to the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and another defence-related organization. The area is near the Gwadar Port and the land prices here are expected to go up substantially once the port becomes operational.

Notified in 1997, The Hingol NP has a total area of over 600,000 hectares (over 1.5 million acres). It includes areas of the Hingol estuary and offshore, to a depth of five fathoms (30 feet). Its land falls in the Lasbela, Gwadar and Awaran districts. The park is said to support a rich diversity of marine, estuarine and terrestrial fauna, such as the marsh crocodile, green turtle, *mahseer*, the houbara bustard, Dalmatian pelican, Spot-billed pelican, Plumbeous dolphin, Sindh ibex, urial, chinkara, pangolin and the leopard.

The PAF is reported to have asked for a total of 80,000 acres, 23,000 acres of which are inside the national park. The Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission has asked for eight mauzas. A mauza is a local unit for measuring an area of land with no fixed acreage.

The Provincial Wildlife Department here is merely a custodian of the land of the Hingol National Park. The land belongs to the Revenue Department which had declared the area a national park through a notification under the Balochistan Wildlife Protection Act 1974. Presently the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is said to be providing considerable financial support to the national park through the World Bank.

Experts have warned that this allotment from the national park would set a bad precedence. They are also saying that the PAF is asking for this land because it had managed to successfully acquire land from the Maslakh Wildlife Sanctuary in the Pishin district as well.

Source: Bahzad Alam Khan. 'PAF swoops on Hingol National Park', *Dawn*, 28/07/06.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### Southeast Asia plans wildlife crime-busting units

Special wildlife crime-busting units are to form the core of Southeast Asia's first coordinated effort against the multi-billion-dollar illegal trade in

animals and plants. Plans for the task forces were agreed upon during a two-day meeting in Bangkok of police, customs and wildlife officials from the 10-nation Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The task forces are part of the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network, launched in December, which aims to target traffickers and criminal syndicates in a region that accounts for a quarter of the global illegal wildlife trade. Thailand, a major transit point for everything from rhino horns and tiger skins to rare snakes, and the Philippines have already set up these task forces. Representatives from China where demand from restaurants, medicine shops and private collectors has surged along with the nation's wealth, attended the meeting as observers and pledged to cooperate with the network.

Southeast Asia is rich in valuable plants and animals, and traffickers using complex routes through Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand can earn huge profits. Tiger skins fetch \$15,000, while ramin, a rare timber used for snooker cues, can command up to \$1,200 per cubic metre. Some traffickers are linked to organised crime, while others used the internet to sell their wares.

Source: Darren Schuettler. 'Southeast Asia plans wildlife crime busting units', <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/BKK265128.htm>, 25/05/06.

## UPCOMING

### Butterfly India meeting in August

The "ButterflyIndia Meet 2006" is being organized at Jairaampur in the Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh from August 21-25<sup>th</sup>. For more details contact

**Arif Siddiqui**, Nacho Valley Society for Eco-tourism and Wildlife Conservation. Email:

[arif\\_arunachal@yahoo.com](mailto:arif_arunachal@yahoo.com)

**Vijay Barve**. Email:

[vijay.barve@gmail.com](mailto:vijay.barve@gmail.com) Web:

<http://butterflyindia.blogspot.com/> and <http://www.amazingarunachal.com/>.

## International Conference on the River Ganga

An international conference – ‘The Majestic River Ganga - Health, Integrity & Management is to be held from November 13 to 15, 2006 at the Patna University. It is being organized by Canada based Aquatic Ecosystem Health & Management Society and hosted by the Environmental Biology Laboratory Department of Zoology, Patna University.

The main objectives of the symposium are:

1. to review and compare the state of "health" of the river and its wetlands,
2. to evaluate the impacts of anthropogenic stress on biodiversity and human health,
3. to review the status of conservation and management of food web dynamics and fisheries of the river
4. to evaluate the technology for the sound assessment and monitoring of the river's ecosystem health,
5. to discuss the need for participation of stakeholders, public awareness, and environmental education of children and youth,
6. to compare the ecosystem health and fisheries of tropical rivers with a special emphasis on River Ganga.

The Conference Themes including the following: Ecosystem health and management of River Ganga and its tributaries (Upper, Middle and Lower reaches); Origin of Ganga - a geological and religious perspective; Historical Perspective of the Gangetic aquatic resources; Expansion of the Gangetic watershed; Anthropogenic impact and toxicology in the Gangetic ecosystem; Biodiversity in River Ganga; Management, and Remediation and Restoration of River Ganga.

Contact: Prof. R. K. Sinha, Zoology Department, Patna University, Patna 800 005.

**J. Lorimer.** Fax: +1 905-634-3516. Email: [lorimerj@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:lorimerj@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**D. K. Kedia** (Patna University). Fax: +91 612 2688801. Email: [dilip.kedia@rediffmail.com](mailto:dilip.kedia@rediffmail.com),

## WHAT'S AVAILABLE

- **Sawarkar, VB** (2005). *A Guide for Planning Wildlife Management in Protected Areas and Managed Landscapes*. Wildlife Institute of India & Natraj Publishers, Dehradun. Rs. 300

Written for planners, wildlife managers, trainers, educationists and lay people interested in wildlife, the guide attempts to fulfil the various needs of PA management by providing the essential planning framework, procedures and processes. It is based on integration of modern scientific precepts and practise with social, cultural, economic and administrative realities.

