

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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EDITORIAL

A new dawn for Manas?

For long the Manas Tiger Reserve in Assam was one wildlife area in the country that was in the news for all the wrong reasons – militancy, destruction of Forest Department infrastructure, attacks on wildlife staff and poaching to an extent that the rhino was completely wiped out from here.

Protected Area Update

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Before the troubles began it was considered by most to be one of the finest and richest wildlife areas in India. What happened here was as good an example as any that protected area management and wildlife protection is but a subset of the overall political - social context in which it is located. The *PA Update* which has been in existence for more than a decade now has regularly reported on the developments in Manas. Looking at these gives a good sense, if not a comprehensive picture, of the trajectory of developments here. More recent issues, in particular, clearly indicate that for the last two years, at least, news from Manas has been more of the positive kind.

A number of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) came together to form the Manas Biosphere Conservation Forum in February 2003 (*PA Update* 45), and work towards better protection and management of the park. Earlier this year, we saw the formation of the Maozigendri Eastern Manas Eco-Tourism Society as part of a promising community based tourism project involving residents of the area, the local unit of the All Bodo Students Union and outside expertise in the field of tourism (*PA Update* 54).

The State Government and Forest Department meanwhile have been working towards improving infrastructure like roads and forest camps and towards better protection, along with special efforts at getting more visitors and tourists. All this along with continued support to and interaction with the range of NGOs who are working here and importantly, also an effort at making local communities part of the process.

The newly formed Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District (BTAD) too has taken special interest in matters related to the forests and wildlife of Manas and in restoring its past glory. BTAD authorities, have in fact commissioned a group of wildlife experts to put together a document exploring the 'Prospects of Wildlife Areas in BTAD' (see report below). Not surprisingly, Manas is expected to occupy centre-stage in this plan. They have even announced that the Manas Centenary Festival will be held in November, later this year.



What can be better evidence of the improved situation here than the fact that the park authorities are now working on a scheme to reintroduce the rhino to Manas.

To say that all is fine and the situation is normal might be a little premature. It cannot be denied, however, that things are certainly moving in the right direction – that a new dawn may indeed be around the corner for this gem of a wilderness area located on the banks of the River Manas!

(For reports on Manas see *PA Updates* 54, 50, 49, 46, 39, 34, 30, 29, 27, 26, 21, 20, 19, 10, 9, 8)

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

Steps to check sand mining in area surrounding Lanjamadagu Sivaram WLS

The Forest Department has taken special steps to prevent the continued illegal mining of sand in a stretch of nearly 28 kms of River Godavari that has been notified as the Lanjamadagu Sivaram Wildlife Sanctuary. The continued mining is said to have seriously threatened the crocodile population here.

Earlier, the forest officials had sought the intervention of the district administration to halt the sand quarrying which was hitherto allowed by the Zilla Parishad in the area. Though, the authorities stopped the auctioning of quarries in the locality, the errant sand

traders continued quarrying within the sanctuary limits. In this backdrop, a joint team of the higher officials of the forest and revenue departments visited the spot in the last week of June and demarcated the sanctuary boundaries.

The FD is also said to have approved an action plan to develop the sanctuary at an estimated cost of Rs 11 lakh. The plan envisages construction of a road between Khansaipet and the sanctuary to develop the picturesque spot into a tourism hub.

Source: 'Ban on quarrying near sanctuary', *Deccan Chronicle*, 01/07/05.

Contact: **DFO Wildlife**, Lanja Madugu Sivaram WLS, Jannaram, Adilabad - 504 205, Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 08739-236224

Tiger and leopard census figures

The recently concluded census in 15 sanctuaries in Andhra Pradesh has revealed that the tiger population in the state has fallen from 146 last year to 122 this time. The Chief Wildlife Warden of the state Mr. Hitesh Malhotra said that the drop in numbers was not very worrisome, particularly because the census could not cover the major chunk of two big wildlife sanctuaries -- Gundla Brahmeswaram (GBM) in Kurnool and Papikonda (PK) in East Godavari – due to the law and order (naxalite) problem.

These two sanctuaries accounted for the sharpest decline in tiger numbers (27 to 20 in GMB and 12 to 4 in PK). Concern however has been expressed regarding the fall in tiger numbers from 10 to four in the Eturunagaram WLS in Warangal. The population in the largest Rajiv Gandhi WLS and Tiger Reserve has remained intact at 70 tigers.

The leopard population in the sanctuaries in the state too has come down from 263 last year to 203 this year. 16 of them were either killed or electrocuted during the last six months when they strayed into agriculture fields and villages.

Source: 'Big cat population falls', *The Hindu*, 19/06/05.

Question mark over Operation Blackbuck

A question mark hangs over the efficacy of "Operation Blackbuck" that was launched to shift the blackbucks that had turned into vermin by grazing in the agriculture fields in 10 mandals of Kurnool district, near the Rollapadu Wildlife Sanctuary (See *PA Updates* 54 & 53).

The operation, estimated to cost around Rs eight crore, was launched in January, but so far only 250 of the estimated 10,000 blackbucks have been shifted out.

A study of the area by the Wildlife Institute of India before the launch of the operation had discovered that the blackbucks were grazing in fields that were rich in sodium content. The problem was not found in those mandals with poor sodium content in the soil.

Concern had reportedly been expressed on the efficacy of the decision to translocate the animals as they would be forced to adapt to a place whose soil and atmospheric conditions were not similar to that in Kurnool district.

The method suggested to control the population of the blackbucks was to help increase the population of predators like jackals and foxes.

The Chief Wildlife Warden of the state, Mr. Hitesh Malhotra however has said that they aimed at restricting the blackbuck population to half in about three years time. He estimated that the total population in the affected mandals was about 5000-6000 animals. He said that capturing and relocating was only a short-term measure, and that an effort would be made in the next phase to create a habitat suitable for increase in the populations of predators like the wolf and the jackal. He said predators had vanished from the area because of loss of bushes. In the absence of predators, the project was playing its role until the natural predator took over.

The forest officials felt that lack of fear of predators and availability of food had caused an explosion in the blackbuck population in the area. It was also felt that the stress and fear caused by the present operation could bring down the blackbuck's fertility rate.

Latest figures seemed to indicate that about 500 deer had been captured and moved out of the affected areas.

Source: 'Operation blackbuck at slow pace', *Deccan Chronicle*, 06/05/05.

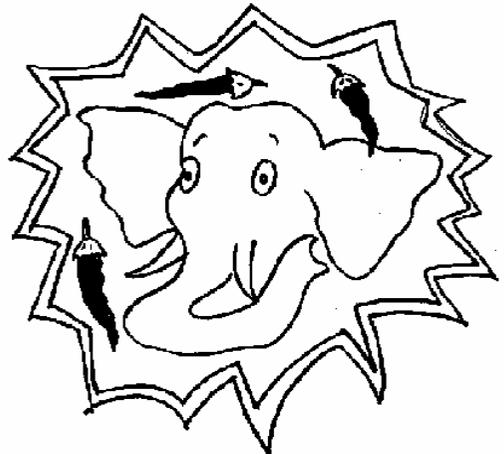
'Operation Blackbuck can be completed in three years: official', *The Hindu*, 11/05/05.

Contact: **DFO** (Wildlife Management), Rollapadu WLS, Atmakur, Kurnool. Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 08516-283337

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ASSAM

Tripwires & red chilli bombs to scare away elephants in NE



Tripwires and red chilli smoke bombs are being used in parts of the North East to prevent herds of wild elephants from destroying crops and attacking homes. The system involves battery-operated tripwires, fixed a few hundred meters from a home. These trigger a warning bell when marauding elephants approach a village, giving villagers adequate lead-time to prepare for warding off the elephants and obviating the need to keep sleepless night vigils. Trials carried out over the past eight months are said to have been successful and full-scale installation of these devices is now being done in five villages in Assam as part of the *Assam Haathi Project*.

