

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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EDITORIAL

A gulf in trouble?

The last few months have seen some drastic ecological changes in the waters of the Gulf of Mannar along the country's eastern coast. An unprecedented algal bloom is reported to have caused the mortality of thousands of marine

animals here. While there certainly is a set of inter-related factors that must have caused the bloom, it is important that scientists have pointed out to the large scale and indiscriminate dumping of municipal and domestic sewage as one of key triggers.

Just a few months ago there were other reports of the corals here getting diseased on account of deteriorating water quality associated with increased pollution and sea surface temperatures (*PA Update* Vol. XIV, No. 3). Illegal blasting and collection of coral for use as limestone continue to pose a serious threat to coral reef resources in the region and it was not very long ago that the exotic algae *Kappaphycus alvarezzi* that is being cultivated here as part of a commercial enterprise was seen to have invaded significant parts of the protected area (*PA Update* Vol. XIV, No. 4).

This species is reported to have become invasive (displacing local varieties of algae) and was also smothering corals leading to major adverse impacts on the reefs in the Caribbean, where it was introduced with similar intentions of income generation. There are fears that a similar situation will be seen soon in the Gulf of Mannar too.

It would seem that Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve which is the biggest and one of the oldest in the country has no respite from human created disasters and one is not even talking about the construction of the Sethu Samudran Shipping Canal that will undoubtedly cause huge irreparable damage to this unique and rich ecosystem. While there are some studies on the negative impacts of human activities such as sewage disposal, exotic species introduction and coral mining, it would also be very important to initiate a long term process to monitor the economic and ecological impacts of these developments.

What is important is that the developments in the Gulf here are only indicative of what is happening all along India's rich and diverse coastal systems. We have a huge coastline that is ecologically very rich and one that supports thousands of human communities. In more ways than one this system has always received a step-motherly treatment. Large scale pollution, construction of major projects like ports, industrial hubs and power plants and damming of rivers that

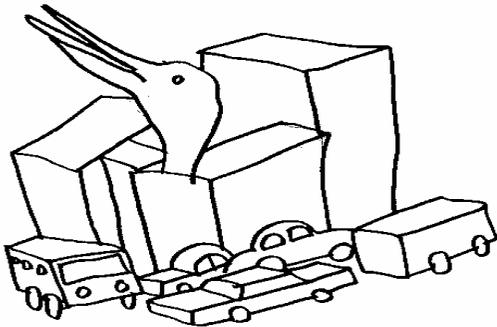
eventually force a change in the fine coastal balance continue even today, unmindful of the damage that is being caused.

The present developments here are perhaps a good indicator of just that. The faster we take notice of this the better it will be because in abusing or even just neglecting the coastal systems today we forget that a much higher price will have to be paid tomorrow.

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

SEZs threaten wildlife



Many sites of wildlife importance in Andhra Pradesh are reported to be under threat because of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and development projects in their vicinity.

These include the Naupada swamp, Telineelapuram in Srikakulam, Veerapuram in Anantapur, which are home to pelicans, Kondakarla Ava in Visakhapatnam and the Important Bird Area of Uppalapadu in Guntur.

A thermal power plant is set to come up at the Naupada Swamp while the catchment area of Kondakarla Ava will be affected by a proposed SEZ. An SEZ proposed in the Mangalagiri mandal of Guntur district is likely to impact Uppalapadu.

Source: 'SEZs threaten wildlife', *Deccan Chronicle*, 22/09/08.

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

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Community Biosphere Reserve in Upper Siang District

The Adi tribe of Simong Village in the Upper Siang District has proposed the creation of a Community Biosphere Reserve, the first of its kind in the country. The community is being assisted in their endeavour by Future Generation, an international NGO.

The aim of the tribe is to conserve their environment and traditions through voluntary community action and to simultaneously tackle the problem of unemployment by promoting tourism in the region.

(Ed: The legal status or management framework for the reserve is not clear.)

Source: 'Nation's first community reserve biosphere comes up in Arunachal Pradesh', <http://www.newkerala.com/topstory-fullnews-19900.html>

ASSAM

Disease kills rhino calf in Pobitora, 2nd one ailing

A mysterious disease claimed a 1 ½ year old rhino calf at Pobitora WLS in early October. Another calf had also started showing similar symptoms of paralysis of the posterior, fever, loss of appetite and weakness. Experts from the College of Veterinary Science, state zoo and Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation & Conservation at Kaziranga were called in to Pobitora to take stock of the situation.

Forest officials said that providing treatment to the calf was difficult because of the continued presence of its worried mother. Officials were using three elephants to chase away the mother so that saline and vitamin could be administered to the calf.

Source: 'Disease kills rhino,' *The Telegraph*, 23/10/08

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Pobitora WLS, Nagaon Wildlife Division, P.O. & Dist. Nagaon - 782001, Assam. Tel: 03672-223104(O), 222310(R)

Chakrashila staff receive training at Corbett

A team of frontline staff from the Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary received training in protected area management at the Corbett National Park in an all-expenses-paid trip sponsored by WWF, the Conservation Initiative for Asian Elephant, USA and the Guwahati-based environmental group, Aaranyak.

The seven-day session was held in October at the Kalagarh Training Centre at Corbett. Forest guards from Chakrashila studied the various anti-poaching measures as well as the eco-tourism and community-tourism initiatives implemented at Corbett. They also visited the high-altitude zoo in Nainital.

Aaranyak has said that if the Chakrashila-Corbett training model turned out to be successful, similar training-cum-exposure trips would be organised for other frontline staff serving in the PAs of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC).

Source: 'Anti-poaching course for Chakrashila staff,' *The Assam Tribune*, 16/10/08

Contact: **Division Forest Officer**, I/c Chakrashila WLS, Kokrajhar – 783370, Assam. Tel: 03661-270635. Fax: 276698. Email: ghoshsonali@gmail.com

Workshop on wildlife management

A six-day field techniques workshop on wildlife monitoring and management was held at Kachugaon Forest Inspection Bungalow. The workshop was supported by the Primate Research Centre NE India, Guwahati, the Kachugaon NGO Green Forest Conservation and the Bodoland Territorial Council.

The training programme was mainly for the 250 volunteers of Bodoland Forest Protection Force (BFPP), which has been engaged in this region for protection and conservation of forests and wildlife in the BTC area. The BTC has been incurring an annual expenditure of Rs. 74 lakh for stipends and other support to the BFPP.

Resource persons from different fields imparted training to the volunteers on diverse aspects of wildlife management, including the use of basic field survey equipment like maps, compasses and GPS tools; making field

observations and taking relevant notes for bird and butterfly surveys; report writing; census techniques involving wild animals like langur, buffalo, tiger and elephant; wildlife tracking, monitoring and priority setting; plant identification; community ecotourism; field patrolling; legal orientation on smuggling; wildlife rescue and captive care.

The BFPP volunteers were provided field kits that included rucksacks, sleeping bags and torches. 25 bicycles were also distributed, and all volunteers were awarded certificates in honour of their work.

Source: 'Workshop on wildlife monitoring, management held,' *The Assam Tribune*, 10/09/08

Workshop on hoolock gibbon translocation

A five-day 'Training workshop on (wild to wild) translocation of western hoolock gibbon' was held in September in Guwahati. The workshop concluded with the consensus that the severe habitat-fragmentation of this critically endangered species may necessitate the relocation of the gibbon to alternative habitats. The need for systematically regenerating of fragmented forest areas was also stressed upon.

It was pointed out that survival chances were low for small groups of hoolock gibbons living singly in sparsely-wooded human-inhabited areas and in agricultural fields. Relocation would require one sq. km. of forest area to suitably shelter three-four hoolock gibbon families of four members each; while a 10 sq km area would be ideal for the relocation of 30 groups with 60 breeding adults.

Habitat destruction through large-scale conversion of forest land for agriculture, illegal logging and human encroachment in forest areas were identified as the main threats to the survival of the animal.

The workshop was held at the Forest Training School, Jalukbari, under the joint aegis of the Wildlife Areas Development and Welfare Trust and the State Forest Department. Over 40 participants from various agencies and countries attended the meet. These included the University of Cambridge, the Zoo Outreach Organisation, the Primate Research Centre and the Sao Paulo Zoo.

