

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

Vol. XVI No. 6

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Protected Area Update
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EDITORIAL

FRA and wildlife conservation: The 'critical' question

Ever since the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (FRA for short) was notified, large sections of the wildlife conservation community have vehemently opposed it. The vociferous opposition that had started much before the final notification is seen even today. Journalists, editors and a section of wildlifers continue to berate and demonise the FRA in any and all possible fora unmindful of developments on the ground.

A historical battle to protect forests, water security, and a threatened indigenous community in the Niyamgiri hills of Orissa has just been won on the back of the FRA and yet, the argument continues to go out that this law will destroy the last of India's remaining forests and wildlife. Neither have other organizations who had petitioned the Supreme Court and a number of High Courts against the FRA thought it right to re-negotiate their positions. There have been no shades of grey in these articulations, not even a black and white; there is just one lens through which this issue is being seen.

The *Protected Area Update* (Vol. XII, No. 4) had argued even before the law was enacted that a balance was needed in the discussions and that it was certainly not the disaster it was made out to be. No law can be perfect. There will always be shortcomings and challenges, but it is baffling why the narratives don't change even when a lot around the narrative does. Why not give credit where it is due? Why continue to discredit even when there is evidence to the contrary?

Take the case of the 'critical' – the critical tiger habitat (CTH) and the critical wildlife habitat (CWH) – the former under the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA) and the latter under the FRA. There is a huge push to get the 'critical' declarations done because then people can be relocated in the presumed interests of wildlife. What is being forgotten in this urgency is that there is due process of law to be followed. Certain conditions have to be met and the local

communities have to consent fully. The Ministries of both, Tribal Affairs and Environment and Forests have made it clear that protected areas are not outside the ambit of the FRA and yet, as a number of reports in this issue of the *PA Update* – from the Dampa Tiger Reserve (TR) in Mizoram and the Simlipal TR in Orissa to the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple and Cotigao Sanctuaries in the Western Ghats – point out, it is evident that the provisions of the law are not being followed.

There is enough other evidence to show at the same time that the WLPA is in many situations unable to protect the PAs, leave alone wildlife outside. Illustrations abound – denotification for mines, dams, and infrastructure projects, continued illegal mining in a number of PAs and continued poaching in even the best protected of parks.

The future for forests and wildlife is certainly not rosy; certainly not in this present paradigm of development where the stakes and vested interests are disproportionately large and too deeply embedded in the system. The terms of the game are not amenable to easy change, but if one looks at the possibilities that the FRA offers there might just be the faint outline of a game changer on the horizon.

It happened in Niyamgiri; it is happening in the continued opposition to land acquisition for the Pohang Steel Company (POSCO) also in Orissa and it happening in a number of places where communities are using the FRA to protect their forests and livelihood resources and keeping out the dams and the quarrying and the logging (see earlier issues of the *PA Update*). The critical question is whether we are willing to see this and give it even an outside chance.

Eds Note: In our effort to keep the *Protected Area Update* interesting and useful, we are adding two new features from this issue onwards: a special section on the FRA and its relationship to wildlife conservation (Pg 20) and another one that goes into the past – digging into the newsletter's archives to bring back stories from a decade ago (Pg 5).

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ASSAM

Locals help to restore Kaziranga NP corridors

In a novel initiative, the local tribal community has joined hands with the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - India and the Forest Department for restoration of degraded animal corridors linking Kaziranga National Park with the Karbi Anglong hills. The drive seeks to secure lost habitat comprising degraded forests through afforestation. The Panbari-Dolamora corridor critical to elephant movement from Kaziranga has been taken up for restoration under the project.

As part of the first phase of the initiative, the Karbi community undertook a tree plantation drive at Longdili-Bijuli, a degraded hill of five hectares owned by them. The plantation sites are located at the south-eastern end of the Panbari-Dolamara corridor on the Karbi Anglong foothills covering *jhum* (slash-and-burn agriculture) fallow land requiring restoration.