Contact: **VB Sawarkar**, 464, Rasta Peth, Pune 411011, Maharashtra. Email: [woodow464@yahoo.co.in](mailto:woodow464@yahoo.co.in)

- **Alfred, JRB., AK Das and AK Sanyal** (2006). *Animals of India – Mammals*. Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata. Rs. 1250.

This publication is the first of a series on Animals of India being brought out by the ENVIS Centre of the Zoological Survey of India.

Contact: **Dr. JRB Alfred**, Director, ZSI, M Block, New Alipore, Kolkata – 700053.

- **Alfred JRB, Ramakrishna and MS Pradhan** (2006). *Validation of Threatened Animals of India*, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata. Rs. 2000

The publication is an attempt to revise the Red Data Book produced earlier by the ZSI in 2003 as per IUCN's 2003 guidelines

Contact: **Dr. JRB Alfred**, ZSI, See above.

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Oppurtunities with Samrakshan in Meghalaya and Madhya Pradesh

Samrakshan Trust is seeking applications for a number of positions at their project sites in the Garo Hills in Meghalaya and the Sheopur district in Madhya Pradesh.

The Garo Hills site needs an Agricultural Officer, a Non Farm Livelihoods Officer and a Community Mobiliser. The MP site needs a Program Officer for Soil and Water Conservation and a Office Manager cum Accountant.

Contact: **Nimesh Ved**, Samrakshan Trust –  
Meghalaya Field Office, Bolsalgre, PO  
Baghmara, Dist – South Garo Hills,  
Meghalaya – 794102. Tel.: 03639 222187;  
Mobile: 99540 54013. Email:  
[nimesh@samrakshan.org](mailto:nimesh@samrakshan.org)

**Syed Merajuddin**, Samrakshan Trust –  
MP Field Office, Village Agraa, Tehsil,  
Vijaypur, District Sheopur, Madhya  
Pradesh – 476332. Tel.: 07528-280040;  
Mobile: 94254 57557. Email:  
[meraj@samrakshan.org](mailto:meraj@samrakshan.org)  
Web: [www.samrakshan.org](http://www.samrakshan.org)

### Program Manager in Sikkim for TMI – India

The Mountain Institute (TMI) - India is seeking to recruit a Program Manager for its office in Gangtok, Sikkim.

Area of Expertise expected is ‘Conservation and Livelihoods in Mountains’ and the applicant also needs to know the English and Nepali languages.

Duties and responsibilities will include managing TMI-India’s conservation and livelihoods program in Sikkim and other states and provide over all program direction to staff and partners; extensive field visits to far flung, remote

villages and high mountains for program planning, monitoring and evaluation; preparing need based proposals and liaisoning with donors, non government organization partners and relevant Government Departments for program development, implementation and fund raising.

Qualifications needed include a graduate degree in the natural or social sciences with preferably a master's level specialization, a minimum seven years of varied and in-depth experience of working in mountains with mountain people and good physical fitness to trek to remote villages and high mountains.

Contact: **TMI**. Tel: 09733173094.  
Email: [applications@tmi-india.org](mailto:applications@tmi-india.org)

### Oppurtunities at the Wildlife Trust of India

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) has a number of vacancies to work in areas related to wildlife conservation and protection:

- 1) Surveyor, Wild Rescue Program
- 2) Manager – North / North East India, Wild Rescue Program
- 3) Program Officers for programs on Awareness for Conservation; Communities for Conservation; Guardians of the Wild; Planning; Wild Aid; Wild Lands; Wild Rescue
- 4) Asst. Field Officer, Wild Rescue Program

Interested candidates may apply by giving full details regarding remuneration received in the present and previous assignments, expected salary and three references to

Human Resources Division, WTI, A-220, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110065. E-mail: [jobs@wti.org.in](mailto:jobs@wti.org.in)

Web: <http://wti.org.in/html/news/jobs.htm#sur>.

