

# PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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**Wetlands in Focus**

For the bird enthusiasts in the wildlifing community, winter is certainly an exciting time. Millions of migratory birds, particularly waterfowl, from far away lands fly into the Indian subcontinent colonizing water-bodies of every size and shape in every nook and corner of the landscape. The birds come and with them they bring the spotlight on the wetlands they visit.

That there is an increased awareness of the phenomenon of bird migration is evident in the large number of reports and photographs of the migratory birds that now appear regularly in both English and the vernacular newspapers.

It is well known that wetlands are, in terms of biomass, one of the most productive ecosystems that also provide a number of crucial environmental services – they recharge groundwater, provide water for agricultural activities, help in stabilizing the local micro-climate, act as sinks during the flooding season, support millions of livelihoods through fisheries, agriculture and related activities and are the homes of a diverse range of animal and plant life.

It is also well known, and ironically so, that wetlands are one of the most abused systems – their waters are full of toxic chemicals that are discharged as industrial effluents or which run off from agricultural lands, they are used as dumping grounds for our wastes and are continually drained to create land for industry, human habitation or agricultural fields. As water stress and demands for the resource increase, control over wetlands and use of the water is also bound to also become a source of serious conflict between various stakeholders; wildlife and migratory birds being one important category of such a stakeholder, though one that does not have any voice.

It is imperative that the issue of the protection and conservation of wetlands must become a priority for all sections of society, be it the media, the non-governmental sector, government agencies, the courts or ordinary citizens.

Efforts are certainly being made. National level organizations like the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Nature (SACON) have worked on creating an umbrella Wetlands Policy and an action plan for wetlands, but nothing concrete has

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**For details see Page 24**

emerged from there. The media, however, has taken greater interest in recent times, as is evident from the reports in this and earlier issues of the *PA Update*. In many parts of the country communities like the Sri Sri Mahavir Pakhi Surakshya Samiti of Mangalajodi under the Chilka Forest Division (see news from Orissa below) have taken up protection programs, both for the birds and for the wetlands (for more such initiatives see [www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/Wkg\\_grp/TILCEP/A/CCA%20India%20brochure%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp/Wkg_grp/TILCEP/A/CCA%20India%20brochure%20(2).pdf)).

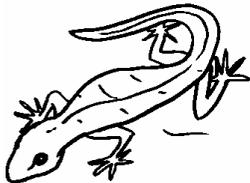
A number of wetlands have been declared as protected areas, important birds areas or sites of importance under the provisions of the Ramsar Convention. Many more are regularly proposed for inclusion within such frameworks for better protection and management (see news from Assam). A National Wetland Conservation Program has been initiated and a regulatory framework for wetland protection is being considered under the provisions of the Environment Protection Act – 1986.

All this is welcome, but clearly, much more needs to be done because the threats to our wetlands, like too many of our other natural ecosystems, is increasing faster and is much larger than we care to believe.

## NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

### ANDHRA PRADESH

#### Golden Gecko sighted in Papikonda WLS



A specimen of the rare Golden Gecko was recently found by the Wildlife Institute of India in the Perantallapalli Village in the Papikonda Wildlife Sanctuary. Known locally as the Bangaru Balli, this is said to be the first record of the gecko from this place.

The reptile is mostly found in the rocky ravines of the Eastern Ghats and has been recently sighted in the Western Ghats of Karnataka and South Arcot district in Tamil Nadu.

Source: 'Golden Gecko sighted in Papikonda sanctuary', <http://www.newindpress.com/news/10/10/07>.

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

### ARUNACHAL PRADESH

#### WWF, Army for conservation of Arunachal Pradesh wildlife and forests

The Indian Army has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – India to prepare a joint action plan for conservation of forests and wildlife in western Arunachal Pradesh.

The MoU was signed by Maj. Gen. D. S. Sidhu, GOC 5 Mountain Division, and Sejal Worah, programme director of WWF-India, at a function at Tenga in Arunachal Pradesh in September.

Source: 'Wildlife protection', [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070908/asp/northeast/story\\_8290104.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1070908/asp/northeast/story_8290104.asp)

Contact: **Sejal Wohra**, WWF-I, 172-B, Lodi Estate, New Delhi - 110 003. Email: **CWLW**, Forest Department, Itanagar – 719111. Arunachal Pradesh. Tel: 0360 – 222310 (o)/ 224370 @. Fax: 0360 – 222351/223556

### ASSAM

#### Survey for herpetofauna in and around Barail WLS

The NGO Aaranyak has undertaken a project 'Diversity and Distribution of Herpetofauna and Evaluation of Conservation Status in Barail Hill Range'. The project has been funded by the Rufford Foundation and logistical support is being provided by the Assam Forest Department and villages on the fringes of the Barail Wildlife Sanctuary.

The study has covered the lower elevation of the Barail Wildlife Sanctuary, fringe villages and tea gardens of the northernmost areas of Cachar and

has recorded 57 species of reptiles and amphibians in the area comprising 19 species of snakes, 15 species of lizards, 20 species of frogs and three species of turtles and tortoises. The survey found two species enlisted in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species — the Asian giant tortoise (*Manouria emys*) and keeled box turtle (*Pyxidea mouhotii*).

. More species of reptiles including the four keeled skink, which was spotted here for the first time in 1905, are expected to be found when the survey covers new ranges.

Source: 'Rediscovery of skink after a century' [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071031/asp/northeast/story\\_8489074.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071031/asp/northeast/story_8489074.asp)

Contact: **Aaranyaak**, Samanwoy Path (Survey), PO Beltola, Guwahati - 781 028, Assam. Email: [bibhab1@sancharnet.in](mailto:bibhab1@sancharnet.in)

### Rs 1cr sought for Kaziranga NP

The Assam Forest Department (FD) has approached the Supreme Court for Rs. One crore for development of the Kaziranga National Park and deal with the huge losses suffered in the recent floods. The money had been deposited more than a year ago by Oil India Limited (OIL) as money for compensatory afforestation for installing an optical fibre link between Upper and Lower Assam that runs through the park.

The FD had put forward a proposal for the company to provide 8,000 litres of petrol and diesel a year for vehicles used in patrolling the park. In response to the plea of the company that this was too much, the Supreme Court has asked them to pay an amount of Rs. Five lakh to the department for the purpose.

Source: Rs 1cr sought for park

[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071110/asp/northeast/story\\_8530783.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071110/asp/northeast/story_8530783.asp)

Padmaparna Ghosh. 'OIL to help monitor Kaziranga',

<http://www.livemint.com/2007/11/07231652/OIL-to-help-monitor-Kaziranga.html>

### 18 rhinos killed in and around Kaziranga in first 10 months of 2007

	Date	Range	Poaching method
1	07.01.07	Burapahar	Gun Shot
2	04.03.07	Kohara	Gun Shot
3	09.03.07	Burapahar	Gun Shot
4	15.03.07	Burapahar	Gun Shot
5	06.04.07	Agoratoli	Gun Shot
6	13.04.07	Agoratoli	Gun Shot
7	20.05.07	Burapahar	Gun Shot
8	03.07.07	Burapahar R	Gun Shot
9	17.07.07	Bagori	Gun Shot
10	20.07.07	Agoratoli	Pit poaching
11	24.09.07	Agoratoli	Gun Shot
12	23.10.07	Bagori	Gun Shot

### Rhino poaching /Accidental deaths of Rhinos outside the Park area in 2007

1	26.01.07	Lakhimpur	Accidental
2	16.03.07	BhaktaChapori	Gun Shot
3	16.05.07	Golaghat Divn.	Accidental
4	06.08.07	Bonkowal	Gun Shot
5	06.08.07	NKAWLS	Gun Shot
6	15.09.07	Hatikuli T.E	Gun Shot

Source:[http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/html/news/2007/071025\\_rhino\\_killed\\_by\\_poachers\\_in%20Assam.html](http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/html/news/2007/071025_rhino_killed_by_poachers_in%20Assam.html)

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

### Watchtowers constructed to warn of elephant raids near Kaziranga

Three watchtowers have been constructed in Lokhowjan, Rajabari and Borsapori to help the local farmers ward away the wild elephants from the nearby Kaziranga NP. Frequent raids by elephants have angered the villagers who have resorted to attacking these elephants with spears and crude arms. Lack of compensation for the damage to their crop and property has further aggravated the problem. Nearly 174 hectares (about 42 tons) of crops were damaged in Lokhowjan, Rajabari and Borsapori in 2006.