Source: Sivasish Thakur, 'Translocation key to hoolock gibbon survival,' *The Assam Tribune*, 20/09/08

Contact: **Dr. Dilip Chetry**, Gibbon Conservation Centre, Meleng, Mariani, Jorhat – 785634, Assam. Tel: 09435043982 / 03771-244378. Email: chetryd@rediffmail.com

Call to include Kaziranga portion in NH-37

The NH-37 Conversion Demand Committee has urged the National Highways Authority of India to rescind the decision to exempt the Kaziranga portion (Kaliabor to Bokakhat) from expanding the highway (see *PA Update* Vol XIV, No. 5). The Centre had called off the proposed expansion following pressure from the State Forest Department (FD) and conservation bodies, on the ground that the resultant manifold increase in the volume and speed of traffic would seriously disturb the wildlife of the famed park. (see *PA Updates* Vol. XII, No. 6, 2 & 1 and Vol. XI, No. 6 & 4).

The committee supporting the highway expansion has argued that the move would adversely impact the four-lakh people living in the stretch between Kaliabor to Numaligarh, by keeping them outside the purview of development. It said that instead of abandoning the NH-37 expansion on the Kaziranga stretch, the authorities could consider constructing elevated roads, tunnels and flyovers as corridors for facilitating animal movement.

The Committee deemed untenable the argument of environmental NGO's that the park would be affected by the air pollution that would inevitably accompany the increase in vehicular traffic on the completion of 4-laning. It said that Kaziranga faced more serious problems like poaching, erosion by the Brahmaputra and lack of manpower, and these needed to be first addressed by the authorities.

Meanwhile, conservation bodies have expressed concern over the continued demands of the conversion committee. They have argued that the only viable alternative to ensure long-term security for the animals would be to divert the four-lane highway to the north bank.

The UNESCO Heritage Committee had also expressed serious concern over the proposal, terming it a 'potential threat to the

integrity of the Park.' In its 32nd report submitted in July 2008, the Committee stated that 'upgrading the national highway will transform the already problematic road crossing into an impossible barrier for the wildlife.'

Kaziranga already has a high animal mortality rate caused by accidents on the highway. Around 55 animals of Kaziranga are killed by speeding vehicles on NH-37 every year. Four-laning the stretch would pose an even greater threat to the animals during the annual floods, when there is large-scale animal migration from the park to the highlands on the other side of the highway (see *PA Update* Vol XIV, No. 5).

Source: 'NH upgrade through Kaziranga opposed,' *The Assam Tribune*, 15/10/08
'Call to include Kaziranga portion in NH-37 expansion,' *The Assam Tribune*, 21/10/08

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

Male rhino gores female to death at Manas

A two-year-old female rhino was found dead within the fenced area of the Manas NP in October. She was one of four rhinos rehabilitated to Manas by the Wildlife Trust of India as part of the Vision 2020 plan to increase the rhino population in the park. It was confirmed that the cause of death was a severe attack by a male rhino that had been recently been moved here from Pobitara WLS.

One of the two male rhinos translocated to Manas in April has also reportedly been damaging crops and entering residential areas near the Park (see *PA Update* Vol XIV, No. 5). It had gone missing for a fortnight in September, and was finally found by park authorities in an interior area near Mushalpur.

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

Source: 'Male rhino gores female to death at Manas National Park,' *The Assam Tribune*, 26/10/08

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

Manas poachers join green NGO

Four poachers from the Sibrubari area under the Batabari Forest Range individuals who were involved in poaching activities in Manas have joined the Manas Sousi Khongkhor Eco-Tourism Society (MSKETS).

The four surrendered their guns under an initiative of the All Bodo Student's Union (ABSU)'s Nikashi Anchalik Committee in Baksa district and have vowed to help the NGO in protecting wildlife.

Source: '4 poachers join green NGO, vow to protect wildlife,' *The Assam Tribune*, 01/09/08

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

GUJARAT

Feral dogs hunt blackbucks at Velavadar

Packs of feral dogs are reported to be regularly hounding and hunting blackbuck in the Velavadar National Park. At least three-four blackbuck are killed in this manner every month and many such cases also go unreported. Young animals are particularly vulnerable.

The problem has been ascribed to a sharp rise in dog population in adjoining villages like Velavadar, Karnatalav, Gangwada, Baraliya and Madhiya. This increase is itself, ironically, due to the fact that farmers need guard dogs to protect their crop from wild fragers that include black bucks. According to the Sarpanch of Velavadar, it is up to the FD control the dog menace. The black buck population at Velavadar is estimated at 13,000 as per the latest FD census.

Source: Himanshu Kaushik, 'Dogs hunt black bucks at Velavadar sanctuary,' *The Times of India*, 17/09/08

Contact: **ACF**, Black-Buck National Park, Velavadar, F/10 Bahumali Bhawan, Bhavnagar – 360001, Gujarat. Tel: 0288-2552077. Fax: 0288-2555336

66% tourists to Gujarat visit Gir



Gir attracts 66% of all tourists visiting Gujarat and 80% of foreign visitors to the state, thanks to good infrastructure at the sanctuary and its Devalia Interpretation zone. That it falls in the pilgrim circuit of Somnath also accounts for its popularity. Additionally those people visiting Diu for alcohol also visit Gir because it is easily accessible.

The other two most visited sanctuaries in the state are the Nalsarovar and Thol bird sanctuaries. Only 7% of the domestic tourists visiting Gujarat visit the rest of the protected areas in the state.

Source: 'Gir is lion of all sanctuaries', *The Times of India*, 05/10/10

Hotels functioning illegally around Gir

Nine hotels in the vicinity of Sasan Gir village have started functioning again illegally after being sealed by the *Talala Mamlatdar* for not obtaining no-objection certificates (NOC) from the Forest Department. There are an estimated 30 private hotels catering to the heavy tourist inflow to the area, but most have neither obtained NOCs from the Forest Department nor have they followed any licensing formality. Authorities had paid a blind eye to this issue till recent orders from the Junagadh District Collector had resulted in the closure. The sealed hotels have started operating again with the start of the tourist season, which brings in as many as 20000 visitors.

Hotel operators claimed that they had already applied for these NOCs a while ago, but the FD's lethargy had stalled the process. The FD, has in turn, said that its officials were busy managing the heavy Diwali season traffic in the

sanctuary, and therefore had not been able to look into the issue. Sasan Gir's DCF also added that he had not received any file of hotels asking for NOCs from the FD.

Source: 'Sealed private hotels rule the roost in Sasan Gir during tourist season', *The Indian Express*, 01/11/08.

Contact: **CF (Wildlife)** Junagadh, Sardar Bag, Junagadh, Gujarat. Tel: 0285 - 631678/630051. Fax: 631211. Email: cfwildlife_ad1@sancharnet.in

New management zone for PAs in North Gujarat

The Gujarat Forest Department (FD) has decided to carve out a fifth forest zone in the state for better management of its protected areas. The new North Gujarat Forest Zone will include the Wild Ass, Nalsarovar and Thol Wildlife Sanctuaries. The Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary in Banaskantha might also be included.

Eleven new posts, including that of Conservator of Forests, will be created following the setting up of this new zone that comes in light of the task force set up in the aftermath of the recent incidents on lion poaching in Gir (see *PA Updates* Vol. XIV, No. 3 and Vol. XIII, Nos. 5 & 4).

In another step, a provision of Rs 4.61 crore has been made for the incorporation and use of modern technology. It includes the cost of engaging a consultant for the development of specifications, system requirement study, development of geographical information systems (GIS) database, and control room applications along with hardware and software. Ground staff in Gir will also be provided with geo-communications hand-held field units, and a management cell will be set up for the implementation of special measures in the lion-specific areas of Saurashtra.

Source: Himanshu Kaushik. 'New forest zone to help protect N Gujarat wildlife', *The Times of India*, 13/09/08.

Contact: **CF, Wildlife**, Junagadh, see above

FD proposes incentive scheme for informers

The Gujarat Forest Department has proposed an incentive scheme for strengthening its informer network and getting more information about illegal activities in and around the states' forests and protected areas. 10% of the value of the seizure will be given to the informant. The quantum of the incentive is yet to be decided for those who provide information about the suspicious movement of people involved in poaching and about other matters related to wildlife protection.

