

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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Protected Area Update

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EDITORIAL

The Big Cat Crisis

The Big Cat Crisis comes to us from at least two clear directions. Lions in Gujarat are being poached for the first time ever with a clear commercial motive in mind. Where the tiger is concerned it is about the numbers of how many are there (or not there) in the wild.

There are confirmed reports of the poaching of eight lions from in and around Gir in the last few months. The claws and bones of the animals were found missing indicating that the Asiatic lion too has started to figure in wildlife trade. It is also important to note that in the last four years another 20 odd of these extremely endangered cats have fallen to their death into open wells that dot the Gir landscape in their hundreds. The combined implications can only be considered ominous. If that was not enough the controversy over moving some lions from Gujarat to Kuno-Palpur continues unabated. Whether it is a strategy that will work in the long run is something that one can know only if it is tried. The message from the Gujarat Government is that they rather have the lion die in Gujarat; sending the animal outside the state is out of the question.

In the case of the tiger it continues to be an issue of their numbers. As we go to press there is much anguish being expressed over the fall in numbers of tigers as reported by the Wildlife Institute of India. Estimates based on a new counting protocol indicate that tiger numbers could be about half (or even less) of what were reported in the last census five years ago. Those figures from some of the main tiger states is rather alarming: In Madhya Pradesh from over 700 in 2001-02 in to less than 300 now; Maharashtra – from 238 to about 100 now and in Chattisgarh from 227 to only about 30 (the Indravati Tiger Reserve was not included in the count).

What this can only mean is that a large number of them have died (many poached) in the intervening period – if this is not a big crisis, what can it be? It also points out to the huge inadequacy in the process and attitudes in the earlier methods of counting.

Initial government responses have been rather characteristic – a combination of denial and skepticism – a refusal, it seems, to accept the figures that are coming out. MoEF secretary Dr. Pradipto Ghosh (he has since retired) was reported as having said that these numbers could not be compared to those from the last census and that, in fact, there was nothing wrong with the pugmark method.

The numbers from the counts still perhaps need a final confirmation and validation. Some correction could still perhaps happen. Yet, it would be difficult to deny that we have a serious problem on hand; and that denial would be the most inappropriate way of dealing with the issue.

The combination of responses needed is also well known to us...more numbers and better trained/equipped ground staff, rapid response teams, joint operations with local communities, winning communities over to conservation rather than making them enemies prone to being exploited by poachers and hands-off tiger habitats to 'development' projects.

The direction, however, to finding a solution would be to acknowledge and accept that we have a problem in the first place. The rest can be then made to happen.

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ASSAM

Elephants translocated to Manas suffer from bug bites

Six elephant calves translocated to the Manas National Park (see *PA Update* 66) from the Kaziranga NP are suffering from bites of the Tabanus flies, blood sucking parasites that are not found in Kaziranga.

The flies are found in Manas in abundance in the dry season and there is also a shortage of wallows in Manas that could have helped the elephants from escaping the bites. The elephants had to be drugged by the authorities to provide them temporary relief.

Insect samples have also been sent to the College of Veterinary Science in Guwahati to find out if they can spread diseases.

Source: 'Shifted elephant calves in Assam face bugs', *Deccan Herald*, 16/04/07.

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

CAG report reveals bungling of Project Tiger Funds in Nameri and Manas

The latest report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India that was recently submitted to the Assam State Assembly has pointed out a number of irregularities in the use of funds under Project Tiger.

The report says that the authorities started by allocating a very small part of the originally proposed sum. The fund allocated was used in an ad-hoc manner, the tiger census were not carried out properly (for 2001-02), little was done to remove encroachers, the authorities failed to keep count of the arms, ammunition and wireless sets provided for tackling poaching and even the State Board for Wildlife that is headed by the Chief Minister himself did not meet to monitor and evaluate the implementation.

The CAG noted that of the proposed outlay of Rs. 20.97 crores for 2001-06 for the Manas and Nameri National Parks, the Centre approved only Rs. 10.59 crores and further that only Rs. 3.30 crore (only 16% of the original amount) was finally released.

The report pointed out that as per directions of the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) funds released by the Centre for wildlife should reach the field level within six weeks of release and that the Supreme Court had ordered in 2005 that the money should in fact reach the field in 15 days time. Yet, in the case of Assam the period varied from 76 to as many as 253 days. The sums that were released by the state government were also towards the end of the financial year, leading to accumulation of huge balances.

The Centre then considered the unspent money as savings at the end of 2003-04 and thus released no funds for the subsequent years for the two parks.

The report has also noted that 37 firearms out of a total of 116 in the two parks were missing. As many as 48 arms used by the authorities had become 'illegal' as their licenses had not been renewed. While the reason cited for the missing arms was that miscreants had snatched them, the CAG found out that there were no details such as date and place of snatching, FIR numbers or police investigations to prove the claim. The accounts related to arms and ammunition maintained by the Field Director of Manas NP too were found to be incomplete and improper.

Source: Samudra Gupta Kashyap. 'Assam: CAG report reveals bungling of Project Tiger Funds', *The Indian Express*, 17/03/07.

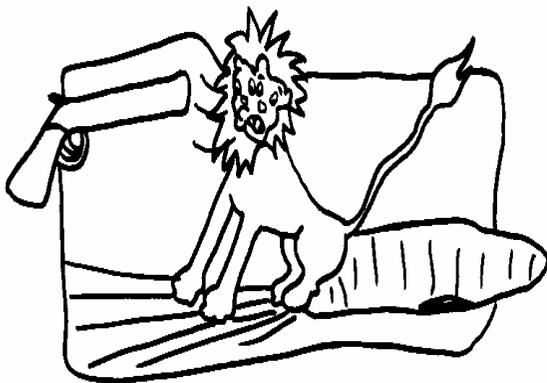
Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Nameri Tiger Reserve Western Assam Wildlife Division, P.O. Koliabhomora, Tezpur – 784001, Assam. Tel: 03712-220854(O), 220803(R)

Director, Manas TR, see above

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GUJARAT

Eight lions poached in and around Gir; another 11 die in open wells



Eight lions have been poached in and around the forests of the Gir National Park in the months of March and April. Three animals were found poached in the Barbaria range in the first week of March and then again on

March 30. Claws and bones were found missing. Another two lions were similarly found poached on April 14 in Bhavnagar district some 100 kms from Gir.

The Forest Department set up a Special Investigation Team immediately after the first incident and announced an award of Rs. 50,000 for information that would lead to the arrest of the poachers. In a breakthrough in the first week of April a group of 17 people, including 15 women were arrested in the matter. They had a number of lion claws and poaching tools on them. Those arrested are believed to be traditional tiger poachers from Itarsi and Katni in Madhya Pradesh.

Responding to the situation, the Central Government also constituted a Special Committee in early April to under take a spot appraisal and report on the matter. The announcement was made by the National Tiger Conservation Authority. The team was constituted of the Regional Deputy Directors (Wildlife) Ms. Meeta Banerjee, Western Region and Shri Santosh Tiwari, Northern Region. Pramod Krishnan, Joint Director (Wildlife) was made the Member Convenor.

The Committee was asked to look into the protection strategy in place for the lions vis-à-vis their mortality during the last three years (natural/disease/poaching), resource dependency of local people on the Gir habitat, steps taken towards redressing park-people conflicts and fostering co-existence and possibility of restorative management in crucial corridor linkages around Gir. The Committee was given a month to submit its report.

The Gujarat State Government too announced a number of measures. These include the creation of the 'wildlife crime' cell in both the Police and Forest Departments, the appointing of 'Van Mitras' for protection work and allocation of Rs. 40 crores for lion conservation.

It was also reported that another five lions in the Barbaria range were not being accounted for and the fear has been expressed that these too would have been poached.

In related developments at least 11 other lions are reported to have died by falling into the open wells in and around Gir in the first four months of 2007. (See *PA Update* Vol. XI, No. 6).