The watchtowers have been constructed by The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) with the help of the Assam Forest Department as part of an initiative under WTI's Rapid Action Project (RAP).

**Source:** Watchtowers constructed to warn of elephant raid near Kaziranga, [http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/html/news/2007/071009\\_elephant\\_watch\\_towers\\_assam.html](http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/html/news/2007/071009_elephant_watch_towers_assam.html)

### **Cycle squads to counter poachers in Manas**

Taking a cue from the Indian Army's extensive use of bicycles in counter-insurgency operations, Manas National Park authorities have decided to deploy "bicycle squads" in its anti-poaching drive. The army had found the bicycles to be very effective in interior areas with very poor or no roads at all.

The squad in Manas comprising of 40 bicycles was to be launched in the last week of November. An additional 40 bicycles will also be eventually procured.

The park has also procured four motorcycles and several new guard camps have been set up in the remote areas of the park to ensure better protection.

**Source:** Pullock Dutta. 'Manas cycle squads to counter poachers', [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071120/asp/northeast/story\\_8566316.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071120/asp/northeast/story_8566316.asp)

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

### **FD for sanctuary status for Urapad Beel**

The Assam Forest Department (FD) has proposed to declare the Urapad *Beel* in the Goalpara district as a bird sanctuary. Thousands of migratory waterfowl visit the wetland every year that was recently listed as an Important Bird Area by the Bombay Natural History Society.

The FD is reported to have just completed a comprehensive study on the waterbody following which the proposal was mooted.

The *beel*, covering an area of six square km, is in Agia, about 10km from Goalpara town along National Highway 37. The FD says that declaring the *beel* a sanctuary would also help in the conservation of crocodiles that are found here.

**Source:** 'More protection for lake's winged guests', [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071011/asp/northeast/story\\_8418757.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071011/asp/northeast/story_8418757.asp)

### **Call to declare Sareswar Beel a sanctuary**

The Dhubri based NGO Nature's Friend has asked for the Sareswar *Beel* to be declared a wildlife sanctuary. The *beel* that has been listed as a Site of Global Importance in the Directory of Asian Wetlands plays hosts to 1000s of birds every year and is considered one of the best wintering sites in the region for migratory waterfowl.

The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) too is reported to have supported the move and has promised putting of infrastructure like watch towers and a guest house to encourage visitors to the place.

Nature's Friend has also pointed out that the government has recently decided to allot land on the periphery of the wetland for commercial activities and that this would be detrimental for the ecology of the place. The NGO has said that it will take up the matter with the Chief Minister of Assam soon.

**Source:** 'Sanctuary dream spreads wings', [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071026/asp/northeast/story\\_8470791.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071026/asp/northeast/story_8470791.asp)

### **Staff shortage plagues Orang NP**

The Rajiv Gandhi (Orang) National Park is reported to be plagued with a serious shortage of manpower and this is adversely affecting protection and conservation work here.

The park does not have a veterinary doctor and the park authorities have to look elsewhere in cases related to death of or injury to wild animals. Of the 186 forest guards required to patrol the park, only 50 guards and 36 casual employees are employed at present. The park also has only four mahouts and five gardeners, against the requirement for 16 each. Similarly, while 18 boatmen are required for the 16 country boats and two motor boats, only nine have been employed.

(Also see PA Update Vol XIII, No. 5, Oct 2007, for similar reports of staff shortage in PAs across the country)

Source: 'No cure for park illness – Orang reels under veterinary crisis',  
[http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071023/asp/northeast/story\\_8451759.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071023/asp/northeast/story_8451759.asp)

Contact: **DFO**, Orang NP, Mangaldoi Wildlife Division, P.O. Mangaldoi, Darrang - 784 125, Tel: 0914-22065(O), 22349(R)  
**Chief Wildlife Warden** – Assam, Rehabari, Guwahati – 781008, Assam. Tel: 0361-2566064. Fax 2547386

## BIHAR

### Retired army personnel for Valmiki TR

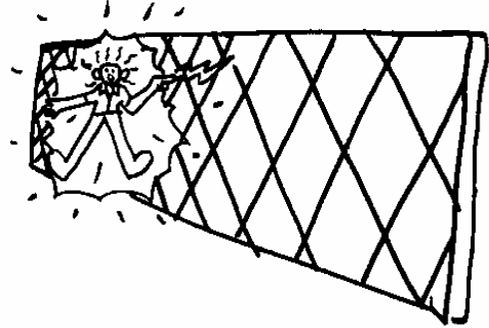
The Bihar State Government has decided to recruit retired army personnel for the protection of the Valmiki Tiger Reserve. A proposal in this regard, which was put forwarded by the state government to the centre, has been approved. The protection force will comprise of 50 personnel in its first phase and will be expanded later.

Source: 'Now retired army personnel to save tigers',  
<http://bihartimes.com/news07/Nov/9/elev en4.html>

Contact: **Director**, Valmiki TR, Bettiah, Dist. West Champaran, Bihar. Tel: 06254 – 235331/232909. Fax: 232909

## GUJARAT

### Squads to identify electrified fences in Gir



The Gujarat Forest Department (FD) and the Paschim Gujarat Vij Company have launched a joint operation to identify electrified fences being erected by farmers in the Gir forest region. The decision has been taken following a number of recent incidents of electrocution of lions here due to the electrified fences.

The Supreme Court too had asked the Central as well as the state government for their responses to a petition filed recently in the matter.

Source: 'Squads to identify electrified fences in Gir',  
<http://www.wildlifewatch.in/news/427,02/11/07>

Contact: **Bharat Pathak**, CF (Wildlife) Junagadh, Sardar Bag, Junagadh, Gujarat. Tel: 0285 - 631678/ 630051. Fax: 631211. Email: [cfwildlife\\_ad1@sancharnet.in](mailto:cfwildlife_ad1@sancharnet.in)

**CWLW** - Gujarat, Block 14, Dr. Jivraj Mehta Bhavan, Old Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar-382010, Gujarat. Tel: 02712-230007. Fax: 221097.

## JAMMU & KASHMIR

### Hangul population between 117 and 190

A recent *Hangul* population estimation carried out by the Jammu & Kashmir Department of Wildlife Protection and subsequent analysis by Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has put the hangul population in the Dachigam National Park between 117 and 190.

A study published in 2005 has suggested that the Hangul population was between 250 and 300 animals (*PA Update* Vol. XI, No. 4, August 2005) while an even earlier survey of 2004 had put the number at 140 (*PA Update* 47)

According to the researchers the major threats to the animal include disease transmissions from the sheep and goats, habitat degradation due to the collection of firewood, small timber and palatable foliage for cattle by local people, livestock and the grazers who camp in the upper Dachigam during summer, harassment by sheep dogs, frequent uncontrolled fires, lack of connectivity between the relic populations and the main (Dachigam) population and predation by the leopard (see *PA Update* Vol XIII, No. 1, February, 2007).

It has been suggested that the upper Dachigam area should be made free from livestock and human use to enable the animal to use its traditional summer range and not remain confined to lower Dachigam only. The Forest Department is also said to have prepared a plan for *Hangul* conservation. It envisages in-situ breeding of *Hangul* and restoration of its summer habitats in Dachigam National Park and conservation of its relic habitations like Khanmoh and Wangath. Approval for the plan is awaited.

The Central Government is reported to have also agreed in principle to a Rs. 8.6 project for hangul conservation from the next financial year. Setting up Project Hangul is also being considered.

Source: Arif Shafi Wani. 'Kashmiri Hangul faces extinction threat',

[http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full\\_story.asp?Date=22\\_11\\_2007&ItemID=31&cat=1](http://www.greaterkashmir.com/full_story.asp?Date=22_11_2007&ItemID=31&cat=1)

Arif Shafi Wani. 'Govt. mulls action plan for hangul conservation', [www.GreaterKashmir.com](http://www.GreaterKashmir.com), 24/11/07.

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

### **Limber and Lachipora WLSs to be included in new Qazinag National Park**

The Jammu & Kashmir State Government has proposed the creation of a new national park, the Qazinag NP, close to the Line of Control (LOC) near Uri in the Baramulla district. The area is reported to have good populations of a number endangered species of wildlife like the

markhor, the musk deer and the Asiatic Black bear. It will be the fifth national park in the state and the biggest and will include the Limber and Lachipora WLSs.

Though the exact area of the park is still to be decided, the initial proposal has been sent to the State Law Department for a legal opinion and to figure out issues regarding the relocation of 15,000 odd people who live in the nearly 30 settlements within the two sanctuaries.