The tolerance level of elephants to some pungent variety of chillies has also been tested and use of chilli smoke 'bombs' and chilli-smearred ropes is also proposed to keep elephants away. Similar techniques are said to have been successfully used in Africa and South East Asia.

The problem of elephant – animal conflict in the North Eastern region of the country has reached alarming proportions with reduction in their habitat being one of the main reasons for this. Wild elephants here have killed more than 600 people in the past 15 years, while 19 elephants were poisoned by angry villagers in Sonitpur district in the year 2001 (see *PA Updates* 38 & 33).

Source: Rajeev Roy / Sanjeev Ahuja. 'Tripwires and red chilli bombs to scare away elephants in NE', *The Pioneer*, 08/06/05.

Stone quarry affects elephant movement in Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve

A stone quarry operating within the Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong Elephant Reserve is said to be seriously affecting elephant movement in this region. The quarry is spread over an area of 3 sq. kms. and is located about 15 kms from the boundary of the Kaziranga National Park.

Disturbed by the constant sounds of dynamite blasts and the presence of thousands of people, wild elephants here went on a rampage recently killing two people and injuring four others at the Letekujan Tea Estate. The herd, which has been stuck in the area inhabited by human population for a couple of months, had already killed a person and injured another at Behora Tea Estate in May.

The quarry has been set up recently for chiselling out boulders for the Bogibeel bridge project. Experts and forest officials have suggested that the problem could become even more serious if not dealt with at the earliest.

Contact: **Director**, Kaziranga NP, PO Bokakhat, Dist. Golaghat – 785612, Assam. Tel: 03776-268095(O), 268086(R)
Dr. Bibhab Talukdar, Samanwoy Path (Survey), PO Beltola, Guwahati - 781 028, Assam. Email: bibhab1@sancharnet

Call for new wildlife sanctuary comprising Rani and Garbhanga reserve forests

The NGO, Early Birds, has urged the Central and the State Governments to consider a new wildlife sanctuary that will include the Rani and Garbhanga reserve forests located near the city of Guwahati. The twin reserve forests constitute around 180 sq. km of forests and are home to wide range of wild animals including the leopard, slow loris, Assamese macaque and elephants.

The reserve forests are close to the Meghalaya border on one side and Deepor Beel Sanctuary on the other, providing about 70 km of natural corridor between the two forests for the movement of animals.

Source: 'Demand for new urban wildlife sanctuary near Guwahati', *The Assam Tribune*, 08/05/05.

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

Document on wildlife areas in BTAD

The Bodoland Territorial Autonomous District (BTAD) authorities have commissioned a document titled 'Prospects of Wildlife Areas in BTAD'. It is being put together by a team of wildlife experts and researchers including the Field Director of the Manas Tiger Reserve. The document will focus on the present status of the Manas National Park, Orang National Park, Barnadi WLS and Chakrasila WLS along with 26 Reserve Forests areas here.

Manas National Park is likely to occupy centre-stage in this plan, details of which are still awaited. The BTAD has said that much needed to be done for the improvement of Manas, particularly its infrastructure. The Forest Department has pointed out that there is an urgent

need for resources, including money and frontline staff to ensure the better protection of Manas.

Source: Prabal Das. 'Protection of Manas biodiversity top priority', *The Assam Tribune*, 13/06/05.

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

Rhino relocation to Manas

The Forest Department and the Manas National Park authorities are planning to reintroduce the rhino into the Manas National Park. As the first step, a three-year-old female rhino from the Animal Rescue Centre at Kaziranga is to be relocated in Manas by November, later this year. The rhino would be radio-collared and kept under constant monitoring for protection. The animal's movements will be restricted to a specific area and she will be under constant observation for a period of a year.

The rhino is to be released near Kuribeel under the Bansbari range of the Park. Field Director, Manas Tiger Reserve, Mr. Abhijit Rabha said that with the gradual improvement of the security scenario, a feasibility study of translocation of rhinos from other protected areas was carried out recently. He said that initially they wanted to begin with one or two rhinos, because the security scenario was still not totally foolproof.

Manas was reported to have nearly 100 rhinos till about the late 1980s. After that, the period of social unrest severely damaged the Park's security system as well as other infrastructure, and the rhinos were poached out of existence here (see *PA Updates* 50, 30, 29, 27, 21 & 20)

The Field Director, also said that there have been recent reports of the presence of at least one other rhino in the Park. The last rhino was thought to have been killed in Kokolabari in 2001, but the present indication is that a

couple of rhinos might still be surviving. There are also indications of rhinos' to and fro movement from Kurichu on the Bhutan side.

Source: 'Rhinos set for return to Manas', *The Assam Tribune*, 09/06/05.

Contact: **Abhijit Rabha**, Director Manas NP, see above

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

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Hangul population only 250-300



A recent study by Dr. Qamar Qureshi of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), has suggested that the population of the Hangul is only 250-300 animals in the wild. What is of also great concern is that fewer fawns now appear to be making it to adulthood. While 50

fawns were reported per 100 females in 1996, this number was down to just 20 fawns per hundred females in 2004.

Once spread across Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir, Hangul territory has now shrunk to a point where 95% of these animals are confined to the Dachigam National Park close to Srinagar. Even the relatively safer higher reaches of Dachigam have been made inaccessible to the hangul by graziers. In the lower reaches the fawns are regularly preyed upon by leopards. The fawns are also easy prey for jackals and domestic dogs maintained by graziers and the army.

In its wintering areas, too, the Hangul is squeezed for space by the presence of sheep breeding farms, VIP guesthouses, public works department, the security forces, irrigation department and public health and the engineering department.

The WII project is now ready to move to its the second phase that will study in detail the relationship between the leopard and the Hangul, using the global positioning system and VHF collars to monitor movements, habitat use and attacks on the Hangul. (Also see *PA Updates* 47 & 32)

Source: 'Kashmir stag losing survival battle', *The Times of India*, 16/06/05.

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

KARNATAKA

Ant, beetle and butterfly survey in Bandipur NP

A recent survey by the Mysore based Green Club has revealed the presence of 27 species of ants, 41 species of dung beetles and 85 species of butterflies in the Bandipur NP

The survey was conducted over the period of an entire year by more than 100 volunteers who camped in 20 spots in the Bandipur forests. The University of Illinois, the Forest Department, and the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE), assisted in the research.

Source: Sharath Srivatsa. 'Counting ants and butterflies', *The Hindu*, 08/06/05.

Elephant census in Bhadra; male to female ratio is 1:2

The recently conducted elephant census in Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary is said to have put the elephant population here at 209. This compares favourably with the 161 elephants counted here in 1993 and the 203 elephants that were reported in the last census in 1997. The three techniques of the block count method, water hole count and the. line transect were used for the census.

One of the interesting findings of the census is that the male to female ratio here is 1:2. The Bhadra Wildlife Section, which undertook the census has forwarded the report

to the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore for further analysis including on the demographic trends.

Source: 'Female jumbos outnumber tuskers in Bhadra forest', *Deccan Herald*, 01/07/05.

Contact: **DCF**, Bhadra Wildlife Division (Bhadra Tiger Reserve) Chickmagalur - 577 101. Karnataka. Tel: 08262-234904(O), 230751(R)

Call to declare Handigundi forest area as sloth bear sanctuary



Officials of the Karnataka Forest Department have submitted reports recommending that the 4000 hectares Handigundi Reserve Forest area in Ramanagaram be declared a 'Sloth-Bear Sanctuary'. The surveys conducted recently have revealed the presence of about 60 sloth bear in the forests here.

This follows the controversy surrounding the proposal of the Sanghamitra Foundation to create a Buddha memorial in these forests. The project involves the carving of a 715-feet high statue on a 1050-monolith for a spiritual center. A Bollywood musical nite was recently organised in Bangalore to raise funds for the project.