The scheme is designed on the same lines as the police information network and is said to be awaiting notification from the government. Forest officials hold that the scheme would be especially useful in curbing timber theft and poaching activities as the FD is presently understaffed and also has a shortage of resources.

The idea for the incentive scheme was mooted following the spate of poaching incidents in Gir recently and had been awaiting approval since then.

Source: Himanshu Kaushik. 'Informers to get incentives from forest department', *The Times of India*, 13/09/08.

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

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Wildlife crime prevention workshop in Leh

A three-day training programme on wildlife crime prevention was held at Leh in the first week of November for the front line staff of Leh and Kargil Wildlife Divisions. The training was organized by the Department of Wildlife Protection in collaboration with Wildlife Trust of India (WTI).

Other participants included the Range Officers of Leh Forest Division and members of Hemis Youth. The participants were trained in various wildlife related legislations in general and the Jammu & Kashmir wildlife Protection Act in particular.

Certificates and field gear kits donated by the WTI were also given to the participants at the end of the workshop.

Contact: **Tahir Shawl**, Wildlife Warden, Wildlife Division Leh, Badami Bagh, Sakara, Leh, Ladakh- 194101. Tel: 01982-252171. Email: tahir_shawl@yahoo.com

JHARKHAND

FD ‘adopts’ two villages near Dalma WLS

The Forest Department (FD) has adopted two villages near the Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary as part of a new forest conservation program being implemented here. The FD hopes that working with and helping the villages of Konkadasa and Chimti would induce them to help the FD protect the sanctuary.

As part of the pilot project, solar street-lights were recently installed at Konkadasa. Each house in the village was also provided with solar lamps. A school has also been set up here, and it will offer education up to class 5. The problem of water shortage in the village has also been tackled by the FD through the installation of three hand pumps. A borewell was dug with the help of the villagers.

A kilometer long road connecting Konkadasa village with Pindvabedam is being constructed and a solar fencing is being installed around the villages to protect them from elephants.

In Chimti village, the women have been provided with a plate making machine to make plates from the leaves that they pick from the forests. These plates will later be sold in Jamshedpur city.

Source: ‘Villages to protect wildlife sanctuary in Jharkhand,’ *The Times of India*, 03/11/08

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

Spotted deer released into Hazaribagh NP



14 captive spotted deer and sambhar were released into the Hazaribagh National Park (HNP) to mark Wildlife

Week in Jharkhand. These were among the 50 such animals that were brought to Rajderwa forest in HNP from different parts of the state.

To ensure that only the healthy animals were released in the wild, they were first vaccinated against possible infection. A medical team had also examined blood and stool samples collected from the deer before their release.

Park officials have said that more deer would be brought to HNP from the deer parks in Chandrapura and Maithon, and also from the Birsa Zoological Garden in Ranchi.

Source: ‘Spotted deer released into forest,’ *The Times of India*, 22/10/08

Contact: **DFO**, Hazaribagh, West Division, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand. Tel: 06546-223340/222296

PCCF, Jharkhand, At- Doranda, P.O. Doranda, Ranchi. Tel: 0651-2500455(O), 2500413(R) Fax: 0651-500413

KARNATAKA

Initiative to control traffic in Bandipur National Park

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) has initiated a Rapid Action Project (RAP) to control the high incidence of wildlife casualty along the road cutting through Bandipur National Park. Funded by the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, the RAP is the outcome of a road-kill study conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Foundation.

The project envisages the enforcement of a speed limit on vehicles plying through the park by placing barricades in critical sections of the 12.5 km stretch. Their placement is decided on the basis of the data collected since 2004. Eight signboards have already been put up along animal crossings and areas with high road kill frequency to help prevent accidents.

The RAP will also produce and distribute pamphlets to create awareness amongst drivers about their responsibility towards the park’s wildlife. This work will be executed at the Kekkanahalla and Melukamanahalli points of entry. Constant monitoring is also on the cards.

It is reported that at least three large animals, including tigers, leopards, and even elephants are killed on this road every month. Spotted deer are particularly vulnerable as they migrate daily in the East-West direction, homing in for the night in Bandipur (forest headquarters), where human presence offers them protection from predators. At day break they cross the road and return to the wilderness.

This particular stretch is a lifeline for Ooty's tourism industry and has a high volume of traffic even at night, when animal activity is high. One vehicle enters the Park every five minutes at an average speed of 80 km/hr.

Though the project is still in its initial stages, it has already begun to yield results. Vehicle speed here is said to have reduced considerably as people are now aware of the 40 km/hr speed limit.

Conservationists are also concerned about the proposed upgradation of this road to a national highway. Road widening work on the Mysore-Ooty highway has already begun in areas external to the protected areas, though the MoEF is yet to endorse this upgradation.

Source: 'Taming traffic in Bandipur National Park,'

http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/current-news/081016_taming_traffic_in_bandipur.html, 16/10/08

Contact: **WTI**, A-220, New Friends Colony, New Delhi. – 110065. Ph. 011-26326025/6

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

Tribal people block entry to Nagarhole NP

Nearly 250 tribal people from the Nagapura Rehabilitation Centre, Unit 2, recently blocked tourists from entering the Nagarhole National Park. The protesters alleged that the Forest Department has failed to allot five acres of land to each family as promised during their resettlement; and that most of them had received only 2-3 acres of land. They accused the department of transferring land meant for the tribal people to private resorts. Some also claimed that the residential units including the

Samudaya Bhavan constructed by the department had collapsed.

The protesters relented after the Deputy Commissioner gave an assurance over the telephone and the local elected representatives promised to take up their demands with the Government.

(Also see *PA Updates* Vol. XII, No. 2 and *PA Updates* Nos. 34, 32, 27, 26, 23 & 22).

Source: 'Tribal people block entry to national park,' *The Hindu*, 08/07/08

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

Night traffic banned inside Nagarhole NP

The Karnataka Forest Department has decided to halt night traffic on the Udbur-Bavali road inside the Nagarhole National Park. A directive to this effect was issued in July by the Mysore District Collector.

It is hoped the move will help check the illegal activities of timber smugglers and wildlife poachers who use this 12-km stretch regularly at night to smuggle valuable forest produce and wildlife products. The road also overlaps with the elephant and tiger migratory corridor used by wildlife to pass from Nagarhole to the Bandipur forests. During summer when food and water is scarce in the forests, several elephants congregate near the Kabini dam backwaters; and this road is a major hindrance in their movement.

The road is also extensively used by tax evaders for bringing in consumable goods from Kerala, which imposes lower taxes than Karnataka. The sale of these goods has resulted in considerable monetary losses for Karnataka. Night activities on this road also include the illegal transportation of cattle from Karnataka to butcheries in Kerala. Several pressure groups with vested interests had therefore opposed any ban on the movement of vehicles on this road.

The ban was also opposed by action committees formed in both states. It was claimed that people in the northern districts of Kerala use this road to transport vegetables and other commodities from Karnataka. The road

also happens to be the shortest route home for students from Kerala studying in Karnataka.

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests has however rejected the Kerala state government's demand to keep the Udbur-Bavli Road open for 24 hour traffic. A relaxation on the use of the road for purposes such as medical emergencies and fire accidents has been allowed.

Source: 'A boon to wildlife, tribal people and exchequer,' *The Hindu*, 16/07/08
'Stir against ban on traffic through forest road,' *The Hindu*, 21/08/08
'Conservationists welcome status quo on traffic through park,' *The Hindu*, 23/10/08

Wildlife research institute coming up in Kodagu

Civil works have begun for establishing the Wildlife Veterinary Research Institute at Doddaluvara village in Kodagu (also see *PA Update* Vol. XIII, No. 5). The Rs. 30 crore project is being promoted by the State Government under the Karnataka Veterinary and Animal Sciences and Fisheries Sciences University, Bidar. Research will be undertaken here in wildlife medicine and nutrition, management of wildlife diseases, wildlife biology, breeding and behaviour. The Institute will offer MVSc, MSc. and PhD. in wildlife as well as postgraduate diplomas in wildlife breeding, healthcare and management..