(Also see *PA Update* Vol XIII, No. 3, June 2007 for reports of mining inside the Limber and Lachipora WLSs)

Source: 'New J&K park to protect bear, markhor', <http://www.kashmirlive.com/story/Fifth-national-park-on-the-anvil-in-JK/240079.html>

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

### **Workshop on Army participation in wildlife conservation in Ladakh**

The fourth workshop on "Military/Paramilitary Forces and Environment Conservation in Ladakh" was held in the first week of October. The workshop was jointly organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – India, the Jammu & Kashmir State Department of Wildlife Protection, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and the field research laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation, Leh.

It was attended by seventy-five officers from the Army, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Himank (border roads association in Ladakh) and the Jammu and Kashmir Police.

The workshop was inaugurated by Tsering Dorjay, Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council.

Source: 'Army to help save wildlife in Ladakh', 03/10/07. <http://www.wildlifewatch.in/news/164>

Contact: **Pankaj Chandan**, WWF - I Hemis Complex, Zangsti Road, Leh 194 101 J & K. Tel: 01982 – 251896. Fax: 252414. Email: pchandan@wwfind.net; [pankaj\\_chandan2001@yahoo.com](mailto:pankaj_chandan2001@yahoo.com)

### **Program for wetlands in state**

Concerned over the shrinking water bodies and wetlands due to a range of reasons including anthropogenic pressure, the Jammu and Kashmir government has initiated a number of measures under the National Lakes and Wetland conservation programme for their preservation.

Official sources said an amount of Rs 177.68 crore was received by the state government from the Centre under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes for the Dal Lake from 1997 to 2007. Rs 164.06 crore from this amount has been spent so far.

The state government had created the Lakes and Waterway Development Authority (LAWDA) in 1997 with the mandate for conservation and management of Dal and Nigeen lakes. A detailed project report for Rs 298.76 crore was subsequently approved by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) in September 2005.

The LAWDA and FD have already axed more than three lakh trees and demolished hundreds of illegal constructions in the Dal Lake during the past two years following directions by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. The court has also directed the LAWDA to prepare a list of buildings constructed within the green belt area around the Lake.

The state government has also prepared a comprehensive management action plan for the conservation of Wular Lake at a cost of Rs 386.01 crores. The plan is to be presented to the MOEF for financial assistance. An amount of Rs 45 lakh was received and spend on Wular Lake in the year 2003-04. A management action plan for the Hokersar wetland with a project cost of Rs 15.31 crore was submitted to MOEF against which Rs 31 lakh were received by the Forest Department in June this year. Another proposal of Rs 6.91 crores for the Surinsar Mansar wetlands in Jammu region has also been prepared and

submitted to MOEF and the sanction for this is still awaited.

The State Government has also prepared and submitted a number of other proposals: for the Mirgund conservation reserve for Rs 1.20 crore, the Hygam wetland for Rs 1.60 crore and the Salabugh conservation reserve for Rs 1.70 crore. (See *PA Updates* 45, 43, 41, 40 and 39) Source: 'Rs. 164 crore spend on Dal, Rs. 386 crore project for Wular Lake', <http://www.newkerala.com/oct.php?action=fullnews&id=7631>

### **Willow plantation around Hokersar stopped**

A Central Government funded project for the plantation of willow trees around the Hokersar Lake has been stopped following concerns over its negative impact on the waterbody.

A proposal for planting the willows around the lake was sent last year by the Department of Wild Life Protection to New Delhi. Rupees Seven lakhs had been released for the project.

The plantation drive was, however, stopped recently after new Chief Wildlife Warden A K Srivastava took charge and prepared a detailed report highlighting the ecological impact of the willows around the lake. It is feared that the willow trees will drain the water of the lake and lead to a shrinkage in its size.

The money meant for the plantation has now been diverted to other programs like the anti-poaching initiatives, and arranging feed for the birds including water chestnuts and typha cultivation. As per official records Hokersar, hosted 450,000 migratory birds last winter. (Also see *PA Update* 41)

Source: Ozair Nissar. 'Wetlands to vanish within seven years: Environmentalists', [http://etalaat.net/english/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=3028&Itemid=27](http://etalaat.net/english/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3028&Itemid=27)

### **Six lakh migratory birds flock to Kashmir**

More than six lakh migratory waterfowl were estimated to have reached the wetlands of Kashmir including those of Hokersar, Mirgund, Shallabugh and Hygam in the month of November.

Source: 'Six migratory birds flock Kashmir',  
*The Financial Express*, 23/11/07.

Contact: **CWLW**, Forest Department, Manda  
Deer Park, Manda, Near Hotel Ashok,  
Jammu - 180001 Jammu & Kashmir.

## **KARNATAKA**

### **Chilli tobacco rope elephant barrier being tried in Bannerghata NP**

Ropes laced with chilli powder and tobacco are being tied around fields bordering the Bannerghatta National Park in an experiment to deal with the increasing problem of elephant depredation. The project has been started by the Forest Department along with the Wildlife Conservation Society. 12 strategic locations where elephant movement is common have been identified for the purpose of implementing the project.

The method known as the 'chilli tobacco rope elephant barrier' has been successfully implemented in African countries.

Source: Amit Upadhye. 'Great Indian rope to do the trick', *The Times of India*, 19/11/07.

### **Tourism plans for PAs in Western Ghats**

The Karnataka State Government has planned the creation of trails and camps at Aanjeri in the Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS), Seethanadi in the Someshwara WLS, Sakrebylu in the Shettihalli WLS, Kulagi in the Dandeli Tiger Reserve, Anshi in Anshi National Park (NP), Bhagawati in Kudremukh NP, Talacauvery in Talacauvery WLS and Gopinatham in the Cauvery WLS.

In a proposal submitted to the Union Government for financial assistance, the Tourism Department has sought Rs. 9.41 crore for strengthening infrastructure for the purpose. The project would be implemented by the Tourism Department through the Forest Department.

While the camps at Talacauvery and Gopinatham will be thrown open for the public for the first time, Kulagi and Sakrebylu camps have been running for a while. In the last two years, Kulagi, known for hornbills, Cyntheri

rocks, Kavala caves, and rafting has attracted over 25,000 visitors while Sakrebylu, a popular elephant camp has received over 8,000 tourists.

Source: Sharath Srivatsa. 'Plan to boost eco-tourism in the Western Ghats', *The Hindu*, 08/11/07.

### **FD opposes erection of electric poles inside Nagarhole NP**

The Karnataka Forest Department (Wildlife), Hunsur Division has objected to the erection of electric poles inside the Nagarhole National Park as part of the Rajiv Gandhi Rural Electrification Project. The work was being done by a contractor to supply power to tribal hamlets in the area.

The FD has asked the contractor to furnish the relevant documents for the work and stressed that the work needed to be ratified by the department first.

The villagers here have pointed out that high tension wires already pass through the PA and that permission for the erection of poles to provide electricity to them should be given immediately.

Source: 'Erecting of electric poles inside park sparks controversy', *The New Indian Express*, 07/11/07.

Contact: **Dy. Conservator of Forests**, Nagarhole NP, Wildlife Division, Hunsur, Dist. Mysore, Karnataka. Tel: 08222-252041(O), 252070(R)

### **25 tigers counted in Bandipur TR; 14 in Nagarhole**

The recently concluded tiger census in the Bandipur and Nagarhole TRs has revealed the presence of 25 tigers in an area of 120 sq kms and 14 tigers in 120 sq. kms respectively. The study was conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India using the Camera-trap method. The forests of Bandipur were covered in the summer of 2007, while those of Nagarhole, were surveyed after the southwest monsoon.

Two cameras were placed every 2 km over the chosen forest area for the purpose of the census exercise. The line-transect method was also used.

Karnataka's third tiger Reserve, the Anshi Dandeli TR will be surveyed during the fourth phase of the census in January 2008 along with ten other reserves all over the country.

Source: Alladi Jayasri. 'Tiger census shows good signs in State',  
<http://www.hindu.com/2007/11/07/stories/2007110754970400.htm>

Contact: **Field Director**, Bandipur Project Tiger Reserve, Aranya Bhawan, Ashokapuram, Mysore – 570008, Karnataka. Tel: 0821-2480901(O), 2484980 (R).