Source: Sivasish Thakur. 'Locals help to restore KNP's animal corridors', *The Assam Tribune*, 22/10/10

Centre releases Rs. 573 lakh for Kaziranga, Manas and Nameri TRs

The Centre has recently released the first installment of funds sanctioned for three tiger reserves in Assam with the condition that the money should be utilized according to the agreement signed last year. The Centre has released Rs. 573.08 lakh for the current fiscal, of which Rs. 272.72 lakh will go to Kaziranga TR, Rs. 237.50 lakh to Manas TR and Rs. 63.58 lakh to Nameri TR. The total amount sanctioned under Project Tiger for the three reserves for this fiscal is Rs. 903.55 lakh, of which the lion's share will go to Kaziranga (Rs. 448.15 lakh), followed by Manas (Rs. 356.08 lakh) and Nameri (Rs. 99.32 lakh).

The release order for the money stated that the money should be made available to the

tiger reserves within two weeks of its receipt. It would require regular furnishing in its monthly report, both in physical and financial terms, the implementation of work as mentioned in the sanction letter. A performance-cum-achievement report would have to be submitted on or before March 31, 2011.

The Centre has also stressed that the funds be utilised as per the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the National Tiger Conservation Authority, the field directors of the three tiger reserves and the state government for implementing tiger conservation initiatives as proposed in the annual plan of preparations. The MoU includes the drawing up of a security plan in accordance with the reserves' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and to ensure intelligence-based protection for tigers and other wild animals as well as the habitat.

As part of the facilities being provided, Manas has been given a deep freezer for preservation of tiger carcasses as some time would be required for investigation of the death of a tiger by experts. Kaziranga has been given a sanction for procurement of GPS sets, standard type night vision devices, solar lighting systems, life jackets and reward to informers and staff, among other things. Nameri has been sanctioned money for the purchase of a projector for public awareness and meetings.

The Centre has also categorised Manas as a 'poor' tiger reserve as it has a low tiger density. The estimated number of tigers in Manas is 15-18. Kaziranga, which recently claimed to have the highest density of tigers in the world, has been categorised as 'good' while Nameri has been given the 'satisfactory' tag.

Source: 'Funds for Assam tiger reserves - Delhi releases first installment, seeks use according to agreement', *The Telegraph*, 01/10/10

Contact: **Director**, Kaziranga NP, PO Bokakhat, Dist. Golaghat – 785612, Assam. Tel: 03776-268095(O), 268086(R)
Director, Manas NP, PO Barpeta Rd. Dist. Barpeta – 781315, Assam. Tel: 03666 – 261413. Fax: 232253 / 260253

A Decade Ago
From the *PA Update* Archives
December 2000

Funds crunch affects Kaziranga

According to officials of the Kaziranga National Park, a severe funds crunch is impeding the anti-poaching operations and adversely affecting the park's upkeep. It is estimated that more than 200 rhinos have been poached and 60 poachers have been killed here in the last decade. With better facilities and funds, the officials say, the protection of the park can be improved further.

However, for the last few years, the Assam state government has been releasing less than half of the annual budget allocated for the park. Consequently, few of the patrol vehicles are in running condition, boats have not been repaired for long and the elephants with the FD often go half fed with private contractors refusing to supply feed as outstanding bills are increasing every year. The 350 odd forest guards in the park are ill equipped and have no sophisticated weapons, while poachers enter the park armed with sophisticated carbines fitted with silencers and night vision devices.

The park authorities were recently also forced to retrench 160 casual forest guards because of lack of funds.

Source: 'Rhinos could become extinct as funds crunch hits Kaziranga', *The Sentinel*, 09/06/2000.

India, Bhutan to jointly monitor Manas tigers

Officials of the Manas National Park in Indian and the Royal Manas National Park, Bhutan have agreed to a joint initiative to monitor the movement of tigers between the two parks having contiguous areas. The decision was taken at a meeting held recently at Bansbari in the Indian side of Manas.

Around 450 sq km will be covered on both sides of the boundary and the exercise will continue for two months. In Manas India, the areas covered would be Bansbari and Bhuyanpara while in Bhutan, the authorities would be covering the Manas range of Royal Manas National Park.

The meeting discussed the concept of Greater Manas. The need for trans-border cooperation and for having regular joint meetings was also discussed. A resolution was passed for conservation of greater Manas landscape.