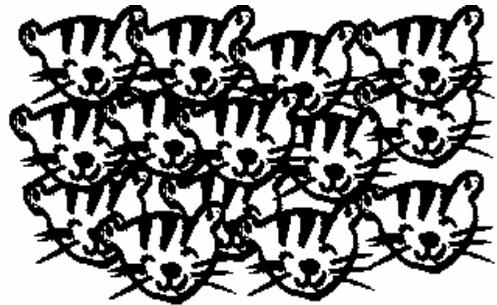
The campus will have a mini-zoo with demonstration units to study animal behaviour; and facilities for diagnosing wildlife diseases will also be provided. In-service training will be given to those working in the zoological gardens, national parks and wild safaris. The institute also intends to create awareness among local people on conservation of wildlife.

The Forest Department (FD) will be involved in the Institutes functioning via an advisory board that will also include non-governmental wildlife experts. Tie-ups with international universities are also on the cards.

Source: 'Wildlife research institute coming up in Kodagu,' *The Hindu*, 25/07/08

KERALA

Tiger population rising in PTR; count to be undertaken across state



The tiger population at the Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Kerala's Idukki district has increased to 38 from about 22 in the past. A recent camera-trap survey has revealed that the density of tiger population has also gone up in the reserve to an estimated 3.4 tigers per 100 sq km. The survey covered 640 sq. kms. of the 925 reserve, and was carried out between January and May 2008 by scientists of the Periyar Tiger Foundation.

56 cameras were deployed in four trapping blocks – Thekkady Range, Allakdavu Range, Periyar Range and Periyar West Division. These yielded 45 photos of 18 individual tigers over 15 sampling occasions. Of the 18 identified animals, seven each were seen in the Thekkady and Vallakadavu ranges, three were seen in the Periyar Range and one was reported from the West Division.

The Wildlife Institute of India however had counted only 23 tigers in the 2314 sq. kms Periyar landscape that included the Neyyar WLS. The WII study had estimated there to be 46 tigers in the entire state.

Following its own study conducted by the Periyar Foundation, the Kerala Forest Department has decided to undertake a count of tigers in different tiger habitats across the state. These include the forests of Wayanad, Gudrikkal, Ranni and also the Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary.

More camera traps are to be set up in these forests and the FD has planned to buy 20 digital cameras from funds provided by the Union Government and the Periyar Foundation.

Source: J Ramakrishnan, 'Tiger population in Kerala forest on the rise: Survey,' *The Hindu*, 19/10/08

KS Sudhi. 'Recounting in more state tiger habitats', *The Hindu*, 10/10/08

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

Conflict between panchayats over management of Kadalundi Community Reserve

A conflict has broken out between the Kadalundi and Vallikunnu Panchayats in Kozhikode district over the management of the Kadalundi Community Reserve. Differences over representation in the community reserve managing committee have remained unresolved despite the fact that both panchayats are controlled by the Left Democratic Front.

Initially, the managing committee was to have three members from the Kadalundi panchayat and two members from the Vallikunnu panchayat besides a representative of the Forest Department. The Vallikunnu panchayat however, demanded higher representation on the ground that most of the reserve fell within their panchayat.

Forest Minister Benoy Viswom was to hold discussions with the leaders of the panchayats in an effort to settle the dispute, and it was suggested that a solution was in sight.

Source: 'Panchayats lock horns over stake in management', *The Hindu*, 19/09/08.

Contact: Email: cbs_biodiversity@rediffmail.com
Chief Wildlife Warden – Kerala, Vazhudacaud, Trivandrum – 695014, Kerala. Tel: 0471-2322217 / 2360452 / 2204896. Fax: 2360452 / 2322217

PUDUCHERRY

Oussudu Lake declared first sanctuary in Puducherry

The Oussudu Lake in Villianur has been declared the first wildlife sanctuary in Puducherry. A notification for protecting an

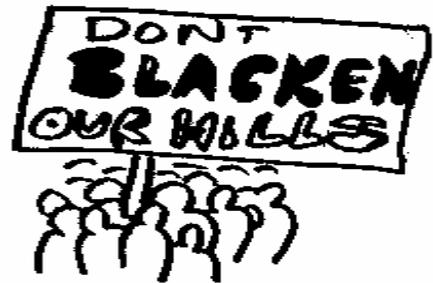
area of about 390 hectares was recently published in the gazette.

The Forest Department will restrict bird hunting and poaching at the lake and protect it from being used as a garbage dump. Plans are also being made to educate people about the importance of bird conservation.

Source: Serena Josephine M. 'Oussudu lake is now a sanctuary', *The Hindu*, 03/11/08

MEGHALAYA

Garo Students Union Opposes Coal Mining near Balpakram NP, South Garo Hills



The Garo Students Union has opposed the continued coal mining in the South Garo Hills including in areas adjoining the Balpakram National Park. In a press release issued in September they condemned the move of the Gongrot Aking (hamlet) to mine coal on their land. The Aking is located in the Rongara Block adjoining the Balpakram NP.

The Union holds that the mining will destroy the rich natural and cultural heritage of the Garo people, who have their last remaining stronghold in this region. The press release states that the livelihood sources of a number of villages will be destroyed as a result of the degradation of land. There would be a severely negative impact on the drinking water supply and the paddy land of Akings downstream of Gongrot i.e. Halwa Atong, Rongrengpal, Alok pang, Ampangre and Halwa Ambeng. These Akings include 26 villages with about 600 families.

A delegation of the Garo Students Union met the representatives of the Gongrot Aking to convey their concerns and has also called upon the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, the District Administration of South

Garo Hills and the Meghalaya State Forest Department to ensure that the mining does not start in the region.

The mining in this region is generally not by industry but by the land owners themselves. A majority of the land is also held by the village community.

Source: 'Garo Students Union Opposed coal mining in South Garo Hills', Press Release, Garo Students Union, 22/09/08.

Contact: **Prosper Marak**, President, Garo Students Union, Baghmara, South Garo Hills, Meghalaya. Tel: 09436325603.
Email: ginsadawa@gmail.com

ORISSA

Simlipal opens for tourists from November

The tourist zone of Simlipal Tiger Reserve and National Park, closed since the 16th of June, was reopened on the 3rd of November.

In the first phase, visitors would be allowed to enter the Park from the Jashipur entry point, from which 44 four-wheelers will be permitted on a daily basis. On completion of road-repair work on Pitabata, 24 vehicles will be allowed everyday from here.

An eatery has also been set up in the park by the villagers of Muktapur in collaboration with the Simlipal eco-tourism society.

Source: 'Simlipal to open for tourists from 3 November,' *The Statesman*, 28/10/08

Tourism facilities for Chandaka WLS

A number of steps have been proposed to promote tourism in the Chandaka-Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary. These include the creation of a six km. long 'nature trail' connecting the hillocks around scenic Deras Dam, the refurbishment of rest houses situated deep inside the forest and the installation of solar energy powered water supply systems here.

The Godibari interpretation centre at the entrance point of Chandaka Sanctuary is to inform visitors about the terrain of the area and about recent happenings in the sanctuary.

In a departmental bid to reduce cattle-grazing pressure on the forest, the Centre will also distribute fodder plants free of cost to villagers from the surrounding areas.

Source: 'Chandaka wildlife sanctuary beckons nature lovers,' *The Hindu*, 10/09/08

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

Anti-poaching measures at Chilika

The Chilika Development Authority (CDA) is stepping up precautionary measures around the Chilika lake to protect the thousands of migratory birds that come here during winter.

Police help was taken to draw up a list of licensed arms holders and of illegal possessors of country guns living near the lake. All have been warned of severe action if found involved in poaching. The Forest Department (FD) has also set up 16 special camps, each one of which will be manned by a forester, one forest guard and three volunteers.

Vigil has been heightened in the main migratory grounds – viz. areas near the Sorana, Nairi, Kalupada, Mangalajodi, Krushnaprasad, Madhurchua, Satapada, Gurubai and Khatiakudi villages.