Source: No breakthrough in Gir lions' killings probe',
<http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/37157.html>
Belinda Wright. 'Tiger poachers behind killing of Gir Lions', Email dated 08/04/07
'Constitution of a Committee for Spot Appraisal of Lions in and around Gir National Park, Gir', Moef Press Release dated 09/04/07
Perna Bindra. (Story in *The Pioneer*), 19/04/07.
Atul Nischal. 'Another Lioness dead, 19 Asiatic lion have died in the Gir sanctuary in the past 4 months', Email dated 15/05/07

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Salt makers to resist relocation from the Dhrangadhra Wild Ass Sanctuary

Nearly 43,000 salt makers spread over 107 villages around the Little Rann of Kutch have decided to resist their relocation from the Dhrangadhra Wild Ass Sanctuary spread over nearly 5000 sq. kms.

The State Forest Department has already issued eviction notices but the situation has been complicated by the fact that the State Government has also provided identity cards to nearly 41,000 of them, certifying them as traditional salt-makers.

The Government traditionally leased out arid and fallow land for 'salt farming' to

local individuals as well as some 20-odd companies. Until 1963-64, this renewable lease for a plot of five to ten acres was for 10 years and thereafter for five years. But when the sanctuary was created in the early 70s attempts were made by the State Forest Department, to acquire the lands. While the companies' lease continued to be renewed as usual, the individuals' leases were not renewed from 1997 onwards. The salt-makers were finally issued eviction notices in early 2007.

The Gujarat Chief Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi is himself reported to have taken up their cause. Addressing the 'Agaria Kalyan Sammelan' in April in village Patdi he assured the salt-makers that he would fight with the Centre to protect their traditional rights for salt-making. He also regretted the fact that the issue had cropped up at a time when the State Government was planning to develop the Navlakhi Port near the Little Rann of Kutch with a special jetty dedicated for salt export so as to fetch the best prices for salt-makers' labour.

It has also been pointed out that the State Government wanted to use satellite communication and modern technology to make salt-making scientific. It would be introducing special courses in the ITIs for wards of salt-makers and promote prawn culture to create job opportunities.

Source: Virendra Pandit. 'Salt makers in Gujarat face eviction, *The Hindu Business Line*, 09/04/07.

Contact: **Sanctuary Suprintendant**, Wild Ass Sanctuary Morbi Road. Dharangadhra - 363310, Gujarat. Tel: 02754-23716. Fax: 23716

GEER to take up project on Great Indian Bustard

The Gujarat Ecological Education and Research (GEER) Foundation has initiated a project to study the habitat status of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) in Gujarat. The work is being done with a Rs. Five Lakh grant from the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The main objective of the project is to gather information on the population of the bird in areas where sightings have been recently reported. The Gujarat Forest Department and other NGOs will collaborate in the project that

will also use GIS and Remote sensing systems to locate the birds and their habitat.

The Director of GEER pointed out that there have been recent reports of the bird from Velavadar in the Bhal region of Saurashtra and also from the Surendranagar district. The FD has said they will also search in areas east of Naliya in Bhuj as also along the Mandvi coastline for the bird.

Source: Shubhlakshmi Shukla. 'Foundation, forest dept GEERing up to study Great Indian Bustard', *Indian Express*, 12/02/07.

Contact: **GEER Foundation**, Indroda Park, Sector 9, Gandhinagar – 382009, Gujarat. Tel: 02712-21385. Fax: 41128. Email: geerindia@sify.com
CWLW - Gujarat, Block 14, Dr. Jivraj Mehta Bhavan, Old Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar-382010, Gujarat. Tel: 02712-230007. Fax: 221097.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Survey for rationalization of PAs

A high-level Central team comprising wildlife experts has recently surveyed the Kugti, Tundah and Kalatop-Khajjiar Wildlife Sanctuaries (WLSs) to re-demarcate and exclude areas having human habitation on their fringes. The team also held consultations with representatives of panchayati raj institutions.

Villagers in these areas have been demanding exclusion from the boundaries of the PAs for a long time (see *PA Update* Vol. XII, No. 3, June 2006). They have pointed out that they had been unable to protect themselves and their crops from large-scale depredation from wildlife and that even the construction of houses, roads, bridges and other developmental activities were impeded in their areas owing to the stringent provisions of Wildlife Protection Act and Forest Conservation Act.

Source: Balkrishan Prashar. 'Wildlife sanctuaries surveyed', *The Tribune*, 06/05/07

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Himachal Pradesh, Talland, Shimla – 171001. Tel: 0177-2624193. Email: Vtandy@gmail.com

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Mining inside Limber and Lachipora WLSs



The J&K State Department of Geology & Mining has allotted gypsum mining leases to private parties inside the Limber and Lachipora Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Baramulla district. Some 1400 kanals of land in the area have been leased out for the purpose. A survey in the area in 2005 had reported the presence of a good number of musk deer, tragopans and markhor here.

The State's Forest and Environment Department said it did not know about these leases being granted and that they had not issued any No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for the same. The State Forest Minister has said a probe will be ordered to find out how the leases were given. The Director, Geology & Mining has admitted that his department had not been seeking clearance from the Department of Wildlife, but that they will do so in the future.

The miners meanwhile have said that they have done nothing wrong and followed all procedures laid down by the government.

Source: Mir Ehsan. 'J&K creates its largest national park, but allows mining inside', *The Indian Express*, 16/04/07.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden North**, Incharge – Lachipora and Limber WLSs, C/o **CWLW**, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Tourist Reception Centre (TRC), Srinagar – 190001. Tel: 0191-544575, 0194-452469

JHARKHAND

Conflict in Dalma over ritual hunting

Like in the earlier years there was conflict and tension between the Forest Department (FD) at the Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary and tribals here over the latter's intention to conduct their ritual hunting called *Sendra* in the local parlance. The tribals have decided to fight for their 'rights' to save their 'tradition' under the aegis of the, Dalmaburu Sendra Samity (DSS).

This year, the tribal chiefs here met on April 14 decided to conduct the ritual hunt on April 30. Accordingly, hundreds of tribal youth from Jharkhand and the adjoining states of Orissa and West Bengal tried to force their way into the sanctuary. The FD is reported to have thwarted their efforts by setting a herd of tuskers on the hunters, prompting them to beat a hasty retreat from the Phadlogoda range of the sanctuary.

The DSS has pointed out that the tribals are being targeted and being prevented from conducting their traditional activities while a number of other activities that are detrimental to the forests and wildlife are continuing unhindered. They have pointed out in particular to the stone crushing units operating at the foothills of the Dalma range.

FD officials have also pointed out that the ritual hunting was subdued this time because of clandestine interventions of Maoist extremists, who are reported to have threatened the tribals with harm if they killed innocent animals. The FD also says that their ongoing efforts to educate the tribal community against the mass killing has started to pay off. The FD has also conveyed to the DSS that they are ready to share the bulk of the cost of the ceremony and organise a huge feast for the tribals on the day the chiefs select to observe *Sendra*. (Also see *PA Updates* 55, 50 & 25)

Source: 'Dalma tribals up in arms against Forest Department', *The Statesman*, 04/05/07.

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Dalma WLS, Wildlife Division, Ranchi, Jharkhand.
Tel: 0651-301861.

KARNATAKA

Proposal for Conservation Reserve status to Puttenhalli Lake in Bangalore

The Karnataka Forest Department (FD) has proposed to declare the Puttenhalli Lake located in Bangalore as a Conservation Reserve. The lake that is spread over an area of about 10 hectares has recorded a presence of at least 49 species of birds

Earlier the lake was under the Lake Development Authority (LDA) and was listed for development for commercial purposes under the Public-Private Partnership Model. The FD is now said to have written to the state government to withdraw the lake from the LDA list and hand it over to them for conservation purposes.

Source: 'Puttenhalli Lake to be bird reserve', *The New Indian Express*, 25/04/07.

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

KERALA

State approves hydroelectric project near Silent Valley NP

The Kerala State government has given administrative sanction to the Rs. 247 crore Pathrakkadavu Hydro-electric project (PHEP) near the Silent Valley National Park.

The project envisages a 64.5 meter high dam with a storage capacity of 0.872 million cum and a power generation capacity of 70 mw. The dam is to come up on the River Kunthi, which flows through the national park.

Environmentalists have expressed serious concern about the dam and its impact on the forests and wildlife of the park. Many say the project will be as damaging as the Silent Valley Hydro-Electric project (SVHEP) that had been called off due to protests in the 1980s.

It has also been pointed out that a detailed Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been conducted for the project and that

there has been stiff resistance to the project after a public hearing in 2004.