The different organizations that will be part of the program include the World Wide Fund for Nature Aaranyak and the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment.

Source: Roopak Goswami. 'India, Bhutan to jointly monitor Manas tigers' *The Telegraph*, 11/11/10

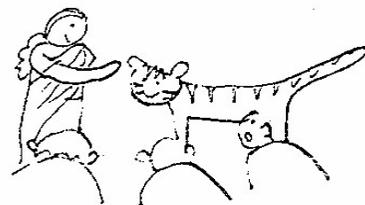
ONGC to support swamp deer conservation in Kaziranga NP

The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Ltd in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust of India recently launched a conservation program for the swamp deer in the Kaziranga National Park. The main aim is to assist the Assam Forest department with a financial assistance of Rs 85 lakh.

Initially the project will be for a period of three years and if successful, then it will be extended in other protected areas as well.

Source: 'Swamp deer conservation prog at KNP', *The Assam Tribune*, 17/11/10

Tiger conservation education program in schools adjoining PAs



The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) along with the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) has initiated a program in schools in Assam to increase awareness about tiger conservation. The program is directed particularly to schools located in areas adjoining national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. The theme for the campaign is 'Born to be Wild: Saving the Majestic Tiger'.

Through this campaign WTI has planned to bring the voices of the world's children to the Global Tiger Summit held in Russia in November.

The selected schools will be given free activity packs, including a documentary film, and information booklets that describe the world of tigers, threats faced by them and conservation initiatives being undertaken. Painting and essay competitions will also be held among the students of these schools.

Source: Pullock Dutta, 'Schools to the aid of tiger conservation - Children living near national parks to boost preservation efforts in Assam', *The Telegraph*, 06/10/10.

Ecodevelopment committees formed in 11 villages bordering the Orang NP

11 Eco Development Committees (EDC) covering 11 villages from the fringe areas of the Rajiv Gandhi (Orang) National park were formed in the year 2009-10 in an effort to reduce tension between the forest department (FD) and communities in these areas. Each of the 11 villages has been provided with drinking water facilities (hand tube wells), solar lights and village roads in the current year. Some of the EDC members have also started extending support by keeping vigil along the park's boundary even during the night and by sharing information with the forest officials.

While the park administration's biggest concern was that locals from the peripheral villages were in league with rhino poachers (*PA Updates* Vol XVI, Nos. 5, 2 & 1), the villagers would be surprised when house to house raids were conducted after every case of rhino poaching.

There have also been many cases of cattle killing by tigers outside the park boundaries resulting in retaliatory killing by the poisoning of tigers. At least six tigers have been poisoned here since 2005 with the last one being in August 2009. Additional problems have been created on account of crop raiding by wild animals specially wild boar and deer.

The FD has reportedly taken a number of steps to deal with these and other conflicting situations. If cattle are killed by tigers outside the park, urgent relief is paid to the affected party within 24 hours. An electric fence is also being

constructed in the vulnerable two km stretch to prevent animals from coming out of the park. In the month of November-December 2010, around 5000 cattle heads in the fringe villages will be vaccinated to avoid possible disease transmission to the wild animals of the national park. Human health camps will also be organised by the FD for the fringe communities during the same period.

A couple of locals who guided poachers but have surrendered subsequently have been engaged by the FD as informers and are paid reward money for help rendered.

Source: 'Eco development committees for Orang', *The Assam Tribune*, 07/10/10
Contact: **DFO**, Orang NP, Mangaldoi Wildlife Division, P.O. Mangaldoi, Darrang - 784 125, Assam. Tel: 0914-22065(O), 22349(R)

Arms training for Orang NP staff

120 numbers of forest staff including permanent, fixed pay and casual workers of the Rajiv Gandhi National Park were recently giving training in the use of firearms. The 10 day training was held at the Kurua firing range, Darrang and was supervised by the SP, Darrang.

This is the first time that the forest staff here has been given such sophisticated fire arms training.

Source: Jayanta Kumar Das. 'Arms training for Orang NP forest staff' <http://www.assamtimes.org>, 27/10/10
Chief Wildlife Warden – Assam, Rehabari, Guwahati – 781008, Assam. Tel: 0361-2566064. Fax: 2547386.