### Elephant population dips in Karnataka

A census carried out in the month of May has revealed that the elephant population in Karnataka has come down from 4347 in 2005 to 4035 now. This figure is also considerably lower than the 5800 elephants counted here in 2002. Experts have, however, said that there is no reason to be worried because numbers tend to vary as elephants continually migrate from one state to another

The Asian Nature Conservation Foundation (ANCF), Indian Institute of Science (IISc) conducted the present study using sample block counting, line transects count, waterhole count and the block count method.

The census was carried out in 23 forest divisions, where the ANCF, using densities, calculated the number of elephants sighted and divided it by the total population in all divisions.

According to the final report there were 1005 elephants in the Bandipur NP while 692 and 591 elephants were counted in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary and the Nagarhole NP respectively. The overall male-female ratio for all divisions together is 1:2.1, where the sex ratio at sub-adult class showed a higher skew towards females than in the adult class.

The census was conducted with Rs. 15 lakh that was sanctioned to the state by the Centre under Project Elephant.

Source: Ashwini YS. 'Elephant population dips in Karnataka', *The Times of India*, 24/10/07.

### Six new species found in Kudremukh NP



A survey conducted in October 2005 by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has reported the discovery of six new species of fauna from the Kudremukh National Park. This includes five insects and one fish, all of which are new to science. The new species have been documented in "Fauna of Kudremukh National Park," a publication which was released recently in Bangalore along with a similar documentation on fauna in the Bannerghatta National Park and the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary.

The new fish, a variety of fresh water catfish, has been named *Glyptothorax kudremukhensis*. It was found from a stream of the Tunga flowing through a degraded forest patch at Muduba. This 32.66 mm long, yellowish coloured, speckled fish was found in a small water pool formed by stones that had blocked the flow of water

The five new insects discovered — *Duta polita*, *Paridris armigera*, *Psilanteris coriacea*, *Psilanteris ferruginus* and *Psilanteris orbitus* — are parasites that feed on other insects.

Source: 'The Garden of Eden just got fuller', *The Hindu*, 25/10/07.

Contact: DCF, Kudremukh Wildlife Division, Karkala, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka. Tel: 08258-221183(O), 221004(R). Fax: 08258-221183

**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](mailto:pccfwl@vsnl.com)

### KERALA

## **New peacock sanctuary at Choolannur, conservation reserve at Kadalundi**

The Kerala government has recently created its first 'peacock sanctuary', spread over 500 hectares at Choolannur. A conservation reserve for protection of birds has also been created at Kadalundi in the Malappuram district.



Source: 'Kerala opens first peacock sanctuary at Choolannur',  
<http://www.newkerala.com/oct.php?action=fullnews&id=9032>  
'Safari park to come up in Kozhikode',  
*The Indian Express*, 08/10/07

## **New 'Malabar Wildlife Sanctuary' to cover forests of Kozhikode and Wayanad districts**

The Kerala Forest Department recently announced a proposal to set up the Malabar Wildlife Sanctuary that will comprise Reserve Forest areas of Kozhikode and Wayanad districts. The sanctuary that will be part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve and the Wayanad Elephant Reserve will cover an area of 75 sq. kms.

The Kakkayam Reserve Forest, the vested forest of the Kombium beat, the Kalpudian beat of Peruvannamuzhy range and the vested forest of Achooranam and Kuriachermala of the Kalpetta range will be included in the sanctuary.

Source: 'Malabar wildlife sanctuary soon', *The Hindu*, 08/10/07.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden** – Kerala,  
Vazhudacaud, Trivandrum – 695014,  
Kerala. Tel: 0471-2322217 / 2360452 /  
2204896. Fax: 2360452 / 2322217

## **MADHYA PRADESH**

### **MP bans polythene in national parks**

The Madhya Pradesh Government has banned the use of polythene in national parks in the state from November 1. Visitors will be

provided with paper bags at the entrance of the park for carrying their belongings.

Source: 'MP to ban polythene in national parks',  
<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/004200710081421.htm>

### **MP Forest Department goes hi-tech**

The Madhya Pradesh Forest Department (FD) is going hi-tech to protect the state's green cover and wildlife by using Information Technology (IT) to enable better net-working among forest officials. The FD has tied up with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) to train its staff and disseminate forestry related information with the help of IT applications. The department has recently become the first in the country to start a forest IT training centre.

Forest guards have been equipped with mobile phones and personal digital assistants powered with GPS and GPRS facility, with the help of which they can take pictures of the forest area and forest-offenders.

Interactive class sessions and virtual classrooms - run by ISRO and BHEL - for officers and technical staff have been conducted at 54 centres in the state to train officers and technical staff.

Source: 'MP forest dept. goes hi-tech',  
<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/004200710211280.htm>

### **Low male-female crocodile ratio in the National Chambal Sanctuary causes concern**



The low male-female ratio of crocodiles in the National Chambal Wildlife Sanctuary is causing concern amongst scientists and forest officials. Only 20 of the 865 crocodiles in the sanctuary are reported to be male.

Climate change and increased infant mortality has been held responsible for the present situation.

The government is said to have provided an incubator to the park authorities to help them deal with the situation. A serious shortage of electricity has however meant the equipment is not used effectively.

Source: 'Low male-female crocodile ratio causes concern', *The Pioneer*, 15/10/07.

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

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

## MAHARASHTRA

### New spider found in Melghat TR

A new spider is reported to have been discovered from the Melghat Tiger Reserve. It was found in the Sipna Wildlife Division in October during an expedition to study spiders being conducted by 30 research students from Amravati University along with the Nature Conservation Society, Amravati.

The insect is about one centimeter long and has an arch-shaped thorax, which tapers down to two lobes at the posterior end.

Reputed scientists including those from the Zoology Department of the University have confirmed that the spider is indeed a new species.

Source: Archana Sharma. 'New spider found in Melghat', *The Times of India*, 18/11/07.

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

### Dummy traps to train forest staff in Pench TR

A novel initiative to train forest staff in the Pench Tiger Reserve has been launched to

locate tiger traps used by poachers. Dummy wooden traps -- which look like the original steel traps generally used by poachers to snare tigers -- will be laid in prime areas and the field staff will be asked to find them within four hours. The wooden traps would be laid by some unidentified forest officials. A team of six employees headed by a Range Forest Officer (RFO) that will be asked to find the traps would be provided clues on the basis of which they are supposed to work.

This is part of a number of new initiatives launched here by the Director of the Reserve, Dr. Mohan Jha. He pointed out that perpetrators of crime always leave behind a trail in the forests, but field staff was unable to identify these because of lack of training. In the next step real steel traps will be laid for detection, after removing the springs so that no harm is caused to humans or animals.

The Tiger Reserve authorities have also decided to take plaster casts of tiger pugmarks all round the year in an effort to create its own database. Around 150 pug impression pads (PIPs) are being created for the purpose in the park and their number will be subsequently increased.

The authorities also held a meeting with *sarpanchs* from surrounding villages during wildlife week to discuss and involve them in forest conservation efforts.

Source: Vinay Pinjarkar. 'Novel way to curb tiger poaching', *The Times of India*, 04/10/07.

Contact: **Dr. Mohan Jha**, Director Pench TR, Near Govt. Press, Civil Line, Nagpur - 440001, Maharashtra. Tel: 0712-2524727(O), 2267282(R) Fax 0712-2539226

**Chief Wildlife Warden**, Maharashtra State, Dr. Ambedkar Bhawan, 4 & 5th Floor, M.E.C.L. Building Seminary Hills & Campus, Nagpur - 440001, Maharashtra. Tel: 0712-2526758 / 2530126. Fax - 2510671. Email: cfwl@nagpur.dot.net.in

## ORISSA

### Tourism promotion in Satkosia WLS

The Orissa Forest Department has launched a big tourism project at Tikarpara in the Satkosia Gorge Wildlife Sanctuary.

Ten tents have been built on the banks of the Mahanadi for visitors. These have been provided with modern amenities like toilets, a kitchen and solar lighting. The initiative is being run by a 62-member local youth association called Tikarpara Paribesh Pratistan (TIPPS).

The charge for the tent per day has been fixed at Rs 500. Having earned Rs 92,000 last year, TIPPS has set a target of Rs 5 lakh for this year. Tourism is also being started in the Purunakote area of the sanctuary for the first time  
(Also see *PA Updates* Vol. XIII, No 2, 3 & 4).

Source: 'Tikarpara now beckons eco-tourists',  
*The New Indian Express*, 31/10/07.