The Kerala State Electricity Board, which is promoting the project says that the fears are unfounded and that the project will submerge only 22 hectares of forests whereas as SVHEP would have submerged 830 hectares.

(Also see *PA Updates* Vol. XII, Nos. 2 & 5)

Source: M Suchitra. 'Disputed project', *Down to Earth*, 31/05/07.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Silent Valley NP, Forest Department, Mannarghat PO, Dist - Palakad Kerala. Tel: 0492 – 2442056 / 2453225

River Research Centre, Kerala. Email: rrckerala@gmail.com

Ramachandran Balachandran. Email: rbalachan@gmail.com

New tiger monitoring protocol in Periyar

The Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) will introduce a new tiger monitoring protocol by which monitoring of tigers will become a daily affair. Under the protocol, an integrated effort involving camera traps, observation of pugmarks, reading of direct tiger sighting using the Global Positioning System (GPS) and monitoring of the prey base of tigers will be made to keep track of the big cat.

The PTR has recently procured 40 camera traps for the purpose of which ten have already been installed.

A tiger monitoring team comprising 12 tribal youths belonging to the Mannan, Paliya and Ooralis communities have also been trained in installing camera traps and using the GPS.

Source: KS Sudhi. 'New Tiger monitoring protocol in Periyar', *The Hindu*, 09/04/07.

Contact: Contact: **Field Director**, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Aranya Bhavan, Forest Complex, S.H. Mount P.O. Kottayam - 686006. Kerala. Tel: 0481-2562940(O) / 2560297(R). Fax: 2569217 / 2565740

Illegal trekking in Periyar TR

The Forest Department has reported illegal trekking operations by tour operators in the tourism zone of the Periyar Tiger Reserve. It has also been suggested that these trekkers are the cause of most of the recent fires that have been reported in the grasslands in the region.

In an incident reported in April, a group comprising 19 foreigners and six guides were rounded up. While the tourists were let off, the guides were fined.



Source: KS Sudhi. 'New Tiger monitoring protocol in Periyar', *The Hindu*, 09/04/07.

Fires reported in April in Parambikulam WLS, Nelliampathy forests

Hundreds of acres of forests and plantations were destroyed by forest fires in April in the Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary and at Thenmala Valley and Pothundy at the foot of the Nelliampathy hills.

The fire in the Thuthumpara area of the Parambikulam WLS was put out by about 100 labourers of Thuthampara Estate of Poab's Group and the forest firewatchers under the Nemmara Forest Division.

One of the reasons for the fires is said to be the lack of pre-monsoon showers in the area, which has been experiencing an unprecedented drought this year. Temperatures had shot up to 36 deg. Celcius while the normal range here is 14-26 degrees. The region also received only four mm of rain in the January and nothing after that.

Forest Department (FD) officials said that the fires were started because of the negligence on part of those who go to collect forest produce and honey. They also alleged that some of the retrenched forest firewatchers were

behind the fires and that one person had also been arrested in this connection.

As part of the measures to prevent fires, the FD is reported to have spent Rs.10 lakh for anti-fire measures in the Nemmara division. Daily wage firewatchers whose services were terminated in March were also taken back

Estate owners in the area have held the FD responsible for the fires. They have alleged that there is no proper management and fire and wind belts were not being maintained properly. The fires have also led to a large number of wild animals including elephant, wild pig, gaur and deer from entering plantations and causing extensive damage. It has also been pointed out that increased tourism activity was aggravating the problem.

Source: G Prabhakaran. 'Fire engulfs Parambikulam, Nelliampathy forests', *The Hindu*, 09/04/07.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Parambikulam Division, P.O. Thunacadavu (Via) Pollachi Dist. Palakkad-678661. Tel: 04253-267233

Crocodile research centre at Neyyar WLS

The Kerala Forest Minister recently inaugurated the 'Steve Irwin Crocodile Rehabilitation and Research Centre' at the Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary. The Centre has been created in the memory of the popular conservationist and TV personality who died recently.

A crocodile farm already exists at the Neyyar WLS. It had been set up in 1977 under the crocodile protection scheme of the Centre and is home to 44 muggers or marsh crocodiles.

Source: 'Minister to inaugurate crocodile research centre', *The Hindu*, 15/05/07

Contact: **Asst. Wildlife Warden**, Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary, P.O. Neyyar Dam, Dist. Thiruvananthapuram – 695013. Kerala. Tel: 0471-2360762.
Chief Wildlife Warden – Kerala, Vazhudacaud, Trivandrum – 695014, Kerala. Tel: 0471-2322217 / 2360452 / 2204896. Fax: 2360452 / 2322217

MADHYA PRADESH

WII study indicates fall in tiger population in MP

Surveys conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) using a new methodology indicate fall in tiger numbers in Madhya Pradesh. This was indicated at a presentation made by the Dr. YV Jhala at the recent Global Tiger Forum's International Tiger Symposium in Kathmandu.

It has been suggested that tiger numbers in the state are fewer than 300, a figure that is less than half the 710 enumerated in the last census. Of these 110-144 tigers were reported from the Kanha-Pench corridor while 40-45 tigers were reported in the Satpura corridor. The Bandavgarh Panna corridor is believed to have no more than 50-55 tigers. Besides this, the only other population of the big cat is west of the Narmada and 'splinter' or sporadic population - both of these would be no more than 15 to 20 – bringing the total number to 215-265.

The first phase of this enumeration exercise was conducted in January 2006. The method involves several stages - use of camera traps, testing of DNA samples and mapping tiger density using GIS. It includes scanning of the landscapes for carnivore signs like pug marks, scratches, and scats and also recording signs of herbivore presence.

Source: Prerna Bindra. 'Tiger population goes down in MP', *The Pioneer*, 24/04/07.

Contact: **Field Director**, Panna National Park, Panna – 488001, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 07732-252135. Fax: 07732-252120

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MAHARASHTRA

Lesser florican spotted in Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary after 1879

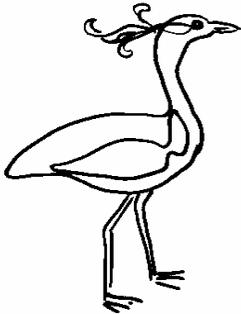
A Lesser Florican was seen in the grasslands of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) Sanctuary in Solapur district for the first time since 1879.

The sub-adult bird was rescued by a young shepherd, Bandu Bhise, as it was being

chased by dogs. He took the bird to his school teacher who informed local foresters.

The shepherd boy was honoured by the Forest Department with a citation.

The incident is being considered an important positive outcome of the recent initiative of the FD here to educate people in the region of the grassland birds like the GIB.



Source: 'Endangered bird spotted', *Maharashtra Herald*.

Contact: **CF Wildlife**, Pune Division, Forest Colony, Near Salunke Vihar Bus Stop, Vanawdi Pune. Tel: 020-25124182 / 26855124

Fires in Melghat and Tadoba Andhari TRs

Large-scale fires and related damage were reported to forests in the Melghat and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserves in the month of April.

Fires were reported in five compartments in the Jamni beat under Khatoda in Tadoba in early April followed by more fires in Compartments 112, 111 and 113. The total area affected in Tadoba Andhari was 111 hectares, while that in Melghat was 62 hectares.

Source: 'Fresh fires in tiger reserves', *The Times of India*, 10/04/07.

Contact: **Field Director**, Melghat Tiger Reserve, Amravati- 444 602 Maharashtra. Tel: 0721 – 2662792 / 2551766. 07223 – 220214 / 222643. Fax: 0721 – 2662792. Email: ati_meltiger@sancharnet.in

PCCF (Wildlife). Dr. Ambedkar Bhawan, MECL Bldg. Seminary Hills & Campus, Nagpur – 440001, Maharashtra. Tel: 0712-2526758 / 2530126. Fax – 2510671. Email: cfwl@nagpur.dot.net.in

MANIPUR

KYKL camp busted in Keibul Lamjao NP

A camp of the proscribed Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lupkykl (KYKL), an underground group in Manipur was busted inside the Keibul Lamjao National Park by the 7 Assam Rifles in a pre-dawn operation conducted in the latter half of March 2007.

The underground activists who were camping at an overgrown spot located 4km from Keibul Sagram fired at the advancing troops at around 5am leading to exchange of heavy firing from both sides. After the firing ceased they were reported to have abandoned their camp and fled.