**TABLES**  
**Population Census of Important Wild Animals**  
Presented in Parliament on August 8, 2005

No	State	Tiger		Leopard		Lion			Elephant		Rhino	
		1997	2001-02	1997	2001-02	1995	2001	2005	1997	2002	1993	1998/99
1	Andhra Pradesh	171	192	138	505				57	74		
2	Arunachal Pradesh	*	**61	98	NR				1800	1607		
3	Assam	458	354	246	248				5312	5246	1440	1684
4	Bihar / Jharkhand	103	110	203	164				618	772		
5	Goa/Daman Diu	6	5	25	41							
6	Gujarat	1	0	832	999	304	327	@359				
7	Haryana			25	NR							
8	Himachal Pradesh			821	NR							
9	Jammu & Kashmir			NR	7							
10	Karnataka	350	401	620	NR				6088	5838		
11	Kerala	73	71	16	NR				3600	3850		
12	MP/ Chattisgarh	927	937	1851	2206							
13	Maharashtra	257	238	431	513							
14	Manipur			NR	NR				30	12		
15	Meghalaya	*	47	NR	NR				1840	1868		
16	Mizoram	12	28	28	NR				22	23		
17	Nagaland	*	23>	NR	42				158	145		
18	Orissa	194	173	422	457				1800	1841		
19	Rajasthan	58	58	474	481							
20	Sikkim	*	NR	NR	NR							
21	Tamil Nadu	62	60	110	41				2971	3052		
22	Tripura	*	NR	18	NR				70	40		
23	UP/ Uttaranchal	475	535	1412	2168				1200	1667	12	13
24	W Bengal	361	349	108	331				276	328	44	120
25	Dadara/Nagar Haveli			15	NR							
26	A&N Islands				NR				35	40		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3508</b>	<b>3642</b>	<b>7893</b>	<b>8203</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>@359</b>				

NR – Not Reported; \* Tiger Census was not carried out; \*\*Only for Namdapha TR; > Entire state not covered

**State Wise Encroachment on Forest Lands and their eviction since May 2002  
(As on 31/03/04)**

Presented in Parliament on August 8, 2005

All figures in hectares (rounded up to closest round figure)

No	State	Encroachment of forest lands till May 2002	Encroachment evicted from forest lands since May 2002	Existing encroachment of forest land as on 31/03/2004
1	Andhra Pradesh	295383	0	295383
2	Assam	371450	71740	299710
3	Arunachal Pradesh	4038	150	3888
4	A&N Islands	4637	2580	2057
5	Bihar	854	602	252
6	Chandigarh	0	0	0
7	Chattisgarh	150495	0	150495
8	Delhi	0	0	0
9	Daman & Diu	88	0	88
10	Dadra / Nagar Haveli	614	0	614
11	Gujarat	36556	14416	22140
12	Goa	1012	0	1012
13	Haryana	2148	874	1274
14	Himachal Pradesh	2926	84	2842
15	Jammu & Kashmir	11090	1806	9284
16	Jharkhand	50178	1739	48438
17	Karnataka	87658	19948	67710
18	Kerala	9473	2183	7290
19	Lakshadweep	0	0	0
20	Maharashtra	93199	13557	79462
21	Manipur	536	3	533
22	Meghalaya	6584	0	6584
23	Madhya Pradesh	146182	8072	138110
24	Mizoram	18760	0	18760
25	Nagaland	0	0	0
26	Orissa	45069	2463	42606
27	Punjab	7234	421	6813
28	Pondicherry	0	0	0
29	Rajasthan	15073	8360	6713
30	Sikkim	3550	50	3500
31	Tamil Nadu	19254	1698	17555
32	Tripura	59336	0	59336
33	Uttaranchal	9949	281	9668
34	UP	27577	362	27215
35	W Bengal	14842	1008	13834
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1495747</b>	<b>152400</b>	<b>1343347</b>

## IN THE SUPREME COURT

### **A list of matters related to protected areas that came up before the Supreme Court in the Godavarman Case on July 14 and 21, 2006**

- 1) Regarding matters related to the Kolleru Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, Andhra Pradesh
- 2) Laying of power transmission line through the Chambal Gharial Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh
- 3) Restoration of parts of the Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Bihar

### **A list of matters related to protected areas that came up before the SC appointed Central Empowered Committee on July 19, 2006**

- 1) Permission for laying of drinking water pipeline through the Balaram Ambaji WLS, Gujarat
- 2) Change of boundaries of the Matheran Ecologically Sensitive (ESA) Area, Maharashtra
- 3) Permission for laying water pipeline through Majathal WLS, Himachal Pradesh
- 4) Laying of an optical fibre line through the Ratapani WLS, Madhya Pradesh
- 5) Permission to lay oil pipeline through the Mahananda WLS, West Bengal

'In the Supreme Court' is based on the Forest Case Update, which is a web-based initiative to provide information and updates on developments related to forests and wildlife in the Supreme Court

Forest Case Update Editors:

Ritwick Dutta & Kanchi Kohli.

Address: E-180, Greater Kailash 2, New Delhi-110048. Email: [forestcase@yahoo.com](mailto:forestcase@yahoo.com) Web:

[www.forestcaseindia.org](http://www.forestcaseindia.org)

### **PA Update *still* needs your support**

For the last many years we have been able to produce the *Protected Area Update* because of the full and magnanimous funding support that we have received, prominently from the Foundation for Ecological Security.

Starting with this issue, we don't have enough support now to take the publication of the newsletter through the coming year. FES continues with its support but that is to the tune of about 70% of the budget requirements. The rest we have to now raise.

This is an appeal, therefore, to individuals and organizations who value the Update as an useful source of information to extend help and support.

For details of how this can be done and what the requirements are please write to me at [pankajs@vsnl.com](mailto:pankajs@vsnl.com)

Many thanks

Pankaj Sekhsaria

For Private Circulation

Printed Matter

To

From

**Kalpavriksh**

Apt. 5, Sri Dutta Krupa

908 Deccan Gymkhana

Pune 411004