The project has been opposed on grounds that it will disturb the flora and fauna here as also the fact that the rocks are said to be nearly 2.5 billion years old.

Source: 'Declare Handigundi forest area as sloth bear sanctuary', *Deccan Herald*, 18/06/05.

Rise in elephant population in BRT Wildlife Sanctuary

The elephant census carried out in the first week of May has put the elephant numbers in the BRT Wildlife Sanctuary at 493. This is 187 elephants more than was counted in the census held last year. The sex ratio too is said to have improved from 1:5 to 1:4.

216 elephants were counted in the Kyatadeveragudi range, 107 elephants in the Punajuru range, while 144 and 28 elephants were counted in the Bailuru and Yellandur Ranges respectively.

Source: N Siddegowda. 'Jumbo rise in elephants', *Deccan Herald*, 17/05/05.

Contact: DCF, BRT Wildlife Sanctuary, Wildlife Division, Chamarajanagar, Karnataka. Tel: 08226-222059(O), 222156(R)

Rs. 50 lakh worth equipment for CID Forest Cell

The Centre has sanctioned Rs. 50 lakhs to the CID Forest Cell of the Karnataka State Police under the Police Modernisation Program. The money will mainly be used to purchase two thermal imaging cameras, one of which will be with the Superintendent of Police (Forest Cell), Madikeri. The other camera will be in the possession of the Inspector General of Police – Forest Cell. The cell will also be getting GPS receivers.

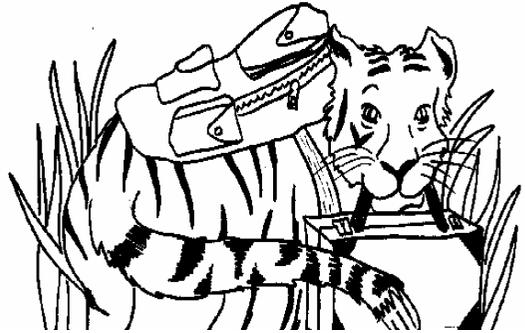
The cell is already in possession of digitized maps, latest directional microphones that can indicate the direction of different sounds, five night vision binoculars, 20 daylight binoculars; digital voice recorders and digital cameras. The cell is also planning to acquire an unmanned aerial vehicle with facility to take photographs and spotter scopes fitted with cameras.

Source: KV Subramanya. 'CID Forest Cell to acquire gadgets to check poaching', *The Hindu*, 02/06/05.

Karnataka tigers for Sariska?

A meeting on tiger population, convened by the Union Ministry of Forests and Environment in May in Karnataka reportedly discussed the proposal of relocating tigers from other parts of the country to certain tiger reserves like Sariska, where the big cats have been poached out of existence.

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) which had earlier been asked to suggest ways of reviving the Sariska tiger population has also been asked to look at the relocation possibilities. It has been suggested by some that the WII may consider south Indian tiger habitats to make Sariska lively again, and a prominent possibility would be to look at tigers from Karnataka.



Experts have called for serious caution to be exercised in the matter, including ensuring that Sariska was absolutely safe for tigers and totally undisturbed. It has also been pointed out that most tiger habitats in the south differ substantially from the dry and scrub forest regions of Sariska. They have also said that a careful and detailed feasibility study, including some kind of genetic mapping, should be undertaken before any further decision was taken in the matter.

Source: BS Arun. 'State tigers to be shifted to Sariska', *Deccan Herald*, 02/06/05.

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MADHYA PRADESH

Tribals protest displacement from Satpura NP

Tribals and NGOs have opposed the displacement of nearly 4000 families of 50 villages from the Satpura National Park and Tiger Reserve. A delegation of the affected tribal people under the aegis of Samajwadi Jan Parishad (SJP) also met the Chairperson of the Tiger Task Force, Sunita Narain in Delhi recently to apprise her of the situation.

Presenting evidence of the inappropriateness of the move the delegation pointed out that the resettlement of just one village had resulted in the felling of 50,000 trees in Dobjhirna forest.

They also highlighted the fact that the successful working of the Tawa Matsya Sangh the co-operative that was conducting fishing in the reservoir of the Tawa dam was being stopped because the entire reservoir was now being considered inside the Bori Wildlife Sanctuary which is a part of the Satpura Tiger Reserve.

Source: 'Tribals protest plan to oust them', *The Hindu*, 25/05/05

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252130. Fax: 07578-52217

Joint management plan for National Chambal Sanctuary

The states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh are said to be working on a joint management plan for the National Chambal Sanctuary. This was decided at meeting held recently in Gwalior that was attended by representatives of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and Wildlife Wardens from the three states.

A decision was taken to create a common protection strategy for the sanctuary

and to increase coordination to check offences. One of the steps includes joint patrolling by personnel from the three states. It was also decided that efforts would be made to maintain the flow of the Chambal river by checking the impounding and diversion of water and that a part of the income generated from tourism here would be shared with local communities.

Water pollution that had caused a decline in the numbers of the endangered Gangetic Dolphin and Indian Gharial along with sand quarrying were identified as the other major threats faced by the sanctuary

A wetland conservation programme supported by the Government of India would also be implemented here. The WII is said to have identified the sanctuary as an important Ramsar site and the Union Government has asked the three states to prepare a joint proposal for the purpose.

The next meeting in this context is proposed to be held in Rajasthan in November.

Source: 'Joint management plan for Chambal Sanctuary soon', *The Pioneer*, 02/06/05.

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

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ORISSA

Dolphin sanctuary proposed at Chilika

The Orissa State Government has proposed the creation of a dolphin sanctuary in the Satpada zone of the Chilika Lake. The proposal is part of a master plan being developed for eco-tourism in the lake. This decision was taken at the eighth governing body meeting of the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) that was held in July. The meeting was presided over by the Chief Minister of the state Mr. Naveen Patnaik

A decision was taken to enforce the Orissa Marine Fishing (Control) Act to stop juvenile fishing. The meeting also discussed

ways to protect the migratory birds and the plantation that would be undertaken on the western part of the lagoon. The CM also announced a proposal to conduct training programmes on wetland management for national and international wetland managers at Bankabehari Das Wetland Research and Training Centre at Chandraput.

Those who attended the meeting included, BJP legislator Bibhuti Bhusan Harichandan, Chief Secretary Subas Pani, APC R N Bohidar, Principal Secretary in the Forest and Environment Department S P Nanda, and Chief Executive of the CDA Ajit Patnaik

Source: 'Dolphin sanctuary planned in Chilika', *The New Indian Express*, 19/07/05.

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

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FD to seek permission for removal of cashew nuts from Balukhand-Konark WLS

The Orissa Forest Department is said to have approached the Supreme Court (SC) appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) for permission to allow for the collection of cashew nuts from the Balukhand-Konark Wildlife Sanctuary.

The collection of the nuts has been prohibited subsequent to orders of the SC issued in 2000 asking for a stoppage of the removal of any resources from a protected area and also the recent amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act that does not allow for any removal for commercial purposes. Commercial collection rights in the sanctuary here have been stopped since 2002-03.

The FD now fears that if the cashew nut is not collected, it may lead to a profuse regeneration of cashew plants in the sanctuary area and this will be detrimental to the

grasslands and meadows that support populations of a number of herbivores including blackbuck and spotted deer. The cashew nut, itself is not consumed by the herbivores, and is known, in fact, to cause soreness in the mouth of the animals.

The FD is in any case finding it difficult to enforce a prohibition on the collection of the nuts from the sanctuary, as it is surrounded by nearly 40 villages with an estimated population of 50,000 people. Already the Puri Wildlife Division has appointed two Range Officers, five Foresters and 11 Forest Guards for the protection of the sanctuary. Further 953 and 515 quintals of cashew was seized in 2002-03 and 2003-04 respectively from people who were trying to take it out from the sanctuary. This was then disposed of through the TDCC.