No casualties, however, were reported on either side or to the endangered Sangai, the brow-antlered deer that is found here.

Source: AR busts KYKL hideout', *The Sangai Express*, 24/03/07.

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

NAGALAND

Protests against encroachment in Intanki NP

Students and villagers of the Zeliangrong Naga tribe recently demonstrated before the Nagaland Assembly demanding removal of encroachers from Intanki National Park located in the Kohima district.

The demonstrators, who had assembled under the aegis of All Zeliangrong Students' Union, were protesting against alleged inaction by the government despite 'continued encroachment' of the park for past couple of years.

They also demanded eviction of encroachers from the Dhansiripar sub-division, in Dimapur district, asserting that the encroached land traditionally belonged to the Zeliangrong community.

Source: 'Protests against Nagaland sanctuary encroachment', *The Assam Tribune*, 21/03/07.

Contact: **ACF**, C/o Wildlife Warden, Wildlife Warden Office, P.O. Dimapur. Dist. Dimapur, Nagaland. Tel: 03862-29340

ORISSA

Management school in way of Chandaka WLS elephants

Environmentalists have expressed concern that the powerful mast lights from a management institute built newly on the southern side of the Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary is likely to disorient the sanctuary's elephant population.

The Asian School of Business Management built a huge campus within a distance of 500 metres from the sanctuary boundary last year. Now, six powerful lights illuminate the residential campus after darkness.

The elephants of Chandaka WLS regularly move out of the sanctuary since they follow age-old migration paths to nearby forests of Bharatpur and Daspur and it is feared that the institute and the lighting will further increase human – elephant conflict, which is already very severe in the area (Also see *PA Updates* Vol XIII, No. 1; Vol XI, No. 4; and Nos. 49, 46, 41, 39, 34, 32 & 29.)

Source: Prabuddha Jagadeb. 'Wildlife glare on B school', *The Telegraph*, 21/04/07.

Contact: **DFO**, Chandaka WLS, SFTRI Campus, Ghatikia, P.O. Barmunda Colony, Bhubaneswar – 751003. Tel: 0674-2440168 @

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

Forests around two villages in core of Simlipal BR undisturbed: AnSI

A study conducted by the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) has said that the ecology of the forests around two villages inside the core of the Simlipal Biosphere Reserve remains undisturbed. The two villages in question are Jamuna and Jenabil. The study also says that forests around two other villages

– Kabatghai and Bakua showed moderate disturbance.

The conclusions have been made based on a Disturbance Index (DI) study conducted by the AnSI. The DI has been calculated as the percentage of damaged trees to the total number of trees per 2000 square metres (20 quadrates of 10 m x 10m). It was estimated to be below 20 percent in Jamuna and Jenabil villages while it was 22.28 percent and 23.86 percent in Kabatghai and Bakua respectively.

The AnSI researchers found 308 normal trees in their demarcated study area in Jamuna and Jenabil villages, against which 54 were marked damaged. In case of the other two villages, 277 normal trees were noticed but 83 were found to be damaged

The AnSI has also worked out a 'Diversity Index' around the four core villages. Calculation was based on the number of tree species available in given area to the total tree population.

Source: Satyasundar Barik. 'Ecology around two core villages in SBR intact', *The Hindu*, 30/04/07.

Contact: **Director**, Simlipal Tiger Reserve, P.O. Baripada, Dist. Mayurbhanj – 757002, Orissa. Tel: 06792-252593(O), 252773(R) Fax: 256705

Tourism facilities to be developed in Bhitarkanika, Satkosia; tourist influx promotes poaching in Bhitarkanika

The Orissa State Government has earmarked Rs. 12 crore for construction related work in the Bhitarkanika and Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuaries for the promotion of tourism. The projects are being supported by the Centre, the state government and some private parties.

Activities proposed include the construction of several watch towers, log and bamboo cottages and other related amenities for tourists.

The initiatives in these two sanctuaries are in addition to the Rs 10 crore eco-tourism project that has been initiated at the Simlipal National Park (see *PA Update* Vol XII, No. 6).

Other reports indicate that there is a clear linkage between tourist influx to Bhitarkanika and an increase in poaching here. This is borne out by

custodial confessions made by some people arrested in connection with wildlife offences in Bhitarkanika. A man arrested with a poached spotted deer here said that he had killed the animal as per an “order” placed by a group of unidentified visitors. He had bribed lower ranked forest staff who had allowed him to go-ahead.

Alleged connivance of forest personnel with poachers has come to light in the wake of turtle meat seizure in the Bhadrak’s - Chandballi belt of the state.

The Forest Department has said that the poaching incidents are not on account of failure protection or patrolling on their behalf. The crux of the problem in Bhitarkanika, according to them, is that the fast disappearing mangroves that has led to shrinkage of the deer’s habitat forcing them into adjoining fields and making them vulnerable.

It has been reported that venison can be procured in the region for Rs. 30-40 a kg while it is Rs 40-50 per kg in the case of wild boar meat. Mutton on the contrary is far more expensive at Rs. 130 per kg. The explanation as per local people is that goats need to be bought for the mutton, while deer and wild boar can easily be poached.

Source: ‘Tourism delivers fatal twist to poaching saga’, *The Statesman*, 05/04/07.
‘Facilities for Orissa sanctuaries’, *The Statesman*, 07/04/07.

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Satkosia Wildlife Division, at/P.O./Dist. Angul – 759143, Orissa. Tel: 0674-230218(O), 230219@
DFO, Bhitarkanika NP, At/PO Rajnagar, Dist. Kendrapada – 745225. Orissa. Tel: 06729-72460/64. Fax: 06727-20775.

Coastal Community Resource Centre near Bhitarkanika NP

The Sandhan Foundation of Bhubaneswar, in conjunction with the UNEP-GPA, NC-IUCN-TRP, MAP-USA and the Government of Orissa, has initiated a project for a Coastal Community Resource Center (CCRC) at Gupti Village near Bhitarkanika National Park.

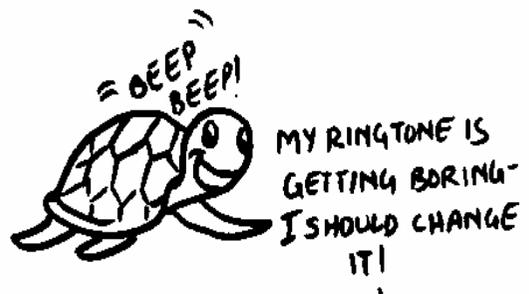
The Center's objective is to educate the local population about the importance of wise

management of the mangrove forest, both for their own health, protection from the effects of climate change, and for sustainable development. The CCRC is working to provide alternatives to exploitation of the mangrove forest. This includes research into alternative crops and firewood able to grow in saline conditions, aquaculture in tidal ponds outside the sanctuary, collection of cow-patties or the purchase of biomass/solar cooking equipment as an alternative to mangrove wood and leaves, green fencing and increased education and development of artistry to provide flexible sources of income and increase human capital.

The Center also serves as a rest house for scientists and tourists as part of promotion of ecotourism to the region, providing the local people with yet another possible source of income, as well as increasing the demand for a well-developed transportation network.

Contact: **Bijay Kumar Nanda**, Sandhan Foundation, D/62, Block 11, Jaydev Vihar, Bhubaneswar – 751013. Tel/Fax: 0674-2360699. Mob: 9938371960. Email: bknanda@sify.com. Web: www.sandhanfoundation.info

Turtles fitted with satellite transmitters



The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the Orissa Forest Department have initiated a project as part of which Olive Ridley Turtles visiting the Orissa Coast are being fitted with satellite transmitters or the Platform Transmitter Terminals (PTT). Seven turtles were fitted with the PTTs at the nesting site of Rushikulya in March followed by eight the following month on the beach at Babubali Island in the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary.

It is hoped the project will provide clues on the movement of the turtles and the routes they take. The PTTs were fitted as part of a three-year

study funded by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. The Ministry has provided Rs 3.5 crore to the WII to fit satellite transmitters on 70 turtles in Orissa.

Source: Rajesh Behera. 'Transmitter terminals to keep track of Ridley turtles', *The Pioneer*, 03/04/07.