GUJARAT

Gir attracts 33000 visitors, earns Rs. 42 lakh during Diwali

A record 33000 tourists visited Gir in the 10 days following Diwali. The park earned Rs. 42 lakhs as tourism revenue on account of this. This is nearly 20 per cent of the total collection in the tourist season last year when

the income from October 10, 2009, to May 15, 2010 was Rs 2.10 crore.

The highest number tourists for a single day was recorded on November 9 and was 1752. The increase in number of tourists is being credited to the Gujarat tourism campaign starring Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan (*PA Updates* Vol XVI, Nos. 5 & 4). The demand for tourist permits has also increased.

The revenue earned has been deposited with the Lion Conservation Society formed by the state government after the poaching incident in 2007. The money is to be used to take up developmental work in the region such as covering the wells, and ensuring that the officials and staff are well equipped.

Source: Himanshu Kaushik. 'Gir attracts 33K visitors, earns 42L during Diwali', www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 16/11/10

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

JHARKHAND

Dalma WLS to expand by over 1500 ha

The Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) is to be expanded by adding over 1500 hectares (ha) of adjoining forests. The decision was taken at the recently held maiden meeting of the Jharkhand State Wildlife Board, which was set up in 2008. The meeting was chaired by chief minister Arjun Munda.

It was also decided at the meeting that about eight ha would be denotified at Lokai in Koderma WLS and rural electrification projects would be facilitated by denotifying forest stretches in Katkamsandi and Ichak blocks of Hazaribagh. A wildlife safari has also been planned at Hazaribagh

Source: 'More space for Dalma', *The Telegraph*, 08/10/10

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

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

KARNATAKA

Plea to allow removal of already mined ore in Kudremukh

The Union Government has said it will file a petition in the Supreme Court seeking permission to allow public sector unit Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd (KIOCL) to lift the ore left in its mines in Karnataka, as well as to undertake underground mining in the same region. The apex court had in 2005 ordered closure of the mines in the Western Ghats citing ecological hazard (*PA Updates* 54, 52, 34, 30-25 & 23-20).

Union Minister for Steel, Mr. Virbhadra Singh is reported to have said that the removal of the ore will cause no ecological damage and will also meet KIOCL's ore requirement for another three years. He also argued that underground mining should be allowed so that the company can be revived and the resources could be fully utilised.

The ministry of steel had last year proposed to merge KIOCL with the National Mineral Development Corporation through a share-swap. That proposal was however shot down by an expert committee which found no synergies between the two firms. The export oriented KIOCL needs around 4-5 million tonnes of iron ore annually to produce 3.6 million tonnes of pellets and 2.16 lakh tonnes of pig iron.

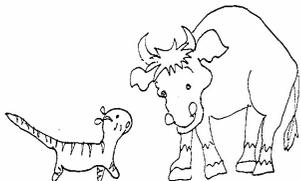
In 2009-10 its turnover was Rs 992.72 crore with a net loss of Rs 177 crore.

Source: 'Govt. to move SC to revive Kudremukh' *The Hindustan Times*, 10/10/10

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

MADHYA PRADESH

Bandhavgarh TR to get gaur from Kanha



The centre has approved the proposal to relocate some gaur from the Kanha Tiger Reserve (TR) to the Bandhavgarh TR (*PA Updates* Vol XV, No. 1 and Vol XIV, Nos. 5 & 3). The relocation is to take place in January 2011 as part of a joint project of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Conservation Corporation of Africa (CCA) and the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department (FD). CCA is helping with the technical know-how for translocation while the state FD has earmarked Rs. 1.16 crore for this project.

Gaur are reported to have been last seen in Bandhavgarh in 1995 while the relocation plan was drawn up in 2007. It was waiting for approval from the central government. The month of January was decided upon for the translocation because this is the time when the animals generally descend from the hills.

A group of 20-25 animals is to be moved initially by a group of forest officials who have been trained in South Africa for the purpose. The gaurs will be tranquilised in Kanha and then be sent to Bandhavgarh by specially-designed trucks. TATA has donated trucks which are being manufactured with special care in Jabalpur.