Till 2002 the FD used to get a royalty of about Rs 30 lakhs from auctioning of the collected cashew nuts.

Source: 'Forest Dept. sees threat to flora and fauna', *The New Indian Express*, 23/05/05.

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer-cum-Wildlife Warden**, Balukhand Konark WLS, Puri Division At/P.O./Dist. Khurda, Orissa. Tel: 06755-220539(O), 220540(R)

Two tuskers poached inside Chandka WLS

Two tuskers were poached in Chandka Wildlife Sanctuary in the months of April and May. The first incident occurred in April at Kumarkhunti inside the sanctuary. The tusks were missing.

The 2nd carcass was found in the middle of May besides the Chandaka-Dampara main road near the Damapara range. A bullet injury was found near its ear. The two tusks had been uprooted and 25% of the body had rotted when the forest department located the animal. (Also see *PA Updates* 49, 47, 46, 41, 39, 34, 32, & 29).

Source: 'Two elephants killed inside Chandaka', *Dharitri*, 17/05/05.

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

Orissa offers awards to check timber smuggling



Orissa will reward informers and officials who help curb smuggling of timber and forest products that is estimated to cost the state Rs.10 billion (\$230 million) annually. Under the new Orissa Rewards for Detection of Forest Offences Rules, reward money will go to those who provide tips leading to or take part in the seizure of timber and vehicles transporting them.

People giving information about smuggled timber and the vehicles in which they are being transported will be entitled to 45% of the value of the goods. Forest officers and staff who effect seizures will get another 45% that will be split equally among the entire group regardless of rank.

Divisional Forest Officers will retain 10% of the proceeds to create a welfare fund or give special rewards or compensation in case of death or disability of forest staff.

Source: Jatindra Dash. 'Orissa offers awards to check smuggling of timber', *Indo Asian News Service*, 12/05/05.

Decline in elephant population in Orissa

A census conducted in Orissa in April, earlier this year, has revealed a significant fall in the wild elephant population in the state. The census figure of 1639 animals compares poorly with the 2002 figure of 1841. In the

1979 census Orissa had recorded more than 2000 wild elephants

The number of tuskers has fallen from 363 in 2002 to 271 now, indicating the existence of significant poaching in the state. 39 elephants are said to have either been shot or electrocuted in the last three years. The total number of elephant elephants poached in the state in the last 15 years is estimated to be 200.

Biswajit Mohanty of the Wildlife Society of Orissa has said that a number of forest divisions have recorded significantly low populations of the pachyderms because to rapid loss of habitat and destruction of migratory corridors due to large scale and ill-planned mining.

The setting up of several sponge iron units in Keonjhar has, for instance, driven the elephants from their original habitat. As a result, only 51 elephants were recorded in the 2005 census as against 112 reported last time.

The elephant population has also shown a marked decline in the Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve that is made up of the Simlipal Tiger Reserve and the Kuldiha and Hadgarh Wildlife Sanctuaries. The current elephant population here is estimated to be 465, down by 47 animals from the last estimate of 512 in 2002. Wildlife officials have said that the decline was mainly due to rapid loss of habitat in the wake of timber smuggling and rampant collection of sal leaves inside sanctuaries for leaf plate making.

Dhenkanal district, which is an ideal elephant habitat due to its mixed forests, has also registered a decline in population due fragmentation of habitat caused by the Rengali irrigation canal.

Source: 'Census reveals decline in elephant population', *Central Chronicle*, 15/06/05.

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

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

RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan demands Rs 228 crore for PAs

The Rajasthan Government is said to have asked the Centre for a grant of Rs 228 crore for the development and maintenance of the existing protected areas in the state. Putting up the demand before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during his visit to the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in the last week of May, Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje said that Rs 119 crore of the requested amount would be needed for the Ranthambore National Park and Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary and Rs 109 crore for the Ghana National Park in Bharatpur.

Details of what the money will be used for or how the figures were arrived out are not known.

Source: 'Rajasthan demands Rs. 228 crore for wildlife park, sanctuaries', *Hindustan Times*, 26/05/05.

Fall in Ranthambore tiger numbers

Preliminary reports from the census conducted in the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in the month of May have indicated that the tiger population here is less than what was counted last year. While last year's figure was 47 tigers, the number this time could be anywhere between 30 and 40. This includes 12 young animals.

This was the first time that three methods were used simultaneously to know the exact number of tigers in the forest. These were the pugmark system, water whole counting and deployment of digital cameras at certain strategic locations. A software program developed by the Wildlife Institute of India to analyse the pugmarks and the strips on the bodies of the tigers to differentiate one from another was also being used.

In all about 250 pugmarks were collected and not a single pugmark was found in the Mansingh forests and those of the Keladevi Wildlife Sanctuary.

Source: Lokpal Sethi. 'Preliminary report hints at dwindling tiger numbers', *The Pioneer*, 13/06/05.

Contact: **Director**, Ranthambore TR,
Sawai Madhopur – 322001, Rajasthan. Tel:
07462-220223 / 222004 / 221139 / 221142

TAMIL NADU

Raids to check if lime units using coral from Gulf of Mannar MNP

A team of forest officials led by the Wildlife Warden of the Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park conducted surprise raids at two lime units situated in the Tuticorin district in the first week of May. The purpose of the raids was to check if coral was being used as raw materials for the production of hydrated lime.

No coral or its usage was found, but the documents were not proper. Both the units raided did not possess the copy of the licence issued by the Mines and Minerals Department and the transport permit issued by the Revenue Department, both of which are pre-requisites to run the unit and transport produce.

Since the managers of the units communicated that the copies were with the owners of the respective firms and hence not available at the campus, the inspection team did not undertake any spot action. The units were asked to produce the necessary documents at the earliest, failing which action was threatened under the Mines and Minerals Act and Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. What happened subsequently is not known.

Lime units in the region have in the past regularly used coral from the marine areas, but this has significantly reduced due to stringent action by the authorities.

Source: 'Forest officials conduct raids at two lime units', *The Hindu*, 05/05/05.

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

Tiger Reserve status for Indira Gandhi NP and WLS

A Tamil Nadu Forest Department proposal to declare the Indira Gandhi National Park and Sanctuary in the Anamalais range as tiger reserve is reported to have been cleared by the Project Tiger Steering Committee. The proposal has been forwarded to the Planning Commission for its approval. The area of the reserve will be about 1000 sq. kms.

A formal notification for the same is expected to be issued in the next few months.

The funding component is yet to be finalised. Out of the total fund allocation, the recurring component would be shared equally by the Central and the State Governments while the rest would be borne by the Centre.

This will be the second Tiger reserve in the State after the Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve in Tirunelveli district.

Source: Vani Doraisamy. 'Second tiger reserve for Tamil Nadu', *The Hindu*, 19/06/05.

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

Call for Tiger Reserve status to Mudumalai WLS and NP

The Nilgiri Wildlife and Environment Association (NWLEA) has re-emphasised the demand for including Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park under the Project Tiger umbrella (see *PA Update* 30).

A survey conducted about five years ago by the Forest Department and the NWLEA had revealed that 31 tigers had made the sanctuary and adjoining reserve forests their home. Immediately, the question of declaring it a tiger reserve was taken up with the forest authorities, particularly so because the forests here are contiguous to those of the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka.

The demand has been raised again in view of the present tiger crisis.

Source: 'Declare Mudumalai a tiger reserve', *The Hindu*, 29/06/05.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Mudumalai WLS, Forest Department, Mahalingam Bldgs, Coonor Road, Udthagamandalam- 643001 Tamil Nadu. Tel: 0423-244098
AC Soundarajan, NWLEA C/o Dist Forest Office (North Divn.), Mount Stewart Hill, Udthagamandalam- 643001, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 0423-2447167. Email: nwlea@sancharnet.in

Public hearing in Masinagudi discusses issues related to Mudumalai WLS

A Public Hearing was held at Masinagudi in Gudalur Taluk on May 15. About 700 people attended the hearing from various parts of Gudalur and Pandalur Taluks. The participants included adivasis, dalits, small farmers amongst a cross section of people in Gudalur and particularly those living in and around the Mudumalai Wild Life Sanctuary.