Fifteen motor boats are also to be deployed for patrolling and special mobile squads comprising forest as well as police officials will keep watch on the restaurants near the lake, where the meat of migratory birds is served as a winter specialty. Strict vigil last year had ensured the arrest of 13 poachers, from whom 48 live or dead migratory birds were recovered.

Source: 'Steps taken to check poaching of migratory birds,' *The Hindu*, 29/10/08

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

Villagers of Karlapat WLS start exercising rights under the Forest Rights Act

Villagers living inside the Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary have begun protecting the forests here after claiming their rights under The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (STOTFDRA), (Forest Rights Act).

The villagers are reported to have claimed that the forest is their resource and that they now also have the responsibility of protecting it. It has been suggested that women in the villages like those of Mundguda, Jogisahipatna, Haradaguda and Herlaguda had in the past failed to curb the timber mafias here because they didn't have any rights or say in the management of the resources. Things are said to have changed now. A few months back, for instance, the villagers seized three truck loads of timber from the official residence of the Range Officer in charge of the sanctuary.

In another instance, villagers of the Tentulipadar village – which is recorded as illegal in Forest Department records – were reported to have actively worked in dealing with and putting out a fire in the forest.

Another incident is related to the construction of a school building in the village of Jakam, also located within the boundaries of the sanctuary. The village of 42 families was denied permission by the local DFO to lift river sand for the construction of a school building that had been sanctioned by the Panchayat Samiti. The community has now decided to bypass the DFO and directly approach the Ministry of Environment and Forest for clearance as per the provisions laid down in the Act (Also see *PA Update* Vol. XIV, No. 2).

Source: Y Giri Rao. Email dated 26/09/08.
'Villagers secure forest rights', *The Times of India*, 26/09/08.

Contact: **Y Giri Rao** Email: ygiri.rao@gmail.com
Officer-cum-Wildlife Warden, I/c
Karlapat WLS, At / P.O. Bhawanipatana,
Dist Kalahandi, Orissa. Tel: 06670-
230526. Fax: 230526

TAMIL NADU

Large scale mortality of aquatic life in the Gulf of Mannar Marine NP



Thousands of marine animals, including highly endangered sea turtles, sea cucumbers, seahorses and sea anemones, have perished around the Mandapam and the Kilakarai group of islands of the Gulf of Mannar. The lagoon areas of the islands were found awash with dead fishes of all sizes and varieties, and odour emanating from the dead aquatic animals could be sensed far away from the shore.

Teams from the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), the Suganthi Devadasan Marine Research Institute (SDMRI) and the Fisheries College, Tuticorin, were dispatched to study the damage to the marine biodiversity of the region.

The CMFRI study revealed the cause of mortality to be fatally low levels of oxygen in the waters of the Gulf. This in turn was caused by the abnormal blooming of an algae called *Noctiluca scintillans*, visually apparent in large green-coloured patches that had caused extensive discolouration of sea-water here. The marine life affected by the blooming mainly included benthic fishes mostly associated with coral reefs, such as serranids, silverbelly and sturgeon. Although the noctiluca is non-toxic, people around the coastal areas were warned not to eat the dead fish. Periapattinam was found to be the origin of the bloom, which then spread to several areas along the 50-km coast from Mandapam to Keelakarai.

Laboratory reports by Madurai Kamaraj University's Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies have revealed that algal-cell density in the seawater had increased from the normal density of a few hundred cells per litre to 12.7 lakh cells per litre. The dissolved

oxygen level had dropped from 5 ml to less than one ml per litre.

The team of scientists attributed the outbreak of algal bloom to coastal marine pollution caused by the indiscriminate dumping of municipal and domestic sewage along the Gulf. The rapid multiplication of algal cells may have been caused by the absence of monsoon winds. The abnormal blooming has occurred before in the Gulf, albeit on a smaller scale, due to drastic changes in sea-environment, such as increasing temperatures, decreasing wind velocity and low water currents.

The Sugandhi Devadasan Marine Research Institute (SDMRI), Tuticorin, found 20-25 colonies of table and branching corals bleached along the seaward side of the shallow waters of the Vazha island; while 10 small coral colonies were found similarly affected near Mulli island. The preliminary report submitted by the Institute said that the bleaching was caused by the elevated sea surface temperature (31 C), which was abnormal for October.

A few colonies were reported to have started recovering after the temperature normalized but more monitoring of the sea was needed to get a detailed and better understanding. It was also pointed out that dead algal cells and micro-organisms arising from the decomposition of the bloom could further stress the corals and sea-grass here if not washed away from the reef area.

A subsequent survey carried out by the SDMRI found that the situation was starting to normalize on the shoreward side of the Mulli, Vazhai and Thalayiari islands. A few juvenile fish were also observed on the seaward side.

Source: Source: Shastry V. Mallady and C. Jaisankar. 'Low oxygen levels leading to high mortality of fish in Gulf of Mannar,' *The Hindu*, 12/10/08

C. Jaishankar. 'Government seeks report on mortality of marine animals,' *The Hindu*, 13/10/08

Shastry V. Mallady and C. Jaisankar. 'Oxygen levels improve in Gulf of Mannar,' *The Hindu*, 14/10/08

C. Jaisankar. 'Algal bloom leaves coral reefs bleached,' *The Hindu*, 15/10/08

C. Jaisankar. 'Algal bloom-hit parts of Gulf of Mannar coming back to life', *The Hindu*, 20/10/08

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

Campaign to declare Gulf of Mannar a World Heritage Site

An international campaign is to be launched to get a World Heritage Site status for the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere. The campaign will also lobby for a permanent cancellation of the Sethusamudram Ship Channel Project (SSCP) (see *PA Updates* 46, 40, 39, 38, 36 & 30).

Biologists, environmentalists, humanitarians, economists, religious leaders, non-profit workers and civic authorities from around the world are to meet at the London headquarters of The Linnean Society for the purpose. The aim is to provide multi-disciplinary evidence encouraging the Governments of India and Sri Lanka to make UNESCO recognize the Gulf as a World Heritage Site.

Those supporting the move include noted international experts like Peter Bunyard, Dr. Ranil Senanayake and organizations like Both ENDS.

Source: Ch. Narendra. 'Campaign to declare Gulf of Mannar a World Heritage Site,' <http://www.mynews.in/fullstory.aspx?storyid=11226>, 10/10/08

UTTARAKHAND

Metal trap-detectors for Corbett and Rajaji

Two national parks in the state – Rajaji and Corbett have procured Deep Penetration Metal Detector (DPMD) devices that can sense poachers' traps hidden beneath the soil. The devices will obviate the cumbersome method of relying on guesswork to locate and unearth gin-traps – a contraption popular amongst poachers.

While the park authorities receive about three – four tip-offs on poaching activity every month, lack of knowledge about the exact location of the hidden traps had often led to dead ends. Forest personnel hope that the newly

acquired DPMD's will help in scaling down the poaching rates in Rajaji and Corbett.

Two traps each have been procured for the parks on a trial basis and more are to be brought in soon.

Source: Prithviraj Singh, 'Forest dept gets detectors for hidden traps,' *The Pioneer*, 10/10/08

Contact: **Director**, Rajaji NP, 5/1 Ansari Marg, Dehradun – 248001, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-2621669 Fax: 262166

UTTAR PRADESH

Trains through Dudhwa may stop

The Indian Railways is willing to shut down the 200-km railway line passing through Dudhwa NP, where trains have run over at least five tigers in the last eight years. The offer follows a complaint filed by the wildlife department against the railways for failing to control the speed of trains here.

In the latest accident, a tiger was run over by a train in the first week of September. Railway officials said in response that the death occurred far away from the earmarked 33 km stretch which has the 15 kmph speed limit regulation. They added that they were willing to shut down the track because it was anyway not cost effective for the railways.

As many as 23 animals – including five tigers and three elephants – have died after being run over by trains in the park area since 2000. The issue had also been taken up by the previous CM of UP, Mulayam Singh Yadav, who wrote to Railway Minister Lalu Prasad, but that failed to resolve the deadlock. Railway authorities have said the UP State Government will have to first take a decision in the matter. (Also see *PA Update* Vol XII, No. 3 and Nos. 44 & 34)

Source: 'Railways willing to stop trains in Uttar Pradesh tiger reserve,' *The Times of India*, 12/09/08

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

WEST BENGAL

Top officials transferred after tiger death in Sunderbans TR

In an immediate response to the possible poaching of an adult tiger in the Sundarban Tiger Reserve, the West Bengal government has recently transferred three top forest officials on charges of dereliction of duty. The action followed a preliminary report given by the State's Criminal Investigation Department.