CWLW- Orissa, Plot No. 8, Shahid Nagar, Bhubaneshwar – 751007, Orissa.
Tel: 0674- 2512502 / 2513134 / 2515840. Fax: 512502

PUNJAB

Proposal for community reserve for sarus cranes in Gurdaspur district

The Punjab Forest Department has said that it has been working for the last one year to finalise a proposal for the setting up of the Keshopur-Miani Community Reserve for the Sarus Crane in the Gurdaspur District and that a number of meetings have been held with the villagers for the purpose. The bird was believed to have become extinct as a breeding bird in the state and the move to create the reserve here is a result of increased presence of the Sarus Crane in the Nangal area in the state and also in the Gurdaspur district.

Source: Vishal Gulati. 'Sarus Crane population on the rise in Punjab', *The Tribune*, 10/05/07

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Punjab, SC No. 2463-64, Sector 22-C, Chandigarh - 160022. Tel: 0172-2705828(O), 2675661(R). Fax: 2705828

RAJASTHAN

Watchtowers, close circuit TV for Keoladeo NP to fight fires

The Rajasthan Forest Minister has announced the setting of 10 watchtowers and the installation of close circuit television in the Keoladeo National Park to deal with forest fires here. Rs. 10 lakhs are proposed to be spent for the same.

The watchtowers would have a provision for water tanks, fire fighting equipment and trained staff to deal with any eventuality in case of fire.



Source: 'Watch towers to battle Bharatpur fires', *The Statesman*, 23/04/07.

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

Leopard radio telemetry project in Sariska

A project to study leopards with the help of radio-telemetry is being initiated in the Sariska Tiger Reserve. The five year project to be started in June 2007 will involve 12 leopards: four adult males, four females and four cubs.

It is hoped that the project will reveal important information about leopard behaviour, their eating habits and movement patterns.

According to the wildlife census in 2004, the leopard population in Rajasthan was around 550. Sawai Madhopur district tops the list with approximately 83 leopards. Other districts having leopard populations are Pali, Chittorgarh, Rajsamand, Sirohi, Karauli, Alwar, Jaipur, Udaipur, Ajmer and Kota.

Source: 'Sariska tigers to have collar ids', *Deccan Herald*, 05/04/07.

Contact: **Director**, Sariska Tiger Reserve, Sariska, Alwar – 301022, Rajasthan. Tel: 0144-41333 (O)

Tigers to be reintroduced into Sariska TR

302 005. Tel: 0141-2380832 / 2540531.
Fax: 2380496/ 2380832

A decision appears to have been taken for the re-introduction of tigers into the Sariska Tiger Reserve. IUCN guidelines are to be followed in the introduction of five young adult tigers - three females and two males - who will be introduced here from the Ranthambor National Park over a staggered period of three years.

The first tigress could be brought into the reserve by the end of 2007 and will be monitored for a month before a male is introduced. The remaining three will then be introduced over the next two years.

If the population adapts and breeds, two batches of two to three tigers will be brought in every three years as experts say restocking is essential to maintain genetic and demographic viability of the population.

The introduced tigers will be fitted with radio collars with a satellite tracking facility and there will be a team of around 12 forest officers as well as wildlife researchers constantly monitoring the animals.

Officials and conservationists have said villages inside the Reserve need to be moved out to ensure the successful introduction of tigers in Sariska as local people resort to tree-felling for fuel wood, bring in cattle into the park for grazing and are also often hired by poachers to kill tigers.

There are plans for the relocation of the 11 villages inside the reserve though only two are reported to have agreed to the move.

(Also see *PA Updates* Vol XII, No. 4 and Nos. 57, 56, 55 & 50).

Source: Nita Bhalla. 'India plans world's first tiger move after debacle',
http://in.today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=topNews&storyID=2007-05-07T111937Z_01_NOOTR_RTRJONC_0_India-296974-2.xml, 07/05/07.

Contact: **Director**, Sariska TR, See above.
Dr. Rajesh Gopal, Director, Project Tiger Annexe No.5, Bikaner House, Shah Jahan Road, New Delhi 110 001.
Email: dirpt-r@hub.nic.in
CWLW Government of Rajasthan, Van Bhavan, Vaniki Path, JAIPUR -

TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu, Kerala to jointly protect Anaimalais

Senior forest officials from Tamil Nadu and Kerala met in the month of March at Top Slip in the Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary to work out a joint mechanism for the protection of the forests of the Anaimalais.

The meeting was held after a gap of three years. The officers exchanged a range of information including maps of anti-poaching camps, details of vulnerable areas and routes, lists of habitual offenders and their photographs and the settlements where they are likely to be found.

Those participating in the meeting included Conservators of Forests, PC Tyagi (Coimbatore Circle); OP Kaler (High Range Circle - Kottayam), Bennichan Thomas (Field Director, Periyar Tiger Reserve) and Wildlife Wardens KR Vardharajan (Pollachi), Sanjayankumar (Parambikulam) and Roy Thomas (Munnar).

The next meeting has been scheduled for Munnar in the month of June.

Source: M Gunasekaran. 'Tamil Nadu, Kerala join hands to protect Anaimalais', *The Hindu*, 14/03/07.

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

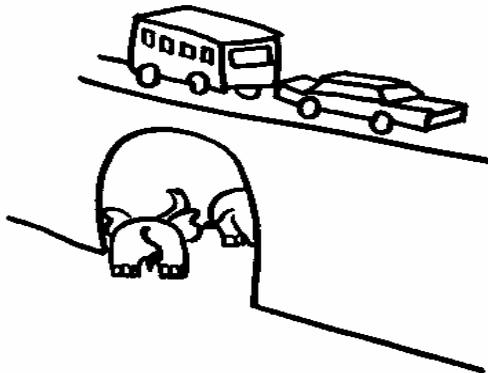
UTTARAKHAND

Road under-passes for Rajaji elephants

The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) which is the process of four - laning the Delhi Dehradun Highway has proposed the creation of underpasses for elephants of Rajaji National Park.

At least two elevated road sections of about 850 meters each will be constructed in the seven km long Chilla Motichur section allowing for elephants to continue using their traditional movement routes.

Source: Anubhuti Vishnoi. NHA offers simple solution for mammoth problem', *The Indian Express*, 20/05/07.



Contact: **Director**, Rajaji NP, 5/1 Ansari Marg, Dehradun – 248001, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-2621669 Fax: 2621669
CWLW, 5, Chandrabani, Mohobewala, Dehradun, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-2644691

WEST BENGAL

Train kills another elephant in Buxa TR

An adult elephant was killed by a speeding train near the Atiabari Tea Estate level crossing in the Buxa Tiger Reserve in the month of April.

The collision occurred at 4.40 am on April 11. The elephant was stuck to the train's undercarriage and was dragged for about 50 metres before the train came to a halt.

This is the seventh pachyderm that has been killed in similar circumstances ever since the stretch between Siliguri and Alipurdar underwent gauge conversion four years ago (see *PA Updates* Vol XII, No. 3, and Nos. 49, 47, 43, 39, 36, 34, 32 & 29).

All the animals have been killed at the four spots on the railway route identified as being sensitive and where the High Court has ordered that trains move at a reduced speed. Another significant change in this context has been the increase in the number of trains running on this route. There were only five pairs of trains here before the gauge conversion; now it is 30.

Source: 'Train kills another elephant', *The Statesman*, 12/04/07.

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

Five elephants found dead in Buxa TR

Five elephants: two adults, a sub-adult and two calves were found dead on the banks of the River Raidak in the Newland Forest Area of the Buxa Tiger Reserve in the first week of May. This is the first time that so many elephants were found dead in the area.

Forest officials said that the animals had been struck by lightning and that an autopsy was to be conducted to ascertain the exact cause. Some local villagers however alleged that they must have died of poisoning as they had entered a nearby habitation the earlier night.

Source: 'Five elephants found dead in West Bengal', *ZEE Television*, 04/05/07.

Rs 10.28 crores for relocation of villages in Buxa TR unused: CAG report

The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) for the year ending March 2006 has pointed out that the West Bengal Forest Department (FD) had failed to use the Rs. 10.28 crore allocated to it for the relocation of villages from inside the Buxa TR. It also noted that the matter was not even included in any of the FD's Annual Plans of Operations for 2000-05 and that during the period 2001-03, the FD only relocated Bhutia Busty which had a population of 415.