The hearing had as its panel members, Dr. Vasantha Devi, former Chairperson of the State Women's Commission, R Ratinaswami, Former Judge and Member, State Human Rights Commission and Dr.V Suresh, Senior Lawyer, Chennai High Court. Over 300 petitions were received from various people of which over 50 depositions were made and hearings conducted.

The Public Hearing was organised by Vyavasaiikal Thozhilalarakal Munnetra Sangam of Niligiris, Peoples Union of Civil Liberties – Tamil Nadu & Pondicherry and the National Forum of Forest Peoples and Forest Workers.

Various issues were discussed that were directly related to the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary. These included among others the impact of the PA on the adivasis and other marginalized communities living in the area; the violations of constitutional rights and relevant human rights and labour laws of the people dependent on the protected area; the efficacy of the PA in the context of conservation; the threats to forests and biodiversity including those from development activities and growth in tourism.

Contact: **MS Selvaraj**, Vivasaiagal Thoilarlagal
Munnetra Sangam (VTMS), 11/341,
Kasim Vayal, Calicut Road, Gudalur –
643212, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 04262-
264559

Conservation Reserve planned at Thirupudaimaruthur, 40 kms from Tirunelveli



There is a proposal for the creation of a conservation reserve at Thirupudaimaruthur village located 40 kms from Tirunelveli, close to the River Thamirparani.

The conservation reserve has been planned keeping in mind the 25 odd huge

trees in the village that attract a significant number of breeding birds, particularly Painted Storks and egrets. An estimated 400 nests have been counted on the trees here this year.

The Forest Department has already decided to spend Rs. One lakh for planting more saplings, conducting an awareness campaign in and around the village and taking the villagers to Koonthankulam Wildlife Sanctuary on an exposure visit.

The panchayat administration in the village has banned the bursting of crackers and has kept ready more than eight cages for young birds that accidentally fall off the nests. There is also a plan to ring some of birds.

The first meeting of the Thirupudaimaruthur Conservation Reserve Management Committee was to be held on May 21. Details of what transpired and what decisions were taken, if any, are not known.

Source: 'Conservation reserve planned in Tirunelveli village', *The Hindu*, 16/05/05.

Contact: **CWLW**, Tamil Nadu, 6D, Panagal Building, No.1, Jeenis Road, Saidapet, Chennai - 600015. Tel: 044-24321738 / 22353589. Fax: 2433707/24321738

UTTARANCHAL

Valley of Flowers NP recommended for World Heritage List

The Valley of Flowers National Park is among eight new sites recommended by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) to the World Heritage Committee for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List

IUCN has recommend the extension of India's Nanda Devi National Park - already a World Heritage site - to include the Valley of Flowers. The proposal was to be considered during the meeting of the World Heritage Committee that was held in Durban from July 10 to July 17.

Of the 788 sites that are currently on the World Heritage List, 154 are natural properties, 611 are cultural properties and 23 are mixed properties. 26 of these sites are in India. These include among others the Ajanta and Ellora caves, the Taj Mahal, the Sun Temple at Konark, the group of structures at Mahabalipuram, the Kaziranga National Park, Fatehpur Sikri and the structures at Hampi.

The most recent Indian site to be included on the list is Mumbai's Chattrapati Shivaji Terminus, which was listed a World Heritage site last year.

Source: 'Valley of Flowers recommended for World Heritage List', <http://sify.com/finance/fullstory.php?id=13893242>, 12/07/05.

Contact: **DFO**, Valley of Flowers NP, Joshimath, Dist. Chamoli, Uttaranchal, Tel: 01389-222179

Wildlife advisory board in Uttaranchal

Uttaranchal has set up its first wildlife advisory board to be headed by Chief Minister ND Tiwari.

The board has been constituted to help the government in formulation of its policy concerning conservation and preservation of wildlife. While the Chief Minister would be the Chairman of the board, the Forest and Environment Minister Navprabhat would be the Vice Chairman.

The members of the board include MLAs Kunwar Singh, Shailendra Mohan Singhal, and Anusuya Maikhuri, DGP Kanchan Choudhary Bhattacharya, a representative from the Forest Research Institute, a representative from the Zoological Survey of India, Chief Wildlife Warden of the state, Mr. Srikant Chandola, and a representative of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation among others.

The board is constituted of 31 members and also has 22 special invitees.

Source: 'Wildlife advisory board set up in Uttaranchal', *The Tribune*, 17/05/05.

No Nepalese nationals to be allowed inside Kedarnath WLS

The Uttaranchal Forest Department is reported to have taken a decision not to allow Nepalese nationals to enter the Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary. The decision was made after the FD caught 38 Nepalese labourers involved in a massive poaching operation near Gaurikund in September last year.

The department has said that the area was under constant threat from labourers of Nepalese origin as they were involved in large scale felling of trees like birch and juniper and poaching of several endangered fauna species.

According to FD estimates more than 55 quintals of wood was being illicitly sold every year by Nepalese labourers and most of the wood being cut was oak. 15 to 25 hectares of forestland is said to be disturbed in the process every year because of rampant felling and indiscriminate grazing of mules.

These activities are said to extend across the Kedarnath Forest Division and according to the FD those responsible are the Nepali labourers and members of the Juar tribe from Pithoragarh who were operating in the region with the tacit support of the local population. The animals that are routinely targeted include the musk deer, snow leopards, leopards and the black bear.

District Magistrate UD Chaube said the district administration was keeping a tight check on all Nepalese nationals who were

required to maintain proper identification to remain in the district.

Source: Namita Kala. 'Forest department's diktat stumps Nepalese in Kedarnath', *The Pioneer*, 10/06/05.

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Kedarnath WLS, Kedarnath Wildlife Division, Gopeshwar Chamoli, Uttaranchal. Tel: 01372-52149
CWLW, Uttaranchal, 85, Rajpur Road, Dehradun, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-744225 / 679817. Fax: 675138/747669

'A group of poachers do not represent a country...'

I am absolutely in favour of taking action against people doing illegal activities regardless of country of origin. Considering the current upsurge of poaching in parks and reserves across India stringent action should be taken against those culprits to discourage such activities. However, generalization of people from any country for the wrong doing by a handful of people does not look fair and professional to me.

A group of poachers do not represent a country. Moreover, poaching, illegal trade, and the increased market demand have become a global problem and it does not help pointing finger to any country or nationality. Addressing this problem that pose serious threats to survival of many wild species of flora and fauna requires a concerted efforts from all the interested parties, nationalities, and countries.

- **Mahendra Shrestha**, Director, Save the Tiger Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 1120 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 900 Washington, D.C. 20036.
Email: mks_tiger@yahoo.com

UTTAR PRADESH

Illegal structures demolished in Okhla Bird Sanctuary

A number of illegal constructions located in the Okhla Bird Sanctuary were demolished recently by the Gautam Buddha Nagar officials. A Public

Interest Litigation (PIL) had been filed in December 2004 following some investigation work done by the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and the Biodiversity Conservation Trust of India (BCTI). The petition had been filed against the grant of fishing licenses in the River Yamuna, a crematorium and some constructions within the protected area.

The matter was first heard in January, when the state of Uttar Pradesh sought three months to file a reply. On May 26, 2005, an additional application was filed to bring to the notice some additional construction activity for expansion of the original structures.

An order passed on May 30 by the Supreme Court appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) directed the Chief Secy, PCCF, DM Gautam Buddh Nagar and Regional CCF, MoEF to ensure that no construction was allowed since it would be in violation of the Orders of the Supreme Court in Writ Petition 202 dated February 14, 2000. Acting swiftly on these orders, the Administration demolished the illegal structures in the month of June.