Tourists aboard a launch in the Sunderbans on October 6 first noticed the body of a tiger floating in one of the many rivers that crisscross the delta. They reported it to forest officials who retrieved the body of the male tiger that had been shot dead.

State Chief Wildlife Conservator S. S. Bisht, Sundarban Tiger Project Director Niraj Singhal and the Director of the Sundarban Biosphere Reserve, P. Shukul have all been transferred. Forest Minister Ananta Roy has said that further action may be taken after receipt of a detailed report.

Source: 'West Bengal removes top officials after death of tiger,' *The Hindu*, 19/10/08

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

Czech national arrested for collecting beetles from Singalila NP flees country

Czech national Emil Kucera, who had been sentenced to three years of imprisonment for collecting beetles from the Singalila National Park, has fled the country without his passport. Kucera who was out on bail reportedly said that the 'absurdity' of the case had prompted him to flee. It is believed that he crossed into Nepal and finally left for his home country.

Along with entomologist Petr Svacha, Kucera had been arrested on June 22, 2008 for collecting beetles from the national park without valid documents. While Svacha was let off with a fine of Rs 20,000 and was described as a 'victim of circumstances' by the chief

judicial magistrate, Kucera was awarded three years imprisonment and a fine of Rs 60,000.

Kucera's lawyer T.K. Pandit said he was unaware of the development and pointed out that if Kucera has indeed left the country it was unfair, and now two of his juniors who were his guarantors would now have to pay a fine of Rs 6,000 to the court. He said the court could issue a warrant as the next hearing was scheduled for November 6 and that help of Interpol could also be sought to get him back.

Earlier, it had come to light that Kucera had used three different passports to enter India during his five visits between 1999 and 2008.

Source: 'Czech forester flees without passport', *The Telegraph*, 28/10/08.

Contact: **CF (Wildlife)**, North Bengal, West Bengal Forest Dept., Aranya Bhawan (Near Court) Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. Tel: 03561-25627(O) 25596 (R) **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Vikas Bhawan, North Block, Salt Lake, Calcutta - 700091, West Bengal. Tel: 033-3346900/3583208. Fax: 3345946. Email: wildlife@cal.vsnl.net.in

NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

Parliamentary committee for scrapping of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill

A Parliamentary Committee on Science and Technology has called for the scrapping of the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill 2008.. The Bill had been approved by the Union Cabinet earlier this year (*PA Update* Vol. XIV, No. 2), and would have provided an initial sum of Rs. 7,500 crores and an annual amount of over Rs. 1000 crores for the afforestation of six million hectares of countryside. This was part of an ambitious 'Green India' program formulated as part of the National Action Plan on Climate Change.

The Bill constituted the mechanism being put in place by the government to channel the funds garnered from developers for diverting forests for their projects. Under a

Supreme Court order, a sum ranging from Rs 5.8-9.2 lakh per hectare is collected from all such project promoters. The court had ordered the creation of a compensatory afforestation fund into which the money was to be collected before being spent by an authority constituted as per its decision outside the normal governance structure.

The order of the parliamentary committee came after it found the much smaller compensatory afforestation funds of the states to be in complete disarray. The committee said that the Bill should be scrapped also because it breaches the federal structure and that the government should follow the existing Centre-state structures for utilization of the funds.

The Centre is, however, not bound to follow the recommendations of the committee.

Source: Nitin Sethi. 'Green India' plan hits Parliament roadblock', *The Times of India*, 14/10/08

Responses to the draft regulatory framework for wetland conservation

The Kerala State Wetland Cell has for the second time approached the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to extend the deadline for submitting its views on the draft regulatory framework for wetland conservation.

The Kerala State Biodiversity Board too has suggested to the Union Ministry that paddy lands, ponds, tanks, streams, canals and other irrigation structures should be brought under the ambit of the regulation. The draft suggests that wetlands do not include main river channels, paddy fields, coastal wetlands such as mangroves, marine algal beds, coral reefs and others covered by the Coastal Regulation Zone notification.

The Board has suggested that no permanent construction should be permitted within 200 metres of the high-tide line, 300 metres of ecologically sensitive areas and 100 metres of the maximum water spread line of inland freshwater bodies. While strict restrictions should be put in place for commercial and industrial uses of wetlands, there should be no curbs on wetland use for community and traditional purposes.

The Wetland Conservation Team of the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) has also analyzed the draft framework in detail and has compared it with the relevant provisions of the Environment Protection Act, the Coastal Regulation Zone, 1991 (CRZ) and the draft Coastal Zone Management (CZM), 2008, notifications.

Concerns raised include the lack of recognition of traditional rights over wetlands; lack of any representation of elected representatives or those of traditional stakeholders; centralization of power in the hands of the Expert Appraisal Committee and the Central Wetlands Conservation Committee and the lack of a Wetlands conservation policy. The detailed analysis can be accessed at http://atree.org/atree_comments_wrf.pdf (Also see *PA Update* Vol. XIV, No. 5)

Source: Email by Priyadarsanan Dharma Rajan. K.S. Sudhi, 'Kerala Wetland cell seeks more time to submit report,' *The Hindu*, 16/10/08.

Contact: **Priyadarsanan D Rajan**, ATREE, #659, 5th A main, Hebbal, Bangalore - 560 024. Tel: 080 23530069. Fax: 23530070. Email: priyan@atree.org URL: www.vembanad.org

13 tigers poached in last two years

As many as 13 cases of tiger poaching have been reported since the creation of the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) in June 2007. The information was recently provided to the Lok Sabha by Mr S Regupathy, Minister for Environment and Forests.

The maximum number of killings was reported from Kerala, where five tigers have been poached since June 2007, followed by two in Assam and one each in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. The WCCB has also seized tiger parts and bones from Haryana and Himachal Pradesh in joint operations with the state police.

The Bureau was created last year to track offences with interstate and/or international ramifications, and to disseminate data on wildlife crime to law enforcement

agencies (see *PA Updates* Vol XIV, Nos 4 & 2, Vol XIII, No. 5 and Vol XII, No. 4).

Source: '13 tigers poached in last two years,' *The Times of India*, 23/10/08

Conference of Southern Forest Ministers

Forest ministers from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Puducherry met recently in Hyderabad.

A total of 35 resolutions were adopted at the two day conference. These included the decision to create a forest development fund by imposing a 5% cess on the sale/mining of forest produce. An appeal was also sent to the Central Government to consider eco-tourism as a forest activity and to earmark 1% of the protected area or 10 hectares of it, whichever is less, for the development of visitor amenities by relaxing the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA). It was further suggested that the Southern States should form an eco-tourism grid.

The meeting also decided to suggest an amendment to the WLPA to delegate powers to the Chief Wildlife Warden to deal with the capture and translocation of wild animals; and to convene a national-level conference of Forest Ministers.

Source: 'Southern Forest Ministers' meet for tax on forest produce,' *The Hindu*, 27/10/08

49 Indian mammal species face extinction threat; rhino out of IUCN red list



The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed over 49 mammal species in India as facing the gravest level of extinction threat resulting from habitat destruction, pollution and poaching.

According to recently released new data, over 124 Indian mammal species are facing different degrees of extinction threat. Of these, 10 species are critically endangered, 39 are endangered, 48 are vulnerable for extinction and 27 have shown a sharp decline in population.

Most of these threatened land mammals are concentrated in the eco-sensitive zones of Western Ghats, north-eastern states and the Andaman Islands. 17 of the total 49 mammal species listed as critically endangered and endangered are from North-eastern India while 16 are found in the Western Ghats.

The IUCN has also removed the one-horned rhinoceros from its Red List of endangered species saying that the animal has shown signs of recovery in range countries following strict security measures. A number of experts and NGOs have said that is not a good decision as it will only exacerbate the animal's vulnerability. IUCN's assessment is also critical since it determines allocation of financial and other forms of aid for the protection of a particular species.