According to the CAG report 5300 people live within the core area of Buxa Tiger Reserve and another 10,700 people live in surrounding areas.

The CAG has also observed that 335 hectares of forestland had long been encroached upon by private orange orchards, that no survey was conducted till January 2006 to identify encroachments in the PA and that a huge cattle population in the fringe villages has also led to extensive illegal grazing in the reserve.

Source: Shaheen Parshad. 'Buxa Tiger Reserve failed to relocate human settlement, says CAG report', *The Indian Express*, 16/04/07.

Contact: **Director Buxa TR**, see above
DFO, Wildlife (II), West Bengal Forest Dept. Aranya Bhawan (Near Court), Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. Tel: 03561-24907(O) / 30383 (R). E-mail: wild2@dte.vsnl.net.in

Forest near Bethuadahari WLS to be developed for tourism

The Bahadurpur forest, near the Bethuadahari Wildlife Sanctuary in Nadia district is to be developed for the purpose of attracting more tourists here. The Nadia Zilla Parishad recently handed over Rs 50 lakh to the district forest department for the purpose.

A proposal for the same had been sent a few years ago to the Central Government but there was no response, prompting the local administration to push the initiative with money from its rural development funds.

The specific plans include the construction of a watch tower along with a three-storeyed rest room building, release of deer and peacocks that have been rescued from various places and treating this forest area as a rescue centre. A water sports complex is being proposed at the Hanshadanga Beel that is adjacent to the Bahadurpur forest.

Source: 'Nadia's very own jungle safari soon', *The Statesman*, 07/05/07.

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Bethuadahari WLS, Nadia - Murshidabad Division, P.O. Krishnanagar, Dist. Nadia. West Bengal. 03472-52362(O), 57242(R). Email: dfonmd@vsnl.com

Serious staff shortage in West Bengal FD

Serious staff shortage has been reported in the West Bengal Forest Department (FD) giving rise to fears of increase in poaching and illegal tree felling. There are said to be 1,053 vacancies for the post of forest guards. 126 posts of the 231 Head Forest Guards remain empty, 320 are vacant for the Deputy Ranger out of the required 1,277 while Forest Rangers

face a paucity of 115 personnel out of 580 sanctioned posts. FD officials have blamed the state government for the present state of affairs saying that forest protection is not on the government's priority list.

A recent report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has also highlighted deficiencies in patrolling in the state's tiger reserves. The report states: 'There was vacancy in the posts of Head Forest Guards (HFGs) and Forest Guards (FGs) to the extent of 54 and 20 % in Sunderban and Buxa respectively. The shortage of patrolling staff at Buxa Tiger Reserve was reported to be 63%.

A large number of staff were found to over-age as per the guidelines recommended by the Wildlife Institute of India. 49 out of 59 FGs and HFGs in Sunderban were found to be above 35 years, while in Buxa, 204 out of a total 209 FGs and HFGs were found to be above the age of 35 years.

The report also points out that in the Sunderbans there is no record on the duration of daily patrolling between 2000 and 2005. Further in 10 out of the 13 ranges of the Buxa Tiger Reserve, patrolling was done only for eight hours a day. The exact status of patrolling could not be obtained in the remaining three ranges because no records were maintained.



Source: Suchetana Haldar. 'Forest go unguarded as dept reels under massive staff shortage', *The Indian Express*, 30/04/07.

Contact: **CWLW**, 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

New newsletter on Community Based biodiversity conservation

A new bilingual newsletter on Community based biodiversity conservation titled Communities and Conservation (English) and Samuday aur Sanrakshan (Hindi) has been launched by Kalpavriksh with financial support from Misereor.

Contact: **Erica Taraporewala**, C/o Kalpavriksh,
at the editorial address.
Email: kvoutreach@gmail.com

Planning Commission stops funding for Project Snow Leopard

Various initiatives under Project Snow Leopard (PSL) are likely to be affected as the Planning Commission (PC) has decided not to allocate any money to the Project for 2007-08. This is an outcome of the process undertaken by the PC to revamp the allocation process under the 11th Five-Year Plan for the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF).

The five states of Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh where the Project is operational are worried that PSL may not get any direct allocation but a discretionary sum from a general fund. The Steering Committee of PSL has suggested that a certain percentage of the overall fund be earmarked for PSL.

The State Governments, meanwhile, plan to utilise some funds from sources meant for national parks and sanctuaries to tide over the financial vacuum created this year. They have also requested the Centre to look at allocating some money from other heads to tide over the financial squeeze.

Source: Nitin Sethi. 'Snow Leopard project stalled', *The Times of India*, 13/05/07.

Details of funds released for relocation of villages from Protected Areas

The table below gives the state-wise details on release of funds for relocation of villages under Beneficiary Oriented Tribal Development, Project Tiger and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries Schemes.

Details of Funds released (Rs in Lakhs)

	Year	MP	Kar.	Mah.	Ori.	Raj.	Utrk-hnd
1.	1997-98	45.00	25.00	-	40.00	-	-
2.	1998-99	350.00	-	-	-	-	-
3.	1999-2000	201.08	68.50	-	-	-	-
4.	2000-01	200.00	64.65	46	-	-	-
5.	2001-02	300.00	100.00	-	-	-	-
6.	2002-03	210.00	300.00	400	-	145.92	-
7.	2003-04	374.00	283.00	-	81.00	-	-
8.	2004-05	-	150.00	-	-	-	-
9.	2005-06	175	77.00	17.	-	80.0	110.20
10.	2006-07	230	58.80	-	-	-	-

During the 9th plan funds were released under the Beneficiary Oriented Tribal Development Scheme while in the 10th plan it was under the Project Tiger and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries Scheme.

The information was recently provided by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Shri Namo Narain Meena in a written reply to question by Shri Vijay Darda and Smt. Syeda Anwara Taimur in the Rajya Sabha. It has also been pointed out that till the 9th plan 103 villages have been relocated from various protected areas.

Source: 'Relocation of existing habitations', Press Release, Ministry of Environment and Forests, 16/03/07.

Inter-State Coordination Committees to check poaching

Inter State Coordination Committees have been constituted to periodically review poaching problems along sensitive borders in six states having tiger reserves / protected areas. These

include the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan and the Palpur Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary in M.P, the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka, Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary/National Park in Tamilnadu and Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala and the Pench Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra and MP.

The Committees will be comprised of the Field Director, Tiger Reserve / Director, National Park / Sanctuary in the area; Deputy Directors of the PAs; Superintendent of Police / SSP in the region; and the Regional Deputy Director, MoEF who will be the Member Convener

The Committee is scheduled to meet once every three months and will work on various aspects related to poaching. This includes exchanging information on major poaching cases/seizures; working out strategies for networking and day to day exchange of information at the field level; preparation of crime dossiers of regular offenders along with photo Ids; organizing sensitization workshops as well as capacity building programmes for successful prosecution of wildlife cases; organizing collaborative border patrolling / tracking of offenders and suggesting strategies for rehabilitation / involvement of traditional hunting tribes / communities in the area for eliciting their support towards conservation.

Source: 'Formation of inter state coordination committee for anti-poaching strategy', MoEF Press Release, 15/05/07.

Dr. TN Khoshoo Award 2007 For Dr. BR Ramesh

Dr BR Ramesh, Director of Research in the Ecology Department, Institute of Pondicherry was recently given the The Dr TN Khoshoo Memorial Award 2007.

Dr. Ramesh has contributed greatly to the application of new technologies for conservation. His vegetation maps of the Western Ghats and Atlas of Endemic tree species are baseline reference materials for foresters, ecologists and conservationists. He has also worked on developing biological indicator values for measuring disturbance in ecosystems; developed wildlife management models using GIS for a Tiger Reserve and

several wildlife sanctuaries in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka; contributed to biodiversity conservation strategy and action plans for the forestry sector and has made the case for rationalizing the existing PA network to cover the substantial gaps in conservation. He has also developed an alternative model of integrated forest management using a landscape approach that would address conservation issues as well as the livelihoods of local communities and other stakeholders.

The 4th Khoshoo Memorial Lecture was delivered by Dr. M S Swaminathan, Chairman, MS Swaminathan Research Foundation. The ceremony was presided over by Dr. Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State for Commerce, Govt. of India.