Source: Subhendu Mazumdar. 'Demolitions to drive away encroachers', Email to nathist dated 12/06/05.

Contact: **Subhendu Mazumdar**. WTI, A-220, New Friends Colony, New Delhi - 110065. Tel: 011 - 26326025/26. Fax: 26326027 Email: env_subho@yahoo.com

Heat wave claims over 200 langurs in Kaimur hills

Over 200 langurs are reported to have died in the Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary due to the severe heat wave in northern India. A severe shortage of food and water is said to have forced the langurs to move out of the mountainous regions into the extremely dry hinterlands, with severe impacts on the animals.

Officials tried to reach out to the animals but this was not possible due to the extreme heat coupled with difficult terrain.

Efforts were also being made to reach water tankers and medicos, mostly on horseback.



Source: 'Heat wave causes death of 200 monkeys in UP forest',

http://news.webindia123.com/news/showdetails.asp?id=91699&n_date=20050626&cat=India, 26/06/05.

Contact: **DFO**, Kaimur WLS, Kaimur Wildlife Division, Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 05442-253126

Trains kill elephants, tigress inside Dudhwa

A tigress was killed in the Dudhwa National Park on May 27 by the Aishbagh-Tikoria passenger on the meter gauge track that runs 40 kms into the core area of the park. A day earlier, three elephants (one male, one female and a calf) were also killed when the Gonda-Mailani train rammed into a herd of 27 elephants crossing the track. The train's engine was also damaged.

At least eight passenger trains pass through the park every day and a number of other animals including elephants have been killed here by speeding trains in the past as well (see *PA Updates* 44 & 34). The park authorities blame the railways for the continuing death of wild animals here. Repeated requests for diversion of the track and even for enforcement of speed limits have been completely ignored.

When contacted, the Additional Divisional Railway Manager (North-Eastern

Railway) is reported to have said that the trains were important and public pressure would not allow the track to be diverted.

Source: Aman Sharma. 'Now, killer tracks claim tigress', *The Indian Express*, 31/05/05.

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

WEST BENGAL

Wildlife Crime Cell for West Bengal

The West Bengal State Government has decided to set up a Wildlife Crime Cell that will comprise officers from the police's wildlife wing, the enforcement branch and intelligence agencies. The cell will keep in touch with neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh and collect relevant information.

A forensic laboratory to deal with wildlife crimes is also to be opened shortly in a section of the state Forensic Science Laboratory in Belgachhia.

These initiatives were announced by the State Forest Minister, Mr. Jogesh Burman after a meeting of the state wildlife board that was held in the last week of June. The meeting was chaired by Chief Minister Mr. Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee.

Source: 'Cell to check poaching', *The Telegraph*, 30/06/05

Rs. Three crores as settlement for 17 acres of land in Narendrapur WLS

The finance department of the West Bengal State Government has sanctioned Rs 3 crore as settlement for the 17 acres of land which is part of the Narendrapur Wildlife Sanctuary. The land will be taken over after the process of the compensation is completed. The land here is home to nearly 112 avian species in addition to jackals, jungle cats, civets, mongoose and monitor lizards. Though declared a sanctuary in 1982, the property continued to be exploited

as an orchard and as a venue for film shoots and picnics.

Source: 'Lifeline for southern sanctuary', *The Telegraph*, 30/06/05.

Unbalanced rhino sex ratio in Gorumara

Forest officials and experts have expressed concern over the unbalanced sex ratio of rhinos in the Gorumara National Park. While the ideal ratio is said to be one male to three females, in Gorumara it is 1:1. The park has 12 male and 13 female rhinos.

The wildlife officials of West Bengal recently held a meeting to find a solution to the problem, but nothing could be finalized. One of the options considered was to bring in females from other areas, but the idea was dropped as the operation is supposed to be a difficult and complicated one.

The problem has been compounded by the fact that a few rhinos including four females have died in the park last year, mainly due to injuries caused during mating. It has also been pointed out that the national park does not have a veterinary doctor to treat the injuries of these animals and local private vets are hired for the task as and when needed.

Source: 'Sex ratio takes toll on rhino', *The Sentinel*, 02/06/05.

Contact: **DFO**, Gorumara NP, Aranya Bhawan, Old Court Campus, Jubilee Park, P.O. & Dist. Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. Tel: 03561-224907(O), 222838(R). Fax: 03561-223563. Email: wild2@dte.vsnl.net.in

Rs. 500 cr plan for East Kolkata Wetlands

The West Bengal Government has formed a new board to deal with matters related to the protection and development of wetlands, particularly the 12,500 hectares East Kolkata Wetlands which is a Ramsar Site (see *PA Updates* 40 & 24).

The state Chief Secretary will chair the seven-member board, comprising secretaries of the Departments of Environment, Fisheries and Land and Land reforms, the District Magistrate of

South 24-Parganas and two representatives from NGOs.

The government has sought the formal permission of the high court for the formation of the new board as the development of the wetlands has been taken up under its instructions.

Work to be taken up includes greening of the area and the setting up of a botanical garden, a bird sanctuary and an amusement park. Facilities for eco-tourism, horticulture and water sports are also to be developed.

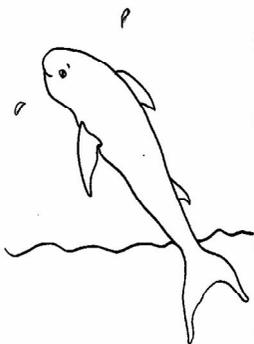
The Union Ministry of Forests and Environment is said to have already approved the draft proposal and a detailed plan is awaiting approval. The Centre has also assured financial assistance which is being sought from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the World Bank.

Source: Shankar Mukherjee. '500 cr plan for wetlands', *The Telegraph*, 04/07/05.

Dolphin census in the Sunderbans in December

A dolphin census is scheduled to be held in the Sunderbans Biosphere Reserve, which is home to both, the Irrawady and the Gangetic dolphins. Experts from Orissa, which has conducted similar surveys in Chilka lake, have been asked to train forest personnel in South Bengal for the purpose.

The count that will be held in December will be conducted by small groups in mechanized boats in the Matla, Muriganga and Thakuran rivers and their tributaries in the Sunderbans. (Also see *PA Updates* 43 & 41)



Source: 'Dolphin count in tiger territory', *The Telegraph*, 04/07/05.

Old age home for tigers in Sunderbans

Authorities of the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve have proposed the creation of an old age home for aged and sick tigers in the reserve. To be spread over 45 hectares on Jharkhali Island, this home is expected to be ready within a year and will also have deer as easy prey for old tigers.

The Central Zoo Authority Member Secretary, Mr. BR Sharma has said that the project is a good study module and could lead to many such old-age tiger homes nationwide. Other experts have suggested that such a project can only be executed at a regional level, depending on the different habitats that the tiger inhabits. A tiger from Ranthambore, for instance, would find the mangrove environment of the Sunderbans a completely alien one.

Source: Jyothi Prabhakar. 'One for the roar', *The Times of India*, 26/05/05.

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

NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

MoEF okays Rs. 65.8 lakh for monsoon patrolling in 10 tiger reserves

The MoEF recently announced that Rs 65.8 lakh would be provided for monsoon patrolling in 10 tiger reserves in the country.

The break up is as follows: Ranthambore (Rs 17.5 lakh) and Sariska (Rs 12 lakh) in Rajasthan; Dudhwa in Uttar Pradesh (Rs 11 lakh); Pakke in Arunachal Pradesh (Rs 6.1 lakh); Corbett in Uttaranchal (Rs 4.75 lakh); Tadoba-Andhari in Maharashtra (Rs 4.32 lakh); Valmiki in Bihar (Rs 3.47 lakh); Palamu in Jharkhand (Rs 2 lakh) and Indravati in Chhattishgarh (Rs 1.21 lakh) and Nagarjunsagar Srisailem in Andhra Pradesh (Rs. 3.45 lakh)

The decision had reportedly been taken after the meeting of Field Directors of the tiger reserves and state Chief Wildlife Wardens with

Environment Minister A Raja held in the last week of May. Ranthambore and Sariska will spend the money to deploy Home Guards and locals to protect the forests from poaching. Other details are not available.