Source: 'Bandhavgarh to get bisons in January', *The Pioneer*, 21/10/10

Contact: **Director**, Bandhavgarh TR, Umaria – 484661, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 07653-22214(O). Fax: 07653-22214/22648
CWLW, MP, Van Bhawan, Tulsi Nagar, Bhopal 462003, Madhya Pradesh. Tel: 0755-557371/ 550391.

MAHARASHTRA

HC asks for relocation of villages from Tadoba Andhari TR within a year

The Nagpur bench of Bombay High Court has directed the government to remove all villages

located inside core area of Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) within a year (*PA Updates* Vol XVI, No. 1; Vol XV, No 4 and Vol XIV, Nos. 5 & 3). The court came down heavily on the forest department (FD) for its failure to relocate the villages for over two decades since 1987 when Tadoba was declared a tiger reserve. It added the divisional commissioner as a respondent and asked him to take quarterly reviews of the relocation process, take monthly meeting of responsible officers, and submit a report. The judges also asked the FD to take help of two NGOs – Satpuda Foundation and Eco-pro to convince the villagers to move.

The court's direction came while hearing a suo-moto plea related to the removal of bamboo from the TATR. The court had taken a serious cognizance of various media reports on bamboo depletion and tree felling in the reserve. It has been pointed out that villagers from nearby areas such as Rantalodhi, Jamni and Palasgaon were involved in the illegal extraction of bamboo for preparing articles, including mats. Large amount of bamboo is also used to prepare baskets for use in the coal mines that have proliferated in the areas surrounding the tiger reserve (*PA Update* Vol XVI, No. 1).

Source: 'Relocate Tadoba villages within a year: High Court', <http://www.sanctuaryasia.com>, 28/10/10

Contact: **Field Director**, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Project, Mul Road, In front of Sanchiti Chamber, Chandrapur – 442401, Maharashtra. Tel: 07172-51414(O), 56382(R)

High Court stays construction of tourist resorts and installation of windmills in Koyna WLS

The Bombay High Court recently issued an interim stay on the construction of tourist resorts and the installation of wind mills in the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary. The order was issued in response to a public interest litigation filed by the Satara based activist, Nana Khamlkar.

The petition had alleged that authorities had permitted the installation of windmills in the sanctuary and a number of trees had been cut for the purpose. The Forest Range Officer (FRO), in his response, admitted that 500-550 trees had been felled in an area of about three hectares at Navaja inside the sanctuary and there were 215 windmills and 10 resorts in the sanctuary that had come up without the necessary permissions.

Source: Rosy Sequeira. 'Bombay high court comes to the rescue of state's flora and fauna' www.dna.com, 24/10/10

Contact: **Asst. Conservator of Forests** (Wildlife), Forest Department, Koynanagar, Taluka Patan, Satara – 415207, Maharashtra.

49 mining leases approved in Sindhudurg; corridor connecting Koyna, Radhanagari WLSs and Anshi-Dandeli TR to be impacted

The Maharashtra state government is reported to have approved 49 bauxite and iron-ore mining leases in the Sindhudurg district. Sindhudurg is said to have the highest green cover in the state (49%) and was declared the first eco-tourism district in the country in 1997.

32 of the 49 mining permits have been given in the Sawantwadi-Dodamarg zone which is an important corridor connecting the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) in Satara district, the Radhanagari WLS in Kolhapur district and the Anshi-Dandeli Tiger Reserve in Karnataka. The region has a number of perennial streams and rivers, and also supports a diversity of wildlife, such as the leopard, bison and deer. Forest officials say there have been at least four tiger sightings here in the past two years.

Four mines, in fact, are already operational in the area. In the case of mining near Kalane village that started about a year ago, the villagers had passed a *gram sabha* resolution stating that they did not want mining, as it would destroy both the rich flora and fauna and their agricultural farmlands. In the two public hearings held for the project they had objected to the environmental impact assessment (EIA) report as it did not mention the existence of perennial water bodies, rivers and the reserve forest in the adjoining areas.