The Khoshoo Memorial Endowment Fund was set up by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Environment and Ecology in the memory of Dr TN Khoshoo.

Previous awardees include elephant specialist and Director of the Bangalore-based Asian Elephant Research and Conservation Centre and Professor, CES, IISc Dr. R Sukumar (2004); Founder Trustee of Utthan and well known environmental activist Ms. Nafisa Barot (2005); Director of HESCO Dr. Anil P. Joshi (2005); and, Dr. Anupam Mishra of Gandhi Peace Foundation (2006).

Source: TN Khoshoo Award 2007 for Dr. BR Ramesh, <http://www.atree.org/index.php>

Forestry fund of Rs 3,500 crore unused

A sum of about Rs 3,500 crore meant specifically for forestry and wildlife preservation is reported to have accumulated in the kitty of the Central Government since 2004 and is lying unspent. The main reason is that the government has not been able to finalise the procedure to use it despite repeated Supreme Court orders.

The Supreme Court had in 2002 ordered the collection of this fund. It had also ordered the creation of the Compensatory Afforestation, Management and Planning Agency (CAMPA) (see *PA Updates* 54, 53 & 49) which was to collect compensation at the rate of Rs 5.8 lakh to Rs 8.2 lakh per hectare of forest land diverted for development projects like dams or irrigation

projects. The sum was to be kept out of the Consolidated Fund of India to ensure that it was not diverted for other purposes and was spent only on afforestation and conservation efforts on the basis of plans submitted by states where the diversion occurred.

It has been pointed out that the interest on the now unspent amount would add up to more than the entire annual Central plan for forestry, if one were to leave aside foreign-funded projects.

Source: Nitin Sethi. 'Forestry fund of Rs. 3,500 crore unused', *The Times of India*, 04/05/07.

TRAFFIC reopens

TRAFFIC – the wildlife trade monitoring network, a joint program of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) has re-established its office in India as a division of the WWF.

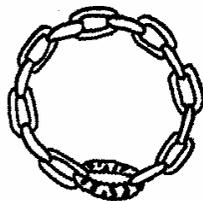
In India TRAFFIC will undertake in-depth research, assist lawmakers and collaborate with the government and like minded people as well as organizations to ensure that illegal trade in wildlife and its detrimental effects are not a threat to conservation. It will be headed by Sameer Sinha, an IFS officer.

Source: 'TRAFFIC reopens', *Tigerlink*

TigerLink restarted

The popular newsletter 'TigerLink' published by the Ranthambhore Foundation has been restarted after three years. The newsletter is now compiled and edited by Prerna Bindra.

Contact: **Prerna Bindra**. Ranthambhore Foundation, RZ-1, Bhawani Kunj, (First Floor), Behind D2 Vasant Kunj, New Delhi – 110070. Tel: 011-26893085 / 09810146686. Fax: 26893085. Email: ranthambhorefoundation@gmail.com



SOUTH ASIA

NEPAL

Sonaha community demands rights in Royal Bardia NP

The first national conference of Sonahas, a tribal community living around the forests of the Royal Bardia National Park (RBNP) was held in Rajipur, Pathavar Village in October 2006.

The Nepal Sonaha Adhikar Sangh (NSAS) was also formed during the conference.

A list of 12 demands were put forth at the end of the conference. These include:

Guarantee of unhindered access to the river within and beyond the RBNP; Traditional rights of Sonahas over forests and rivers; Unrestricted access to fallen firewood, wild vegetables, grass and other non-timber forest produce; Compensation for the loss caused by wild animals and Restructuring of protected area management in Nepal

Source: 'First National Conference of Tribal Sonaha', *People and Protected Areas*, Issue 1, March 2007

Contact: **CDO**, Sahayog Marg – 91/71, Anamnagar, Kathmandu. Tel: 977 – 1- 4254017. Email: cdonepal@wlink.com.np Website: www.cdo.org.np

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Increase in Black Necked Crane, Bar Headed Geese populations in Tibet

A survey carried out in January 2007 by the Tibet Plateau Institute of Biology and the International Crane Foundation has reported a significant increase in the number of Black Necked Cranes and Bar Headed Geese in Tibet. The survey was spread over 11 days and a distance of 2600 kms covering the valleys of the Lhasa, Yarlung and Nyang Rivers and their tributaries.

The number of Black Necked Cranes reported was 6900 which is 3000 more than what

was recorded in 1992. Similarly, the survey reported nearly 32000 geese, a number more than double of what was reported 15 years ago.

The main reason for this increase in numbers is said to be the creation of the Yarlung Zangbo River Middle Reaches Black-necked Crane Nature Reserve along with better wildlife protection by the Tibet Forestry Department and increased public awareness. Over 76 percent of the cranes and 48 percent of the geese were found within boundaries of the new nature reserve.

Source: 'Black necked crane thrives in Tibet wintering reserve', *Xinhua*, 26/02/07

Working Group on High Elevation Grasslands

A Working Group on High Elevation Grasslands is being established under the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)'s Grasslands Protected Areas Task Force. For details contact

Bill Henwood. Email: bill.henwood@pc.gc.ca

Workshop on Governance and Categories Assessment for PAs in ASEAN region

A four day 'Capacity Building Workshop on Governance and Categories Assessment' was held from April 23-27 in Sahab as part of the 2nd ASEAN Heritage Parks Conference and 4th Regional Conference on Protected Areas in S-E Asia. The workshop was organized jointly by the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity (ACB); IUCN-WCPA SEA, WWF and BirdLife International.

Through group exercises (including mapping), presentations and discussions, the workshop went into great detail on how the PA systems in each of the 10 countries of the region covered the IUCN - PA categories and the Governance types, and what the key gaps were.

Follow up actions discussed include initiation of surveys to identify Community Conserved Areas and PPAs, assessing laws/policies to see how these can be built into the PA system, and reviewing the progress of implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

Key recommendations from the workshop went into the final Action Plan of the Conference, which ASEAN as a forum will consider for implementation.

Source: Ashish Kothari. Email dated 06/05/07.

Contact: **Cristi Nozawa** (BirdLife, and also WCPA vice-chair for S-E Asia). Email: cristi@birdlife-asia.org
Ashish Kothari, C/o Kalpavriksh at the editorial address. Email: ashishkothari@vsnl.com

UPCOMING

Fourth International Conference on Environmental Education

The Fourth International Conference on Environmental Education (EE) with the theme "Environmental Education towards a Sustainable Future - Partners for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development" is to be held at the Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad from 26 to 28 November 2007. UNESCO and the Government of India are co-sponsors of the Conference.

The Conference will look at understanding what has emerged out of the discipline of EE since the first conference that was held in Tbilisi three decades ago and the role of EE within Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The Conference will also help set the roadmap for progress through the Decade for ESD (DESD). The conference will have plenary sessions, thematic workshops, poster sessions, side events, and an exhibition to address the wide range of thematic issues.

The conference hopes to bring together 1500 participants from all over the world, representing a variety of stakeholder groups including government officials from UNESCO Member States and representatives of UN agencies. Since ESD is about interdependent systems, efforts will be made to get representation from diverse fields including environment, health, water and sanitation, human rights, gender, peace, citizenship, social justice, civil society / NGOs, corporates, academics and media.

Contact: **Conference Secretariat.**
Email: tbilisiplus30@ceeindia.org
Web: www.tbilisiplus30.org

OPPURTUNITIES

Deputy Director for the Corbett Foundation

The Corbett Foundation (TCF) needs a Deputy Director to head its field operation in Dhikuli, Uttarakhand. Duties will include managing, enhancing and fine-tuning projects and programmes, and managing relationships with stakeholders in Corbett Tiger Reserve / National Park. The candidate should have worked in a managerial capacity before, heading up a team of people in the field.

A track record of work with NGOs in rural/wilderness areas, especially those with an environmental mandate - would be a plus. Good working knowledge of Hindi (reading/writing/speaking) is essential.

TCF runs a range of programmes including health services and outreach, and compensation for livestock killed by tigers/leopards outside the legal limits of the National Park and Tiger Reserve.