Source: 'Down south, only AP gets tiger aid', *Deccan Herald*, 14/06/05.

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

New laboratory for conservation of endangered species

A new Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Animal Species (LACONES) will be opened in July at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad. The announcement was made recently by the Minister for Science and Technology and Ocean Development, Mr. Kapil Sibal

Among the first projects to be undertaken would be related to the tiger. It would involve collection of tiger scat samples for DNA finger printing, which will help in getting an accurate picture of the number of tigers in the wild. The process of collecting scat samples was to be started by training of Forest Department Workers in July.

The Project will be run jointly by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Department of Biotechnology.

Source: 'New laboratory for preservation of endangered species to be set up in Hyderabad', Ministry of Science & Technology, Press Release, 19/05/05.

SOUTH ASIA

SRI LANKA

Four elephants shot dead in Wilpattu NP

A female elephant and three calves were shot dead in early June with a T 56 weapon in the

Wilpattu National Park. This is said to be the highest number of elephants killed in a single incident in the recent past. Details of the incident and the motive behind the killings are not known.

The Wildlife and Nature Protection Society (WNPS) of Sri Lanka has written to the Sri Lankan Environment Minister asking for a fair and thorough investigation in the matter.

Source: WNPS appalled by recent elephant killings at Wilpattu National Park', *Daily News*, 29/06/05.

Villagers attack, injure six forest officials in Yala NP

Six wildlife officers attached to the Yala National Park were injured and hospitalised following an attack by a group of villagers in June. Police are now said to be guarding the park. The attack followed an incident where a wild elephant had entered an illegal cultivation in the Yala National Park and killed a young man on the spot.

Wildlife officials have said that the attack by the villagers also follows several successful raids conducted by the officers where they had busted a successful illegal game-meat business. It is believed that the villagers had been roused up by these game-meat traders to distract the officers from performing their duties.

Source: Florence Wickramage. 'Six wildlife officers injured in attack by villagers', *Daily News*, 18/06/05.

UPCOMING

National Seminar on Bird Ecology and Conservation

The Institute for Natural Resources Conservation, Education, Research & Training (INCERT) along with the Newsletter for Birdwatchers is organizing a national seminar on Bird Ecology and Conservation with the theme being 'New Initiatives for Bird Conservation'.

The seminar that is to be held in

Bangalore on November 12 & 13, 2005 is being supported by the Karnataka State Biodiversity Board and the Department of Forestry & Environmental Science, UAS, Bangalore.

The topics that the seminar will deal with include: bird diversity and conservation; bird population dynamics; bird biology and behaviour; wetlands and waterfowl; applied ornithology and impact of development on bird populations.

Contact: **INCERT**, No. 10 Sirur Park 'B'
Street, Seshadripuram, Bangalore –
560020. Tel: 080-23364142 /
23364682. Email:
bird_seminar@yahoo.co.in

ButterflyIndia Meet 2005

A ButterflyIndia Meet 2005 is being organized from September 16 to 18, 2005 in the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala. The meeting will include sessions on various topics and issues related to butterflies including identification, conservation and migration.

Contact: **Kishen Das**. #951, 6th cross, I Main,
Srirampura II stage, Mysore-570023,
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Vijay Barve. Email:
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International colloquium on Tree Squirrels and Flying Squirrels

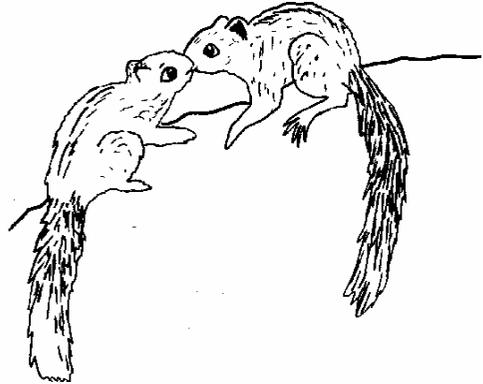
The Fourth International Colloquium on Tree Squirrels and the first Colloquium on Flying Squirrels is being simultaneously organized in March 2006 in the Periyar Tiger Reserve.

It is proposed that this colloquium will act as a forum for the exchange of a wide spectrum of research ideas ranging from the ecology, life history strategies, evolutionary biology and comparative phylogenetics to the conservation biology of tree and flying squirrels.

This is the first time this colloquium is hosted in Asia. The previous ones were held in Europe and USA. The Colloquia will be

accompanied by a Conservation Priorities Workshop focusing on issues pertaining to and threats faced by tree squirrels and flying squirrels, particularly in the tropics.

The Colloquia will be officially hosted through the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore India.



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Errata:

The workshop 'Conservation and Action Plan for Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises of India' being organized by the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust in association with the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department is being organized in Kukrail from **October 17-20**, and not October 7-20, as indicated in the last issue of the *PA Update* (No. 55, June 2005).

The error is regretted

Contact: **MCBT** Post Bag 4, Mamallapuram -
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INTERNATIONAL

Biodiversity Conservation Corridors in the Greater Mekong Subregion

The six Asian countries sharing the Lancang-Mekong River: Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam have pledged to

build biodiversity conservation corridors for wild species movement and the maintenance of viable populations. The initiative was adopted at a recent conference of Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) environmental ministers and awaits a nod from the heads of the respective states.

The corridors would be unprecedented in Asia and the news is a blessing to wildlife struggling for survival in their highly fragmented habitats in the Mekong river basin. Habitat fragmentation, mainly caused by rapid economic development poses a growing threat to the rich animal and plant diversity in the GMS.

The Asian Development Bank that is the main sponsor of a decade-old sub-regional economic cooperation programme involving the six nations has welcomed the initiative.

Source: 'Asian nations to build biodiversity conservation corridors', *Financial Express*, 05/07/05.

WHAT'S AVAILABLE

- **Kumar, A, Sati, JP, Tak, PC and Alfred, JRB (2005)** *Handbook on Indian Wetland Birds and their Conservation*. Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), (2005). Pp: i-xxvi; 1-468; 468 colour photographs, colour maps 355, 13 B&W maps, 52 colour plates. Price 15,00/= (10% discount to all individuals, 35% discount to students, scholars and amateur birders).

The Handbook provides extensive information on 310 wetland bird species, which includes 243 waterbirds and 67 wetland dependant birds listed from India. The handbook is the result of close cooperation between the ZSI, Wetlands International, Birdlife International, International Crane Foundation and Indian Cranes and Wetlands Working Group, besides

host of eminent bird photographers from around the world.

Contact: **Dr Arun Kumar**, ZSI, 218, Kaulagarh Road, P.O. IPE, Dehradun - 248 195, Uttaranchal. Telefax : 911352758362. Email: drarunk@sancharnet.in

- **Dutta Ritwick & Bhupender Yadav.** *Supreme Court on Forest Conservation*. Universal Law Publishing Co., New Delhi. 2005. Rs. 395

The book is in response to the continuing demand of activists and lawyers across the country to access the orders of the Supreme Court in the *T. N Godavarman Vs Union of India (W.P 202 of 1995)* case. The present work aims to fill an important gap by providing lawyers, activists and organizations with up to date orders and judgments of the Supreme Court in this case.

Orders from 1996 to January 2005 have been included in this book, which also has a commentary of some of the important subjects dealt by the Supreme Court in the case. The major subjects covered include: national parks and sanctuaries, saw mills and wood based industries, plantations, social forestry, encroachments, mining, and non timber forest produce.