Source: '49 Indian mammal species face gravest extinction threat', *The Hindu*, 08/10/08
'Rhino population: Changed status may hit conservation efforts,' *The Assam Tribune*, 25/10/08
Sanjeeb Baruah, '1-horned rhinos out of endangered list,' *The Asian Age*, 27/10/08

NTCA signs pact with TRAFFIC India

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has recently signed a pact with the NGO, TRAFFIC India to support on-ground enforcement action for tiger protection. As per the agreement, a comprehensive database on wildlife trade and crime will be developed, and capacity building programmes will also be conducted for various enforcement agencies to meet emerging and existing challenges of wildlife enforcement.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests gave a green signal in the last meeting of the Authority to the long-pending demand of the NTCA as well the NGOs in the field that they be allowed to work jointly.

Source: 'NTCA signs pact with an NGO for tiger conservation', *The Times of India*, 16/10/08

Contact: **Samir Sinha**, TRAFFIC –India, WWF India, 172-B, Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003. Tel: 011-41504786, Fax: 43516200. Email: ssinha@wwfindia.net
Web: www.traffic.org

Edberg award for environmental work to Shekar Dattatri

Filmmaker and naturalist Shekar Dattatri has been awarded the annual Edberg Award in recognition for his work in conservation and education work. The Sweden based Edberg Foundation said it noticed how the world-class filmmaker had chosen to forego well-funded international film projects in order to pursue national, regional and local projects in India.

The Edberg Foundation was established in 1990 in the name and spirit of Rolf Edberg, a prominent Swedish politician, author, philosopher and environmental advocate.

Contact: Edbergstiftelsen, The Edberg Foundation, Box 558, 651 12 Karlstad, Sweden. Email: kansli@edbergstiftelsen.se Web: www.edbergstiftelsen.se
Shekar Dattatri. Tel: 044-24415744.
Email: shekar.dattatri@gmail.com
Web: www.shekardattatri.com

Workshop on wildlife conservation laws for Northeast judiciary

A two-day orientation programme on wildlife conservation laws was held at Guwahati for the Northeast Judiciary in September. The workshop was organized by Traffic- India and WWF India and was attended by over 60 judicial officers from the states of Assam, Tripura and Mizoram.

The workshop was inaugurated by Chief Justice Chelameswar of the Gauhati High Court.

Source: 'Chief Justice Chelameswar inaugurates orientation programme on wildlife conservation laws', *The Assam Tribune*, 22/09/08

SOUTH ASIA

BANGLADESH

World's largest population of endangered dolphins found in Bangladesh



The world's largest population of the Irrawaddy Dolphins has been found in Bangladesh's waters. This was revealed by a five-year study conducted by the Bangladesh Cetacean Diversity Project and the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society. Until now, it was believed the small light-grey mammal was threatened, and the International Union of Conservation of Nature had put five of its Southeast Asian populations on its list of critically endangered animals.

The study has counted 5,832 Irrawaddy dolphins along Bangladesh's 1,400 km. coastline and estuaries. In other areas where the dolphins are known to converge, such as in the Mekong delta, populations have been estimated to be less than a 100.

Although its name is derived from Myanmar's biggest river, the six feet long Irrawaddy dolphin is mainly an oceanic mammal that favours coastal waters and estuaries. Many were found in the world's largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans, which is also home to 400 endangered Ganges sweet-water dolphins.

The future of the dolphin continues to be threatened on account of entanglement casualties in long fishing nets, habitat pollution and the construction of new dams along coastal rivers. The researchers have urged the government to create small networks of protected zones in order to protect the Irrawaddy dolphin.

Source: 'Large population of endangered dolphins found in Bangladesh,' *The Times of India*, 12/10/08

Bangladesh to protect deer in Sundarbans

Bangladesh has tightened security in the Sundarbans to protect its deer population against widespread organized poaching. According to forest officials, at least 10 poachers were detained in October and over 100 kg of meat, several deer skins and dozens of traps were recovered from them.

Source: 'Bangladesh acts to protect deer in Sundarbans,' *The Times of India*, 26/10/08

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

New President for the IUCN

Ashok Khosla of the New Delhi based Development Alternatives was elected the new president of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). He takes over from Valli Moosa who had been in charge since 2004. Khosla was elected new president at the IUCN's recent World Conservation Congress that was held in Barcelona, Spain.

Contact: **Carolyn Wahnbaeck**, IUCN
Email: carolin.wahnbaeck@iucn.org

MoU for protection of migratory birds of prey found in Europe, Africa and Asia

A joint initiative by the governments of the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom has led to the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to protect over 70 species of migratory birds of prey and owls.

The MoU was signed at a meeting held in Abu Dhabi organised by the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi (EAD), under the United Nations Convention on Migratory Species.

The measures agreed to will ensure that signatories focus particular conservation efforts on critical 'bottleneck' sites - including those identified as Important Bird Areas by BirdLife - where large numbers of raptors concentrate while on migration from breeding grounds in the north to wintering ones in the

south. Furthermore, signatory countries will investigate and attempt to solve problems likely to be caused by human activities, and assist the recovery and re-introduction of bird populations where they have declined.

Source: 'Safer passage for migratory birds of prey',
http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2008/10/cms_mou2.html

INTERPOL and CITES launch new manual for wildlife crimes investigators

The Secretaries General of INTERPOL and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) recently launched a new guide to support law enforcement officers investigating wildlife crimes. The manual provides guidelines on how to carry out 'Controlled Delivery' of illegal items in order to identify individuals connected with criminal activity and to gather evidence against them using techniques developed in combating drugs trafficking. A controlled delivery enables law enforcement officers to monitor shipments of contraband until they arrive at their destination so that the individuals involved in the smuggling chain can be identified and arrested.

The manual was launched at INTERPOL's 6th International Conference on Environmental crime that was held in October. It was attended by more than 150 wildlife and environmental crime specialists and law enforcement officials from 54 countries.

Source: 'New support manual for Wildlife crimes investigators',
<http://www.interpol.int/Public/News/2008/Cites20081016.asp>

UPCOMING

Maharashtra Rajya Pakshimitra Sammelan

The Maharashtra Rajya Pakshimitra Sammelan (Maharashtra Bird Lovers Conference) 2008 is

being organized by the Pakshimitra Mandal, Nashik in the last week of December 2008.

The tentative dates for the conference are December 27 and 28 and the venue will be the Nandur Madhmeshwar Bird Sanctuary.

Contact: **Madhukar Jagtap**, President,
Pakshimitra Mandal Nashik, Jagtap & Co., A-101, Paradise Plaza, Opp. Madhu Milan, Shingada Talav, Nashik – 422001, Maharashtra. Tel: 0253-2507503/2501503 / 0 9822057503.
Email: jagtap_nsk@sancharnet.in

OPPORTUNITIES

Doctoral research fellowships in tiger conservation

The Kathryn Fuller Science for Nature Fund has announced that it will award doctoral fellowships in 2009-10 to scientists addressing research questions that will significantly improve the practice of tiger conservation. Applicants for Fuller Fellowships may pursue doctoral degree research in fields that will have a direct impact on tiger conservation, including tiger ecology, tiger prey, large mammals, and/or tiger landscape ecology.

The fellowships are available for citizens from the following tiger range countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The doctoral field research must be conducted in one of more of the WWF 13 Global Priority Tiger Landscapes and the last date for receiving complete applications is January 30, 2009. For further details check <http://www.worldwildlife.org/tigerfellowship>

Graduate Research Assistantship at Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife, Michigan State University

The Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Michigan State University is offering a Graduate Research Assistantship to work on a

research project related to international environmental law and politics. The candidate must have an interest in coupled human and natural systems, and the integration of social science and ecology.

Minimum requirements are a BS or a BA in a related field and preference will be given to students with some training in law, political science or public policy.