Activists have pointed out that mining companies are increasingly eyeing Maharashtra

ever since the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) imposed a moratorium on fresh mining leases in Goa.

Source: Viju B. 'Mining blow to Western Ghats', <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>, 15/10/10

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

MIZORAM

227 families to be evicted from Dampa TR

227 families belonging to the Chakma community from Andermanik village are to be evicted for the expansion of the Dampa Tiger Reserve (TR). Forest officials had already imposed restrictions on *jhum* cultivation that are the community's main source of livelihood. For some amongst those to be evicted now, it will be a 2nd eviction as they had been moved once in 1989 when the Dampa TR was created. In other cases it was an earlier generation that had been displaced. They had been moved outside the TR area and settled at the present Andermanik village.

The villagers are opposed to the relocation. They link it to the fact that they never got the promised compensation when they were displaced the first time. The villagers have also pointed out that even today their village has no road connectivity and no health care centre. The villagers have to walk nearly 18 kms through difficult terrain to Rajiv Nagar to get basic things like the PDS grain or medicines.

They are also not clear about the choices to be made this time – between Option I which is a financial package of Rs. 10 lakhs per family and Option II where the Forest Department has the responsibility for the relocation/rehabilitation of the villages from the tiger reserve.

Source: 'Mizoram's Dampa tiger reserve to evict 227 tribal families', www.merineews.com, 25/09/10

Contact: **Field Director**, Dampa Tiger Reserve, P.O. West Phaileng, Dist. Mamit – 796431, Mizoram.

ORISSA

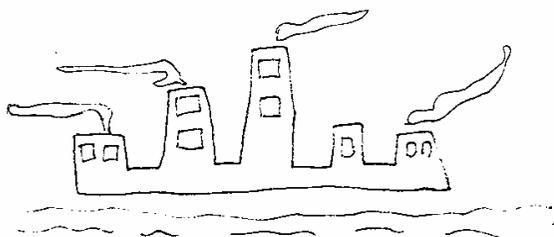
Coastal fishing ban for seven months

The Orissa government has imposed a seven-month ban on fishing for the nesting and breeding season of Olive Ridley turtles. The ban will be in force along 120 kms of sea coast in six districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Ganjam till May 31 next year.

No fishing by boats will be allowed within 5 km radius, by motorboats within 10 km radius and by trawlers within 20 km radius. The livelihoods of at least three lakh fishermen across the state is expected to be affected by this ban order.

Source: Hemant Kumar Rout. 'Orissa Bans Fishing In Coastal Areas For Seven Months', <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>, 02/11/10.

Concerns over proposed thermal power plant proximity to Chandaka WLS



The wildlife wing of the Orissa Forest Department (FD) has raised concerns over the setting up at Naraj of the 1,000 mw thermal power plant (TPP) proposed by Tata Power Company. The Rs. 4,900 crore coal-based plant will come up about 12 km from Cuttack and 20 km from Bhubaneswar. It needs about 990 acres and is close to a road that connects Khurda, Chandaka, Barang and Gobindpur.

The FD has noted that the site is close to the Chandaka-Dampara Wildlife Sanctuary and

also the Nandankanan Zoological Park. It has also been pointed out that the plant is located very close to the Mahanadi and Kathjodi rivers raising concerns about their pollution.

The Tata Power Company, which signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Government in 2006, proposes to draw about 96,684 cubic meter water from Mahanadi while sourcing coal from Talcher Coalfields.

Source: Siba Mohanty, 'Power unit at Naraj worries Forest department', *The New Indian Express*, 05/10/10

Maoists blow up forest buildings inside Sunabeda WLS

Maoist extremists are reported to have blown up several forest buildings including a range office and forest rest house at Sunabeda inside the Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary on the 15th of September 2010. A large number of armed persons stormed into the Sunabeda village, and triggered explosions blowing up several forest structures. These buildings had suffered extensive damage when they had been attacked a year ago as well. They had been lying empty and unoccupied since then.

The wildlife organisation Wild Orissa (WO) issued a note and has also written to senior officials denouncing the extremists' onslaught on the Forest Department (FD) infrastructure. They have pointed out that the forests of Sunabeda-Khariar constitute a vital tiger habitat, which holds excellent promise for the future of the tiger in central India and these cases of damage should be dealt with a strong hand.