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Satkosia  
Wildlife Division, At/P.O Dist. Angul –  
759143, Orissa. Tel: 0674-230218(O),  
230219@

group of organisations in the name of providing succour to poor are supporting infiltrators and the unauthorised occupation of both, the revenue and forest lands. Besides felling trees and converting the forestland to homestead and paddy fields, these inhabitants were fishing in prohibited territory with resources and equipment provided by the NGOs. The FD has also alleged that the NGOs were giving cattle and goats to the illegal settlers here under social security schemes. Many of these were freely grazing inside the forest areas causing further degradation.

The FD report also says that there is evidence that some organisations were clearing the existing mangrove and then trying regeneration to show the activity as their own project.

It is not known whether the FD has made public the list of NGOs it has named in this report to the state government.

**DFO**, Bhitarkanika NP, At/PO Rajnagar, Dist.  
Kendrapada – 745225. Orissa. Tel:  
06729-72460/64. Fax: 06727-20775

### **Mechanised boats banned at Gahirmatha for turtle nesting season**



Forest officials have imposed a ban on fishing activities by mechanised boats inside the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary from November 1, 2007 to May 31, 2008 as per the provisions of the Orissa Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1982 and Orissa Marine Fishing Rules, 1983. This is one of main steps taken by the authorities to ensure safe nesting of the Olive ridley turtles that nest along the beaches here in large numbers every year.

The Forest Department has also sought help from the Coast Guard and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) personnel of Wheeler Island to step up surveillance around the island.

12 on shore and three off shore camps will be set up by the FD to prevent the illegal entry of trawlers to the sanctuary during the ban period. The local police have been requested to keep a tab on the fishermen who illegally enter into the sanctuary to catch fish violating the order. Besides, night patrolling will also be stepped up by the forest officials with the help of Coast Guard personnel.

The forest officials have also planned to establish artificial hatcheries to hatch some of the turtle eggs.

In a later development 17 fishermen were taken into custody in the last week of November for fishing inside the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary. They were arrested from four deep sea-trawlers that were spotted by the FD near Satabhaya Chinciri Island in the prohibited waters. Fish catch worth Rs. Three lakhs, fishing nets and implements were seized from the fishermen who are from Balasore and Paradip.

Source: Forest officials on their toes to ensure a safe breeding season for Olive Ridelys', *The Pioneer*, 25/10/07.

'17 fishermen intercepted for illegal fishing', *The Statesman*, 25/11/07

### **Ban on NTFP collection causes of collapse of *haat* system in Sunabeda WLS; local tribals adversely affected**

The traditional barter and *haat* (market) system which was an informal source of credit and trading for tribals in and around the forests of the Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary has been badly hit after the ban on extracting NTFPs from protected areas has come into place.

The Sunabeda Sangharsa Bahini (SSB) which is opposing the eviction of tribals from the sanctuary has pointed out that business in NTFPs from the sanctuary area gave tribals a fair price for their collection prior to the ban. The ban has now deterred the traders from purchasing any of the produce collected and brought to the *haats* by the local tribals. The SSB has also pointed out that even if the locals managed to collect some NTFP now, their collection fetched less returns as they no longer enjoyed the control they had on their resources. Before the ban, tribals used to collect *amla*, *harida*, *bahada* and *mahul* and sell them. The traders would pay the tribals either in cash or in the form of essential commodities like clothes, soaps, and edible oil.

(Also see *PA Update* Vol XIII, No. 4)

Source: 'NTFP ban: barter, *haat* system collapse', Express News Service, 2/10/07.

Contact: **DFO**, Sunabeda Wildlife Division, At/P.O. Dist. Nuapada – 766105, Orissa. Tel: 06678 - 23372(O), 23401(R)

### **GIS mapping to trace elephant movement in Chandaka Dampara WLS**

Efforts are being made to use Geographic Information System (GIS) based applications to track the movement pattern of elephants in and around the Chandaka Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary. Annual and seasonal data and information about cropping pattern, water availability, areas of the forests used by villagers to collect resources like firewood or graze their cattle is to be used to understand, predict and manage elephant depredation with the help of the villagers of the periphery areas.

This area has seen a lot of animal human conflict in recent years and it is hoped this initiative will help deal with the problem (see *PA Updates* Vol XIII, No. 3 & 1; Vol XI, No. 4; and Nos. 49, 46, 41, 39, 34, 32 & 29.)

Present analysis of the movement pattern of the elephants from the GIS database shows that the elephants generally move out towards the South on the Khurda side of Barunei Hills near Ratanpur village.

The current study is being carried out in consultation with SPARC, a GIS consulting firm.

Sanctuary authorities have also started an exercise of naming some of the commonly sighted elephants according to their specific characteristics. It is hoped that the exact location of the elephant will be known which can then be notified on the bulletin boards at different locations of the sanctuary.

Source: 'GIS mapping to trace jumbos', <http://www.newindpress.com/NewsItems.asp?ID=IEQ20071017023917&Page=Q&Headline=GIS+mapping+to+trace+jumbos&Title=ORISSA&Topic=0>

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

### **Simlipal TR opened to visitors from Nov. 4**

The Simlipal Tiger Reserve has been opened to visitors from November 4. In the first phase, visitors will be allowed entry through the Kalika Prasad gate via Jashipur. Repair work on the roads through Kalika Prasad entry point had been completed while work was still in progress on a temporary bridge over river Palpala near village Munidara causing delay in access through Peethabata.

A maximum of 60 vehicles were to be allowed into the park, 40 through Kalika Prasad gate and 20 through Peethabata.

Tourists will also have the opportunity of exploring the forests on elephant back. The Project Tiger authorities here had brought three elephants to help ferry the forest personnel inside the forests and also for protection activities. These are to be now used for tourism purposes as well.

Entry of tourists to the reserve had been suspended from June 15 ahead of the rainy season as the roads inside reserve get damaged in the rains.

Source: 'Simlipal biosphere reserve to be opened from Nov. 4',  
<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/002200710261440.htm>

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

### **Wildlife Conservation award to the Mahabir Pakshi Surakshya Samiti, Mangalajodi**

The Sri Mahabir Pakshi Surakshya Samiti of Mangalajodi under Chilka Forest Division in Khurda district was recently awarded the Biju Patnaik Award 2006-07 for Wildlife Conservation for their excellent work of bird protection. The award which includes Rs. One Lakh and a citation was given away in the first week of October by Chief Minister of the State, Mr. Naveen Patnaik.

The Chief Minister also released two books on the occasion - Wildlands of Orissa, prepared by scientists and State wildlife officials, and Orchids of India, compiled by former Chief Wildlife Warden, Saroj Kumar Pattanaik.

Speaking on the occasion the Chief Minister said that the state could not create any more protected areas, though attention would be paid to maintaining and protecting existing wildlife corridors.

Source: 'Wildlife award for Mahabir bird protection body', *The Pioneer*, 02/10/07.  
'Naveen calls for restoration of critical wild animal corridors', *The Hindu*, 04/10/07.

### **New State Board for Wildlife constituted**

A new State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) has been constituted in Orissa. The term of the last board has expired in 2005 and the state government had taken no interest in reviving it since.

Three young MLAs have been inducted in this new board. They are Pratap Keasari Deb and Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo of the Biju Janata Dal and Nitesh Gangadeb of the Congress. Former School and Mass Education Minister Nagendra Pradhan has been dropped.

Other members of the board include Prof Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi; Former PCCF (Wildlife) SK Patnaik; former IG Forests MF Ahmed; environmentalist and former MLA Bibhudhendra Pratap Das; ornithologist S Balachandran from the Bombay Natural History Society; Chief of Project, Bihang Uday Narayan Dev; former Minister Mangala Kisan; Prof GBN Chani; AK Sharda and SN Patro.

The Chief Secretary is a permanent invitee of the board, while the PCCF (Wildlife) is its member-convener.

Source: 'State wildlife board revamped, three MLAs included', *The Pioneer*, 14/10/07.

Contact: **CWLW Orissa**, see below

### **SACON to study bird mortality in Chilka**

The Coimbatore-based Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) has submitted a proposal to the Wildlife Division of the Orissa Forest Department for surveillance of waterfowl at Nalabana Bird Sanctuary in Chilka Lake.

The project is intended to monitor the bird mortality and identify possible reasons behind chemical contamination, disease aspects for mortality of waterfowl and recommend remedial measures.

Nearly 1000 and 2000 migratory birds were reported to have died in Chilka in 2005 and 2006 respectively. The reasons for the deaths have not yet been identified.

Source: 'Forest Dept. plans study on migratory birds at Chilka', *The Pioneer*, 26/10/07.