Contact: **Dr. Mark Axelrod**, 362 North Case Hall, James Madison College and the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, East Lansing, MI 48825, USA. Tel: (517) 353-8607. Email: axelrod3@msu.edu Web: <http://www.fw.msu.edu/>

Small Cat Action Fund

The Small Cat Action Fund (SCAF) is a grants program established by Panthera, with the oversight of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group. It supports in situ conservation and research activities on the small cat species. The SCAF is open to application to any qualified individual and institution. Preference will be given to projects with a strong conservation emphasis.

Emphasis is given to requests for field conservation and research activities. The next deadline for applications is March 1, 2009.

Contact: **Nicole Williams**, Program Officer, Panthera, 8 West 40th Street, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Email: grants@panthera.org

List of Community and Conservation Reserves

Community Reserves

No	Site and State	Date Declared	Area Sq Kms	Source
1	Kadalundi-Vallikkunnu CR, Kerala	17/10/2007	1.5	http://kerala.gov.in/web_journal/binoy.htm
2	Keshopur-Miani CR, Punjab	5/02/2008; 2007 acc to WII*	3.15	http://www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/community_reserves.htm
3	Lalwan CR, Punjab	5/02/2008; 2007 acc to WII*		http://www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/community_reserves.htm
4	Ghumusar Blackbuck, Orissa	NA		www.rediff.com/news/2005/jun/20mak2.htm

*Wildlife Institute of India

Conservation Reserves

No	Site and State	Date Declared	Area Sq Kms	Source
1.	Jayamangali Blackbuck CR, Karnataka	2/01/2007	NA	Govt No: FEE 342 FWL 05 (notification number)
2.	Bankapur CR, Karnataka	08/2007	NA	http://www.hindu.com/2008/01/25/stories/2008012555190700.htm
3.	Jhilmil Jheel CR, Uttarakhand		37.83	http://www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/cr.htm
4.	Asan, Uttarakhand		NA	http://www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/cr.htm
5.	Borgad CR, Maharashtra	5/03/2008	3.49	http://www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/cr.htm
6.	Chharidhand CR, Gujarat	NA	80	http://www.birdwatch.co.uk/website/content/view/1546/32/
7.	Saraswati Plantation Haryana	2007	44.53	http://www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/cr.htm

8.	Bir Bara Ban, Haryana	2007	4.19	http://www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/cr.htm
9.	Hokarsar (Wetland) CR, J&K	NA	4.5	http://jammukashmir.nic.in/view/feb022k3a.htm
10.	Haigam Wetland CR, J&K	NA	NA	www.cmsindia.org/cmsenviscentre/resources/newspaper/details.asp?id=478
11.	Shallabugh CR, J & K	NA	NA	www.birdlife.org/action/change/ramsar/ibas_ramsar_asia/11_India.pdf
12.	Naganari CR, J&K	NA	20	http://www.wti.org.in/html/news/features/050418_markhor.htm
13.	Noorichan TsoKar Wetland CR, J&K	NA	200	www.ladakh-tourism.org/wildnoorichan.htm
14.	Tsomoriri Wetland, J&K	NA	120	www.ladakh-tourism.org/wildnoorichan.htm
15.	Pangong Tso Wetland, J&K	NA		www.ladakh-tourism.org/wildnoorichan.htm
16.	Gharana Jammu and Kashmir	NA	NA	www.kashmirtimes.com/archive/0803/080327/JRegion.htm
17.	Potter Hill CR Himachal Pradesh	24/01/2007	NA	FFE-B-G(8) 3/2007 (notification number)
18.	Tiruppadaimarathur CR Tamil Nadu	14/02/2005	0.0284	www.forests.tn.nic.in/WildBiodiversity/cr_tcr.html

Proposed Community Reserves

No.	Site	Area	Source
1.	Betnai and Balipadar CR, Orissa	NA	www.wildlifeorissa.in/blackbuckproject.html
2.	Wadvana Wetland CR, Gujarat	NA	www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/community_reserves.htm
3.	Pariyej and Kaneval Lakes CR, Gujarat	NA	www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/community_reserves.htm

Proposed Conservation Reserves

No.	Site	Area	Source
1.	Upper Lake of Bhoj Wetland Madhya Pradesh	NA	www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/cr.htm
2.	Adjoining areas of Nalban WLS Orissa	NA	www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/cr.htm
3.	Tso Lhamo Cold Desert CR Sikkim	NA	www.wii.gov.in/nwdc/cr.htm
4.	Agatti CR Lakshadweep	NA	www.lead.org/page/89

Compiled by **Persis Taraporevala**, Kalpavriksh. Email: persis.taraporevala@gmail.com

The Ghost of the Mountains - New book from Kalpavriksh

Kalpavriksh and Snow Leopard Conservancy-India Trust (Leh) have published a story book for children titled **"The Ghost of the Mountains."** The story is based on a true life incident where the life of a snow leopard, an endangered animal, is saved by a young lad in the village of Ang.

Kalpavriksh has been involved (in collaboration with Snow Leopard Conservancy-India Trust) with a locale-specific conservation education programme for children in Ladakh for the past three years. Under the programme localised educational material has been developed, including this story book.

The book has been authored by Sujatha Padmanabhan and illustrated by Madhuvanti Anantharajan

To obtain a copy of the book please contact **Anuradha Arjunwadkar** at kvbooks@vsnl.net

Latest Status of Critical Tiger Habitat

Name	State	CTH Area (sq. kms)	TR (sq. kms)	Status
Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem	Andhra Pradesh	2527	3568	CTH Notified
Namdapha	Arunachal Pradesh	1807.82	1985	CTH Notified
Pakhui (Pakke)	Arunachal Pradesh	683.45	Pakhui-Nameri 1206	CTH Notified
Nameri	Assam	200		CTH Notified
Manas	Assam	840.04	2840	CTH Notified
Kaziranga	Assam	625.59	NA	TR and CTH Notified
Valmiki	Bihar	880.78	840	CTH Notified
Indravati	Chhattisgarh	990.190	2799	Decision taken for notification
Achanakmar WLS	Chhattisgarh	551.552	NA	Decision taken for notification
Bandipur-Nagarhole (Extension)	Karnataka	1515.59	1515.59	CTH Notified
Bhadra	Karnataka	492.46	492.46	CTH Notified
Dandeli WLS & Anshi	Karnataka	814.884	814.884	CTH Notified
Palamau	Jharkhand	414.08	1026	CTH Notified
Periyar	Kerala	881	777	CTH Notified
Parambikulam-Anaimalai (TN)	Kerala Tamil Nadu	958 + 235	NA	CTH Notified
Bandhavgarh	Madhya Pradesh	716.903	1162	CTH Notified
Kanha	Madhya Pradesh	917	1945	CTH Notified
Panna	Madhya Pradesh	578.68	542	CTH Notified
Pench	Madhya Pradesh	411.16	758	CTH Notified
Satpura (Bori) Panchmari	Madhya Pradesh	1339.26	1486	CTH Notified
Sanjay NP & Sanjay Dubri WLS	Madhya Pradesh	831.25	NA	Status Unclear
Tadoba-Andhari	Maharashtra	652.82	620	CTH Notified
Pench	Maharashtra	257.26	257	CTH Notified
Melghat	Maharashtra	1500.49	1677	CTH Notified
Dampa	Mizoram	500	500	CTH Notified
Simlipal	Orissa	1194.77	2750	CTH Notified 8F(S)-32/2006/20801F&E
Satkosia WLS	Orissa	523.61	963.87	CTH Notified 8F(S)-32/2006/20807F&E

Ranthambore	Rajasthan	1113.36	1334	CTH Notified
Sariska	Rajasthan	881	866	CTH Notified
Kalakad-Mundanthurai	Tamil Nadu	895	800	CTH Notified
Mudumalai WLS & NP	Tamil Nadu	321	NA	CTH Notified
Corbett	Uttarakhand	821.99	1316	CTH Notified
Dudhwa-Katerniaghat (Extension)	Uttarakhand	NA	1362	CTH Notified
Buxa	West Bengal	459.13	759	CTH Notified
Sunderbans	West Bengal	1699.62	2585	CTH Notified
Source: NTCA, MoEF, Presentations made my CWLWs at conference in Bangalore, May 7 th , 8 th , 2008				
Compiled by Kalpavriksh. For more information, contact arshiyabose.research@gmail.com				

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