Contact: **The Chairman, TCF.**
Email: khatau@pacific.net.sg; gracie@varunship.com.
Web: <http://www.corbettfoundation.org/>

Oppurtunities with ATREE

The Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) has advertised the following openings as part of its various programs:

1) Research Associate, Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary:

The Research Associate will coordinate ongoing work on agro-forestry and related activities under ATREE's Conservation and Livelihood Programme (C&LP). The position will be based at the ATREE field station at the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka. Candidates should hold a graduate or post-

graduate degree and 1-2 years field experience in agroforestry, organic farming and community livelihood issues. Fluency in Kannada is required. Computer skills would be an advantage.

2) Fellow in Environmental Governance

The fellow is expected to build and lead a programme in policy and environmental governance, and contribute to the development of ATREE's Center for Conservation, Governance and Policy and an interdisciplinary doctoral program in conservation science. The candidate must have experience in policy analysis and an interest in catalyzing meaningful exchange and action among government, non-government, and corporate sector institutions involved in environmental governance. Applicants are expected to have a doctorate in social sciences though candidates with a Masters degree and substantial research and professional experience will also be considered.

This position is endowed with a grant from the Arghyam Foundation and is based at Bangalore.

Contact: **Director**, ATREE, 659, 5th 'A' Main Road Hebbal, Bangalore 560024, Email: director@atree.org

3) Conservation Education (Program officer):

This is a position based in Bangalore. The candidate should have a Masters Degree in natural or social sciences and demonstrated experience in conservation education. S/he must be willing to travel to other states in South India when required. The job primarily entails coordinating the rural conservation education initiatives of ATREE in the southern region. S/he also will be required to facilitate urban education outreach in Bangalore

Contact: **Kalpana Prassana.**
Email: kalpana@atree.org

4) Positions at ATREE's Coastal and Marine Programme:

ATREE's Coastal and Marine Programme, (<http://www.atree.org/cmp.html>) has invited applications for the following positions in two projects.

UNDP Post-Tsunami Environmental Initiative
(www.ptei-india.org)

a) Research Associate in Natural Sciences:
Applications are sought for the position of a Research Associate (RA) in the natural sciences. The RA will assist in the execution of the natural sciences component of the project and will be expected to additionally assist the Project Head and other project staff in the execution of the overall project.

The duration of the assignment is until September 2008. The candidate could subsequently be considered for a research position within the Coastal Programme

Contact: **Dr. Kartik Shanker.**

Email: kshanker@ces.iisc.ernet.in

b) Research Associate: Sociology:

The applicant should have a Masters degree in any of the social sciences, particularly sociology, anthropology or social work. The position is for the project duration (till September 2008).

Candidates with experience on working with coastal communities would be preferable. Candidates should possess good writing and communication skills and knowledge of the Tamil, Malayalam or Telugu will be beneficial. Candidates from the fishing community are encouraged to apply.

Contact: **Sudarshan Rodriguez.**

E-mail: sudarshanr@yahoo.com

c) Research Associate: Policy:

The applicant should have a Masters degree in any of the social sciences, preferably a degree in law or subjects related to policy studies especially public policy. Persons with an LLB and demonstrable research experience may also apply. The position is for the project duration (till September 2008).

Candidates for the policy position should have a keen interest in legal theory, public policy studies or policy analysis. Knowledge of Tamil, Malayalam or Telugu will be beneficial. Candidates from the fishing community are encouraged to apply

Contact: **Aarathi Sridhar.** Email:

aarthisridhar@yahoo.co.uk

d) Associate Hydrologist:

The Coastal and Marine Programme at ATREE is looking for suitable candidates for the post of a Associate Hydrologist to work on the UNDP-Post Tsunami Initiative project that will assess the impacts of upstream land-cover change and reservoir impoundments on coastal and estuarine ecosystems in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry.

The candidate is expected to have:

A Bachelor's or Master's degree in Science/Engineering/ Agriculture with a hydrology component; an aptitude for field and laboratory work with a working knowledge of Tamil besides English; familiarity with basic hydrologic principles, instrumentation and water quality sampling; knowledge of basic data processing and graphing using Excel and aptitude for learning new data processing software

Contact: **Dr. Jagdish Krishnaswamy.** Email:

jagdish.krishnaswamy@gmail.com

Volunteers for Leopard awareness program around SGNP in Mumbai

The City Forest Project under the Conservation Department of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) authorities have undertaken an initiative to reduce human-leopard conflict in SGNP. The project is being undertaken under the Monsoon Protection Strategy declared by Project Tiger.

The Plan of action includes interactions with the local communities and creation and display of banners highlighting some of the key points for explanation.

The project that will run from mid June 2007 to late November 2007 is seeking volunteers to help with its implementation.

Contact: **Krishna Tiwari.** Project Officer - City

Forests. Tel: 09833404036. Email:

tiwari_sgnp@yahoo.co.in;

jungleshwar@gmail.com

Director – Madras Crocodile Bank

The Madras Crocodile Bank / Centre for Herpetology (MCB/CFH) has advertised for the position of **Director – Administration and Development**

The candidate should have a minimum of 5 years experience in an administrative post, preferably with experience in the direction and functioning of a non-government organization, including project proposal drafting, communication with local and international funding agencies, networking with students, scientists, potential funders and the general public. While knowledge of reptiles/wildlife is not essential, the candidate should have a genuine interest in learning about the field.

Partial list of activities and responsibilities of the Director:

1. Overall direction of the day-to-day activities at MCB/CFH along with the Projects Coordinator and Curator and fulfilling set targets.
2. Fundraising/drafting project proposals for funding MCB/CFH development, research, educational, conservation activities.
3. Work with staff, trustees, Zoo Consultant, architect and engineer on development and execution of the new Masterplan for the total revamping of the Croc Bank.
4. Networking with other NGOs, reptile parks/zoos, students, scientists and colleagues of MCB/CFH.
5. Facilitate continuous publicity via all forms of public and electronic media and interact with the visiting public.

Applicants should send their complete CV, photograph, an informal statement of their interest in the position and at least three reference letters (with contact details) from persons who know them and their work.

A hard copy application marked 'For Director's Post' should be sent to:

Trustee Madras Crocodile Bank Trust
Post Bag 4 Mamallapuram – 603104,
Tamil Nadu Email: mcbtindia@vsnl.net.
Tel: Phone: (91)(0)44 2747 2447

READERS WRITE

Pilgrimages in PAs

That's an interesting point you raise in the editorial Pilgrims and PAs (*PA Update* Vol XIII, No. 2, April 2007) regarding educating pilgrims about wilderness. In Assam, Orang NP is one such place where villagers are allowed to enter the Shiva Temple located inside the park on the day of Shivratri - and often a day that poachers target.

Likewise, there is very little being done for all the tourists who visit the national parks. Kaziranga clocks a few lakh visitors every year - but what is being done to educate these people? I had mentioned this to the earlier Forest Minister of Assam during the Kaziranga Centenary panel discussion on the park's future, and quite a few people came up saying they were willing to contribute to educating visitors. Unfortunately the whole initiative seems to have disappeared into thin air.

There has to be a paradigm shift in environmental education in the state, if not in most parts of the country. We all know that this is the future, but I feel most NGO efforts in this field are myopic - their standard procedure of having "workshops" and "awareness camps" - don't keep the long term vision in mind. Education efforts need to be sustained over a period. If you ask me, the most successful educationists in modern Indian history have been the missionaries. Where is the zeal?

- **Maan Barua**
Email: maanbarua@gmail.com

Thank you for the Protected Area Update, which is packed with information as usual. The issue of pilgrims and pilgrim sites that you have raised in the Editorial is very pertinent.

- **Sumi Krishna.**
Email: sumi_krishna2002@yahoo.com

IN THE SUPREME COURT

PA related issues discussed in the Central Empowered Committee in April and May 2007:

- Destructive mining activities in the Saranda Elephant Reserve, Jharkhand
- Impact of tourist resort allegedly impacting the Kayanpura Elephant Corridor, Karnataka
- Continuance of Fishing in Tawa Reservoir in the Satpura National Park by the Tawa Displaced Tribal Fish Production and Marketing Co-operative Federation, Madhya Pradesh
- Construction of the Mughal Road from Bafliaz (Poonch) to Shopian (Pulwama), Jammu & Kashmir and its impacts related to the Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuary
- Application seeking judicial approval in respect of disposal of forest produce in Valmiki Wildlife Sanctuary

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 Web: www.forestcaseindia.org

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