Contact: **DFO (WL)**, Chilka, 1865/66 Nuasahi Nayapalli (near Sub PO), Bhubaneswar – 751012. Orissa. Email: [bravo\\_123@satyam.net.in](mailto:bravo_123@satyam.net.in)

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

## PUNJAB

### **Kathlore forest to be declared a wildlife sanctuary**

The Punjab Forest Department (FD) has issued a preliminary notification to declare 2,000 acres of forest near Kathlore, on the border of J&K, as a wildlife sanctuary. The forest, which is home to hog deer, wild boar, neelgai, sambar and a number of bird species lies on the banks of the River Ravi.

FD officials say that creating a sanctuary here would help deal with the problem of poaching and encroachment.

Local villagers, on the other hand, say that the forest land now being declared a sanctuary originally belonged to them. They have also expressed serious concern about the damage caused to their crops by wild animals here like the wild boar. They have pointed out that as per the culling policy, permits to kill wild boar at night are not given and they are also only allowed to hunt the male.

The FD says it is aware of the people's problems and that they are seeking funds to erect a barbed wire fence around the forests to prevent wild animals from straying into the adjoining fields. The FD also intends to hold meetings with the surrounding villagers to apprise them of the sanctuary proposal and to seek their support for the same.

Source: 'Post-conflict, Kathlore forest declared a sanctuary', *The Tribune*, 05/10/07

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

## RAJASTHAN

### **Keoladeo Ghana NP to get water from River Yamuna**

The Rajasthan State Government is proposing a Rs. Six Billion project for revival of the wetlands of the Keoladeo Ghana National Park that have been hard hit in recent years on account of a severe water shortage.

Surplus water from the Yamuna River that flows into the Goverdhan drain will be brought to the sanctuary through a 19-km-long pipeline. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Tabard) is expected to finance the project that will bring in 350 million cubic feet {MCFT} of water to this sanctuary. The project has been handed over to the irrigation department, and bids have been invited.

Water from the Ajan bund which has been the main source of water for the PA has not been released for the last few years because of the demands of adjoining villages to use it for their agriculture. It has been suggested in the past that water should be made available from the Gambhir River and the Pachna Dam, but this too was not implemented. Another proposal to get water from the Chambal has also not seen much progress (see *PA Updates* Vol XIII, No. 1 and No. 54, 53, 50, 43, 40 & 39).

Source: 'Bharatpur bird sanctuary to get a facelift', <http://sify.com/news/fullstory.php?id=14560536&vsv=SHGTslot2> 14/11/07.

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

### **Weeding operation conducted in Keoladeo Ghana NP**

Over six sq. kms of the 29 sq. kms Keoladeo Ghana National Park was freed from *Prosopis juliflora* in an operation carried out by the park authorities along with residents from 15 neighbouring villages. Many years of recurrent drought and absence of water in the wetland had led to the further proliferation of the plant that is very hard to eradicate in any case.

The plant has vigorous coppicing power. The park authorities had made several attempts in the past to kill the mother trees but could not succeed as even the burnt stumps sprouted with great vigour. The mammal population in the park such as Blue bulls, chital, wild boar and feral cows, which consumed the ripe seeds, helped its propagation. The only option seemed to be uprooting each individual tree.

Hiring contractors who would agree to uproot the host trees for their wood was ruled out because of the stringent Wildlife Protection Act.

By 2006 the situation was reported to have gone from bad to worse. As an effort to involve local villagers, the Forest Department held several meetings with the local villagers where they were told that instead of stealing wood from the park they could now earn it through their labour. Initially only five individuals responded positively, but this number increased steadily. In response the authorities formed an Eco Development Committee in February 2007 and registered all the villagers to take their help in dealing with the problem.

The village of Ram Nagar was selected as the first village to start the weeding experiment. The villagers, grouped family-wise, were allocated plots of 10x100 metres area each from where they removed the mother trees, new seedlings and saplings, plucking them by root. The villagers were allowed concessions, such as permission to cart away the wood on bicycles and hand-driven trolleys. Several park gates were opened to give them easy access.

A team of 60 forest staff kept vigil, maintaining a complete record of the wood transported out of the park.

By September 2007, 550 families were engaged in removing of the plant from the park; they had cleared nearly six sq. kms and removed more than six tons of wood as reward. The authorities have set a deadline of one year to eradicate the weed from the park.

Source: Sunny Sebastian. 'Ghana park witnesses a major weeding operation', *The Hindu*, 27/10/07

Rakhee Roy Talukdar. 'Villagers to bird park rescue', [http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071007/asp/nation/story\\_8405558.asp](http://www.telegraphindia.com/1071007/asp/nation/story_8405558.asp)

### **Rajasthan can't get enough ex-soldiers for wildlife protection**

The Rajasthan government's plan to recruit ex-soldiers to guard wildlife sanctuaries and stem the rise in poaching has evoked a poor response. Only 700 applications were reportedly received though the posts advertised were a 1000. Of the applications received 10% were further found to be not suitable.

Source: 'Rajasthan can't get ex-soldiers as wildlife wardens', <http://www.newkerala.com/oct.php?action=fullnews&id=10066>

### **Bhagani village relocated from Sariska TR**

Bhagani village in the Tehla forest range of the Sariska Tiger Reserve was recently relocated to a site near Behor in Alwar district, about 100 km from Sariska.

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), an NGO helping the forest department to relocate this village, handed over bank drafts of compensation to 18 families who have been relocated.

The relocation is said to be a follow up of the recommendations made by the Tiger Task Force (TTF) that was set up after all tigers were reported poached from Sariska.

11 villages are located inside the reserve and four of these were selected on a priority basis for relocation. Bhagani is the first of these four. Negotiations are reportedly on for the relocation of the second village to a place near Moujpur in Alwar district (see *PA Updates* Vol XIII, No. 3, Vol XII, No. 4 and Nos. 57, 56, 55 & 50).

The Forest Department here has also already recruited 35 ex-army personnel out of the 100 posts recently created as per recommendations of the government. A nod is also being awaited for halting night traffic on the highway that runs through the heart of the reserve.

Source: 'Village relocated as Sariska prepares for big cats', <http://www.newkerala.com/oct.php?action=fullnews&id=11748>

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

### **TAMIL NADU**

#### **Gulf of Mannar NP Coral Reefs to be studied**



The Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute, affiliated to the Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, will study the 'health' and 'productivity' of coral reef ecosystem in the Gulf of Mannar over five years. The aim of the research is to analyse the ecological changes happening to the ecosystem because of natural reasons as also human impact. The study will also suggest remedial measures against degradation.

The project will be funded by the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve Trust under a United Nations Development Programme - Global Environmental Facility scheme.

It will be conducted by fixing permanent monitoring stations around 10 islands falling under Mandapam, Tuticorin, Vembar and Keezhakarai group of islands - Vilanguchalli and Koswari (Tuticorin group), Nallathani, Puluvinchalli and Upputhani (Vembar group), Valai, Poovarasampatti and Vallimunai (Keezhakarai group), and Pullivasal and Manoliputtui (Mandapam group).

Biological parameters such as percentage cover of corals, species composition, size structure of coral communities, presence of newly settled coral (coral recruitment), coral growth, fish population around corals, extent of coral bleaching, mucus secretion owing to stress, micro algal assemblage and sedimentation on the reefs, would be investigated as part of the study. Physical and chemical properties of the ecosystem too will be monitored.

(Also see *PA Update* Vol. XIII, No. 4)

Source: R Vimal Kumar. 'Coral reef eco-system to be studied', *The Hindu*, 15/10/07

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

CWLW, Tamil Nadu, 6D, Panagal Building, No.1, Jeenis Road, Saidapet,

## TRIPURA

### National park status to Trishna WLS

The Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary located in the South Tripura district has been declared a national park by the state government. The park is reported to have an estimated 456 plant species, 150 species of birds, and about 46 species of wild animals.

Source: Tripura wildlife sanctuary become national park', <http://newspostindia.com/report-22346>, 06/11/07

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Tripura, Aranya Bhawan, Nehru Complex, Agartala - 799001, Tripura. Tel: 0381-225223. Fax: 0381-225253/224013, 2422249

## UTTARAKHAND

### Poaching alert in Corbett and Rajaji during Diwali

A special tiger poaching alert had been issued in the Rajaji and Corbett National Parks during the festive season of Diwali.

The alert was sounded after Uttarakhand forest officials received information that some poaching gangs from Rajasthan and Haryana had become active in the adjoining national park areas and could use the festive season to poach here as well.