Contact: **Ritwick Dutta**, 69, Lawyers Chamber, Supreme Court, New Delhi 110001. Email: ritwick1@vsnl.com Web: www.unilawbooks.com

OPPORTUNITIES

Openings with Greenpeace India

1. Campaigner – Toxics for issues related to corporate accountability, elimination of hazardous chemicals and to see that companies substitute them with safer alternatives.
2. Campaigner – Genetic Engineering to work against the introduction and use of dangerous untested biotechnology into our agriculture and

campaigns for the use of sustainable methods of agriculture.

3. Campaigner – Renewable Energy to work towards preventing climate change by replacing fossil fuels with clean renewable energy.

The work for the above three includes research, mobilizing support from the public and other groups, lobbying government, industry and other stakeholders, and working with media in order to get the message out

4. Actions Coordinator to work towards achieving the campaign objectives of Greenpeace through non-violent, direct, confrontative action on a regular basis.

The work will involve: co-ordinating and ensuring execution of non-violent direct actions or other forms of visual activities against strategic targets in order to achieve the campaign objectives; participating in the development of the campaign strategies and in particular ensuring that confrontational actions are included as a key tactic in the campaign strategies; developing and maintaining a network of highly skilled people with specialist skills to carry out technical aspects of direct actions; responsible for selecting, recommending, purchasing and maintaining the necessary/basic action equipment and ensuring that the storage facility/warehouse is in good condition; Ensuring that all volunteers and/or staff taking part in direct actions have been fully trained for whatever role they are being required to fulfill within the action.

A minimum of 5-6 years of work experience in the respective areas is desirable

Contact: **Rohan D'souza**, Greenpeace India,
No. 3360, 13th B Main, HAL 2nd
Stage, Indiranagar, Bangalore- 560
038, Karnataka. Email:
rohan.dsouza@dialb.greenpeace.org
Web: www.greenpeaceindia.org

Conservation Action Trust

The newly formed Conservation Action Trust (CAT) is looking for an individual who is committed towards protecting the environment.

The individual must be based in Mumbai, must be physically fit, and must have some knowledge and experience of forests and wildlife. Knowledge of environmental law will be an asset. Remuneration will be commensurate with ability and experience.

Contact: **Debi Goenka**, B 502 Glengate, Hiran.
Gardens, Powai, Mumbai – 400076.
Maharashtra. Tel: 022-25700638/ Telefax:
25701459. Email: debi.cat@gmail.com

READERS RESPOND

Live Bait use in Gir census

Recent reports in some newspapers that the lion census in Gir was carried out on bait (Live Bait used for Gir lion census, *PA Update*, No. 55, June 2005) are baseless according to our own experience. We felt that exceptional cases were generalized and sensationalized.

We participated in the census as observers, and in the two days of the census saw 53 lions in various zones like Sasan, Visavadar, Dedakdi, Devaliya and Talala.

It was more than evident that the exercise was not carried out using bait as the lions were found behaving in a natural manner. They were either sleeping, roaming majestically or at times left immediately on sighting the census staff. Occasionally they also charged.

It is our collective responsibility not to deviate from the very purpose of such a scientific census. So, we, as an NGO appeal to nature lovers to see the things in the right perspective, as it is always easy to criticize than to appreciate.

- **Govind Vekaria / Revtubha Raijada**,
Sky Forest Youth Club, Keshod – 362220,
Gujarat. Tel: 0286 – 2272132 / 02871 -
234529

IN THE SUPREME COURT

1) Applications Filed Before the CEC: An Analysis

This is a preliminary attempt to put together an analysis of 140 cases that have been either filed directly before the CEC or were IAs recommended by the Supreme Court

Regional Representation:

The regional representation of these cases is as follows: 54 of these cases are from Uttar Pradesh and 32 are from Karnataka. The next in line is Kerala with eight applications, followed by six from Rajasthan, and five each from Uttaranchal and Orissa. The states from where there have been three applications each are Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Two applications each have been filed from Delhi, Goa, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana and only one each is from the states of Meghalaya, Mizoram, Assam, Gujarat, as well as the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. This is surely not representative of degree of violation of forest and environmental laws, but where groups and agencies have considered the CEC as a forum of redressal.

The Applicants:

Very interestingly, 70 of these applications are by saw mill and veneer industry owners, 48 of which are from Uttar Pradesh itself. 17 are from Karnataka and seven 7 applications are from state government departments, three of which are the forest department. The maximum number of applications has been filed by plywood/saw mill and veneer mill owners. NGOs are next in with a total of 29 and individual activists (including four advocates) have also filed 29 applications. Two applications have been filed by private associations like the Karnataka Planters Association, and Aravalli Retreat Plot Owners Association. One application has been filed by a local body, which is the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council. In the remaining cases the status of the applicant is not clear.

Range of Issues covered:

A glance at the range of issues that have been covered brings the following to light. The applications have been made in response to:

- Grant of saw mill and veneer industry licenses
- Violations of the FCA, 1980 for mining, hydro-electric projects, industrial estates, ports
- Encroachment of forest land, or in a PA
- Against refusal to allow research in protected areas of Karnataka
- Directed at the conservation of a particular endangered species like the Olive Ridley Turtle or prevent the illegal felling of trees in biodiversity hotspots
- Permission for the use of forestland by agencies like the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited.

This is just a preliminary analysis and that too not of the entire set of applications filed before the CEC. However, it gives an idea of the range of cases that have been filed, and from which region, as also the range of issues that the CEC deals with. We are in the process of developing this database and will keep you all updated with new analysis. Any help from our readers to update this database will be most useful.

(Note: This particular analysis was put together with the help of Apoorva Bahuguna and Shibani Ghosh. Some information has also been procured from the Sanctuary Asia website)

'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 (see PA Update 49). It is produced with the support of the Foundation for Ecological Security, Anand.
Forest Case Update Editors:
Ritwick Dutta (Court Office), 69, Lawyers Chambers, Supreme Court, New Delhi-110001. Kanchi Kohli, (Coordinating Office) Email: forestcase@yahoo.com
All issues of the Forest Case Update are uploaded on <http://www.geocities.com/forestcase/forestcaseupdate.html>

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- d) **CD:** All the issues (Nos. 1-56) are in simple format. Cost. Rs. 130

All payments should be made via DD in the name of Kalpavriksh, payable at Pune

Contact: Pankaj Sekhsaria, Kalpavriksh, at the editorial address. Email: pankajs@vsnl.com

New Publications from Kalpavriksh

a) Large Dams For Hydropower In

Northeast India: A Dossier

Compiled by: Manju Menon with Kanchi Kohli

Published by: Kalpavriksh and South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers & People (SANDRP)

About the Dossier: More large dams are being proposed in North East India than in any other part of India. Yet very little organised information is available about what is happening in this region. This Dossier is an attempt by SANDRP and Kalpavriksh to provide information around the Large Dams being planned, constructed and operated.

No. of Pages: 228

Suggested contribution: Rs 150/- for Individuals; Rs 300/- for institutions

Add Rs 25/- for postage and packing

Contact:

- a) **Swati**, Kalpavriksh, at the editorial address. Email: kvbooks@vsnl.net
- b) **SANDRP**, 86-D, AD block, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi 110 088. Email: cwaterp@vsnl.com

b) Eleven Years of the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 1994: How Effective Has it Been?

By Manju Menon and Kanchi Kohli

Published by: Kalpavriksh, The Just Environment Trust and Environmental Justice Initiative (HRLN)

About the publication: The report follows the developments in the EIA notification and its implementation since 1994. The information is based on experiences of communities and environmental groups across the country.

It is comprised of six sections that deal with the 12 amendments that have taken place over the last 11 years; issues related to the practice and implementation of the EIA notification; and also look at the institutions for redressal of environmental clearance. It concludes with a set of recommendations based on the issues that have emerged over the last eleven years.

Contributory amount: Rs. 100 (postage extra)

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