Source: Sahil Nagpal. 'Tigers in danger in Corbett in festive season - red alert on', <http://www.topnews.in/tigers-danger-corbett-park-festive-season-red-alert-24314>

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

### 5066 vultures counted in Uttarakhand

A recent census conducted by the Wildlife Department of Uttarakhand has put the



population of vultures at a little over five thousand in the state.

Out of the 5,066 vultures counted the highest number was 2311 of the Himalyan Griffon vulture. The numbers for the other species of vultures were as follows: Red Headed vultures – 200; Cinereous species – 574; Eurasian Griffon – 35; Lammergeier – 205; Indian Vulture – 279; Slender Billed vulture – two; White Rumped – 255 and the Egyptian Vulture - 316. The species of as many as 889 vultures could not be ascertained.

The count was conducted in 32 forest divisions in the state – 14 in Garhwal and 18 in Kumaon. The protected areas covered in the census included the Nanda Devi, Valley of Flowers and Rajaji National Parks, the Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary and the Corbett Tiger Reserve.

The maximum 485 vultures were counted in the Rajaji National Park. In Pithoragarh Forest division the number was 474.

Source: Jotirmay Thapliyal. 'Vultures flying high in Uttarakhand', *The Pioneer*, 12/10/07.

Contact: **CWLW**, 5, Chandrabani, Mohobewala, Dehradun, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-2644691

## UTTAR PRADESH

### Elephant Reserve for UP

The Uttar Pradesh Government has proposed the creation of a 744 sq kms Elephant Reserve spread across the Saharanpur and Bijnore districts of western UP. It will incorporate four forest areas of the Social Forestry Division in Bijnore district, a substantial part of the Najibabad forest range in Bijnore, Amangarh range also in Bijnore, and part of the Shivalik forest range in Saharanpur district.

According to the biennial census figures available with the State Forest Department, the number of elephants in the Bijnore forest division in 2005 was 16. In 2007 the figure had gone up to 62. The Najibabad range reported 24 elephants in 2005. In 2007, their numbers jumped up to 254 mainly due to migration of the animals from the Corbett National Park on account of a severe water

shortage there. The Shivalik forest range reported 29 tuskers in 2007.

Source: Atiq Khan. 'It's official: elephant rules the roost in Uttar Pradesh', *The Hindu*, 04/11/07.

### Rs. 15.77 lakhs for the Kukrail Gharial Centre

The Uttar Pradesh government has issued a grant of Rs 15.77 lakh to the Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre (KGRC) for conservation of the 'critically endangered' gharials.

The state forest department (FD) has also asked the Centre for a Rs 1.45-crore grant to upgrade the rehabilitation centre. The step was taken following a survey undertaken by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) which has put the gharial on the red list of critically endangered species this year.

The population of the animal in the wild in now estimated to be only 200. The construction of various structures on rivers like dams, barrages and activities like sand mining are believed to be the main reasons behind the drastic fall in the gharial population.

The Gharial Rehabilitation Project had been started in 1975 at the behest of the Central Government. Over the years, the KGRC kept the successful breeding and survival record of the gharial at over 90 per cent. Nearly 4000 gharials have been released in rivers across the country since the project was launched. The initiative started suffering when the Centre stopped the financial assistance in 1992-93 and the state government too pulled out in 1998-99.

The State FD is now working on a collaborative project with the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust for the conservation of the gharial. The KGRC would be upgraded in such a way that it would provide as a favourable habitat for the breeding of gharials. The tourism zone would be separated from the breeding zone, the wildlife museum would be renovated and a new watchtower would also be constructed for the tourists.

Source: 'UP allots funds for gharial conservation', <http://www.wildlifewatch.in/news/231>, 08/10/07

Contact: **DFO**, WL, National Chambal Wildlife Division Mau Van Block, Agra, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0562-2320091  
**CWLW**, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, 17, Rana Pratap Marg, Lucknow – 226001, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 0522-206584(O), 237715 & 223015(R) Fax 0522-222061/206188

## WEST BENGAL

### Initiative for Red Panda protection in PAs in North Bengal

Help Tourism and Association for Conservation & Tourism (ACT) has launched initiatives in and around PAs in North Bengal for the conservation of the Red Panda. These include:

- 1) A collaborative eco-tourism project with youth in Hee Bermiock and Singling, adjoining the Barshey Rhododendron Sanctuary
- 2) Development of an ecotourism project in Kolakham village adjoining the Neora Valley National Park.
- 3) Attempts are also being made to develop and declare community reserves at Hee Patal, the Meghma Village adjoining the Singalila National Park and one adjoining the Neora Valley National Park.

Contact: **Raj Basu. Help Tourism**, 143 Hill Cart Road, Malati Bhavan, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, PO Box 67, Siliguri – 734401. Tel: 0353-2535893 / 2433683 / 09434146891. Email: [helptourism@sancharnet.in](mailto:helptourism@sancharnet.in)  
Tel: 09733000444. Email: [actraj@gmail.com](mailto:actraj@gmail.com)  
**Asit Biswas**. Tel: 09831031980 Email: [asit.helptourism@gmail.com](mailto:asit.helptourism@gmail.com)

### Train knocks down elephant in Buxa TR

A male elephant was struck down by a railways parcel van about 100 metres away from Rajabhatkhawa Railway Station within the Buxa Tiger Reserve in early November.

Angered by the incident, activists of the Himalayan Nature and Adventure Foundation (HNAF), a Siliguri based conservationist group, blocked the Kamakhya-Dnanapur Capital Express for more than an

hour at the Siliguri Town station They have also threatened to disrupt train service throughout north Bengal in future unless the authorities took notice and enforced speed limits on trains traveling in some areas of the Dooars. Members of the forest protection committee at Rajabhatkhawa are also unhappy with the growing number of animal deaths from train accidents here.

The Railway authorities have, in response, argued that they are already maintaining the prescribed speed limits and that it would not be possible to bring down the speed limit to 40 kmph or reduce the number of trains in the Dooars as demanded by the HNAF.

Nine wild elephants and two bison have been killed by speeding trains in the Dooars since March 2004 after the conversion of the tracks from meter to broad guage (see *PA Updates* Vol XIII, No .3; Vol XII, No. 3, and Nos. 49, 47, 43, 39, 36, 34, 32 & 29).

Source: ‘Parcel van knocks down elephant in Buxa’, <http://www.wildlifewatch.in/news/503,10/11/07>

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

**Chief Wildlife Warden**, 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

### Govt identifies 94 wetlands for regulatory framework

A draft regulatory framework for wetlands which would be notified under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 has been prepared by a special multi-disciplinary expert

group constituted for this purpose. The announcement was made in the Lok Sabha recently by the Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests, Mr. Namon Narayan Meena.

The proposed framework has the provisions for regulatory authorities at the central, state and district levels and comments on the same have been invited from state governments and other stakeholders. The classification of wetlands would be based on their size, threat perceptions, and importance at various levels.

The ministry has identified 94 wetlands, many of which are protected areas, under the National Wetland Conservation Programme. The wetlands identified are as follows:

**Andhra Pradesh:** Kolleru

**Assam:** Deepar Beel; Urapad Beel

**Bihar:** Kabar; Barilla; Kusheshwar Asthan

**Gujarat:** Nalsarovar; Great Rann of Kachh; Thol Bird Sanctuary; Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary; Little Rann of Kachh; Pariej; Wadhvana; Nanikakrad

**Haryana:** Sultanpur; Bhindawas

**Himachal Pradesh:** Renuka; Pong Dam; Chandratal; Rewalsar; Khajjiar

**Jammu & Kashmir:** Wullar; Tso Morari; Tisgul Tso & Chisul Marshes; Hokersar; Mansar-Surinsar; Ranjitsagar; Pangong Tsar

**Jharkhand:** Udhwa; Tilaiya Dam

**Karnataka:** Magadhi; Gudavi Bird Sanctuary; Bonal; Hidkal & Ghataprabha; Heggeri; Ranganthittu; KG Koppa wetland

**Kerala:** Ashtamudi; Sasthamkotta; Kottuli; Kadulandi; Vembnad Kol

**Madhya Pradesh:** Barna; Yashwant Sagar; Wetland of Ken River; National Chambal Sanctuary; Ghatigaon; Ratapani; Denwa Tawa wetland; Kanha Tiger Reserve; Pench Tiger Reserve; Sakhyasagar; Dihaila; Govindsagar

**Maharashtra:** Ujni; Jayakawadi; Nalganga wetland

**Manipur:** Loktak

**Mizoram:** Tamdil; Palak

**Orissa:** Chilika; Kuanria wetland; Kanjia wetland; Daha wetland

**Punjab:** Harike; Ropar; Kanjli

**Rajasthan:** Sambhar

**Sikkim:** Khechuperi; Holy Lake; Tamze Wetland; Tembao Wetland Complex;

Phendang Wetland Complex; Gurudokmar Wetland; Tsomgo wetland

**Tamil Nadu:** Point Calimer; Kaveli; Pallaikarni

**Tripura:** Rudrasagar

**Uttar Pradesh:** Nawabganj; Sandi; Lakh Bahoshi; Samapur; Alwara Wetland; Semarai Lake-Nagaria lake Complex; Keetham Lake; Shekha wetland; Saman Bird Sanctuary & Sarsai Nawar Complex

**Uttaranchal:** Ban Ganga Jhilmil Tal

**West Bengal:** East Calcutta Wetland; Sunderbans; Ahirom Beel; Rasik Beel; Santragachi

**Chandigarh:** Sukhna

Source: 'Govt. identifies 94 wetlands for regulatory framework',  
<http://www.wildlifewatch.in/news/618,22/11/07>.

### **Trains running along wildlife corridors might stop running at night**

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) is reported to have written to the Rail Board suggesting that movement of trains through wildlife corridors in Orissa, West Bengal, Assam and Uttarakhand be stopped at night till preventive measures were put in place.

A number of wild animals, particularly elephants have been killed in the last few years in railway accidents in different parts of the country.

It has been pointed out that animal movement takes place mostly during the nights and the absence of reflectors, underpasses at necessary points and hooting mechanism in trains are reasons why the accidents continue to happen.

A case in the point is the Daitari-Bansapani line connecting Orissa's iron ore heartland, where two elephants were killed in the month of November. While the mining projects and the railway line was conceived in the 1980s no attention had been paid to create passages for the safe movement of wildlife. Even the Forest Department (FD) had not suggested preventive steps then.

The MoEF Secretary has pointed out that the Railways must take steps to install safety mechanism and if necessary, impose restriction on movement of trains at night.

Source: Siba Mohanty. 'Will trains stop running at night?', [www.newindpress.com](http://www.newindpress.com), 18/10/07.

### **India has 606 PAs covering 15.59 million hectares**

India now has 510 wildlife sanctuaries and 96 national parks covering a total area of 15.59 million hectares.

The information was provided by the Minister of State for Environment and Forests, S Regupathy during a program to mark wildlife week in Delhi in the first week of October.

The minister also conferred the Rajiv Gandhi Wildlife Conservation Awards to Mike Pandey for 2004 and to Himmat Singh Negi for 2005.

Source: 'India creates network of wildlife sanctuaries', <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/News>, 03/10/07.

## **SOUTH ASIA**

### **PAKISTAN**

#### **Permits auctioned for Markhor, Himalayan Ibex trophy hunting**

The North West Frontier Province (NWFP) Wildlife Department recently auctioned hunting permits for four Kashmiri Markhors and three Himalayan Ibex under the Trophy Hunting scheme for the current hunting season that will run from December 15 to March 2008.

The permits were auctioned at a record high rate including one for Toshi Game Reserve in Chitral for \$81,000, showing an increase of \$24,000 against the previous year rate of \$57,000.

The other three permits for Markhor were auctioned at different rates; one in Chitral again in Toshi game reserve at \$77,000, Gairath Game Reserve in Chitral at \$68,000 and Kaigah Game Reserve in Kohistan district at the rate of \$58,000. Three permits of Ibexes were auctioned at a rate of \$3,100 each. All the

permits were auctioned to the biggest bidder, Karakoram Treks and Travels.

For the last couple of years the revenue generated through trophy hunting has been increased due to increase in quota of Markhor hunting for Pakistan by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES).

In the conference of CITES held in Chile in November 2002 the quota of Markhor hunting for Pakistan was doubled from six to 12. As a result the annual quota of Markhor for NWFP was also increased from three to four.

The break-up of the hunting quota of 12 animals has been as follows: four in the NWFP, five in Baluchistan and three in the Northern Areas. Out of the total amount earned from the hunting permits last year, 80 percent was distributed among the communities living in the areas where the permits are granted. Officials have pointed out that trophy hunting was a very attractive incentive for involvement of communities in wildlife conservation.

Source: 'Permits auctioned for Markhor, Himalayan Ibex trophy hunting', *Daily Times*.

## **UPCOMING**

#### **Workshop on Compensation and Rewards for Ecosystem Services**

The Indian Society for Ecological Economics (INSEE) will be organizing a two day workshop, on February 4 & 5, 2008 in the Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. The workshop will focus on Compensation and Rewards for Ecosystem Services. It will be an attempt to deliberate on relevant efforts and prepare a policy paper for the benefit of decision makers.

Unpublished papers, preferably from young researchers, are invited on the following areas: a) Provisioning services (food, fiber, genetic resources, bio-chemicals), b) Regulating services (air and water quality, population and pest regulation and climate regulation), c) Cultural Services (spiritual, aesthetic and recreational values), d) Payment for Ecosystem

Services, e) Market Mechanism for Environment Services, f) Rewards for Environment Services.

[www.ecoinsee.org](http://www.ecoinsee.org), [www.iifm.ac.in](http://www.iifm.ac.in),  
[www.isec.ac.in](http://www.isec.ac.in).

Contact: Prof KV Raju, Secretary, INSEE. Email:  
[kvraju@isec.ac.in](mailto:kvraju@isec.ac.in). Web:

## IN THE SUPREME COURT

### PA related matters in the Central Empowered Committee in October 2007

- Construction of two tunnels with their ancillary works of the Pula Subbaiah Veligonda Project in 107 ha of lands of Rajiv Gandhi Wild Life Sanctuary, Andhra Pradesh.
- Construction of a 133 KV transmission line through the Son Ghariyal Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh to deal with the voltage problem in the area.
- Use of over 2000 hectares of land within the Kanchendzonga National Park for Catchment Area Treatment (CAT) for the Panan Hydro Electric Project in Sikkim.
- Unauthorised construction of the Hansi Butana Canal inside the Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary, Haryana.
- Relaying of water pipelines of 1.5 kms length from Sitlee to Manda, from Sitlee to Lohar to High Court complex affecting 1.1925 ha of wildlife area in Ramnagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Jammu & Kashmir.
- Regarding disposal of forest produce from the Valmiki Wildlife Sanctuary, Bihar.
- Related to the Durgawati Irrigation project and the Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary, Bihar.

### PA related matters heard in the Supreme Court in November 2007

- Laying of optical fibres in the Kaziranga National Park
- Declaration of Mt. Abu as an Eco Fragile Area
- Diversion of forest land in the Pulicat Wildlife Sanctuary and Pudirayavoruvu Reserve Forest for construction of a road.

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.

Contact: **Ritwick Dutta & Kanchi Kohli**. Forest Case Update Editors, E-180, Greater Kailash 2, New Delhi-110048. Email: [forestcase@yahoo.com](mailto:forestcase@yahoo.com) Web: [www.forestcaseindia.org](http://www.forestcaseindia.org)

Contact: **MK Jiwrajka**, Member Secretary, Central Empowered Committee, Room No. 106, Paryavaran Bhavan, CGO Complex, Lodi Road, New Delhi - 110003. Tel: 011- 4361297

## The PA Update needs support

It was around the same time last year that we had sent out a similar appeal for support for the *Protected Area Update*. Many readers and organizations had responded positively, which itself was an indication to us that the *PA Update* is useful and we have a number of well wishers.

The Foundation for Ecological Security continues to be our biggest supporter and has willingly agreed to provide a majority of the funding for the *PA Update* for another year. Just like last year, however, we are still short by about a 30% of the budget.

There are various ways, big and small, in which we can be helped. Individual readers are urged to send in their contribution as subscription. These are small amounts but if we receive a large number the help will be great. Organisations like Forest Departments and NGOs can avail of the bulk subscription method where we can together reach out to a larger number of people as well.

We also have back issues of the Update is a simple hard bound three volume set that would be a very valuable resource base for researchers, officials, activists or anybody else interested in getting a comprehensive picture of what has happened in the country's PA network over the last few years.

I do hope you will consider contributing. For any further details or clarifications please do write to me. We would also welcome any other ideas that you might have for us.

Pankaj Sekhsaria

Email: psekhsaria@gmail.com

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