In light of the attacks and the situation here, WO has requested the following actions:

1. Rebuild the damaged infrastructure and re-establish the presence of wildlife officials.
2. Sunabeda-Khariar forests be notified as a tiger reserve on priority, to preempt moves of extremists and also to consolidate wildlife conservation in the area.
3. Destruction of illicit ganja cultivation.
4. Engage support of local communities and explain to them the biological services accruing from conservation to the Sunabeda-Khariar forests.

5. Harmonize functioning of different government agencies towards for better protection of forests and wildlife.

6. Relocate, on a voluntary basis, small hamlets/villages, scattered in the sanctuary precincts, and set up consolidated settlements in existing areas like Sunabeda or in the plains area. Such resettlement areas need to be provided with all facilities including irrigation, health, and education, so that (those) relocated are able to live a better life.

Source: Surya Sachi Swain. Note issued by WO, 20/09/10

Contact: **Surya Sachi Swain**, Program Head, Sunabeda Conservation Program, Wild Orissa, Plot 3A, Janpath, Satyanagar, Bhubaneshwar – 751007, Orissa. Tel: 0674-512044. Email:

wildorissa@hotmail.com

Divisional Forest Officer, Sunabeda Wildlife Division, At/P.O./Dist. Nuapada – 766105, Orissa. Tel: 06678 - 23372(O), 23401(R)

610980. Email: kachhapa@gmail.com

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

PUNJAB

Rs. 58 crore to fence wildlife sanctuaries

The Punjab Forest and Wildlife Department is taking up a Rs. 58 crore project to fence the wildlife sanctuaries across the state. The money is to be spent in two years following which Rs. 30 crore will be made available each year for the fencing and other activities like construction of water holes, planting fruit-bearing indigenous trees in the forests and setting up of makeshift shelters for the animals.

The work is being undertaken following an order of a Patiala court to take up fencing to stop wild animals from entering agricultural fields in response to a PIL filed in the matter.

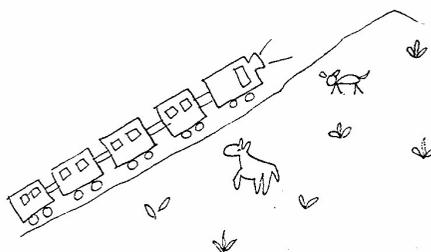
Source: Bipin Bhardwaj, 'Wildlife sanctuaries to be fenced', *The Tribune*, 15/10/10

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Punjab, SC No. 2463-64, Sector 22-C, Chandigarh -

160022.Tel: 0172-2705828(O),
2675661(R). Fax: 2705828

RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan Tourism proposes train-safari through Todgarh-Raoli WLS



Rajasthan Tourism has proposed to start a train safari on the existing Marwar-Udaipur meter gauge railway section that passes through the Todgarh Raoli Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS). The 22-km Ghat section, considered to be the highest rail track in Rajasthan, starts from Kamlighat and touches Goram Ghat, inside the 495 sq km sanctuary, to reach Phulad after passing through the Aravalli Mountains.

The rail line had been constructed by the Maharana of Mewar who used it for his visits to Delhi to meet the Viceroy. After independence the rail line continued to be in use as a link between Marwar and Mewar. Kamlighat railway station, also the entry point to Todgarh Raoli WLS, used to be an important station in the past as every train used to stop here for at least half an hour to check the engine and steam pressure before entering mountain track.

The track fell into disuse as the Marwar-Jodhpur metre gauge got converted to broad gauge leaving this line up to Marwar Junction only. The metre gauge rail bus which once operated between Merta Road and Merta City in Nagaur district now stands idle.

Rajasthan Minister for Tourism, Ms Bina Kak, has written to Union Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr Jairam Ramesh, seeking permission for the safari inside the sanctuary which will be a joint project between the Rajasthan Forest Department and the Indian Railways

Source: Sunny Sebastian, 'Rajasthan now plans an eco-train safari', *The Hindu*, 04/10/10

Mining resumes in Sariska TR

Mining activities are reported to have resumed in and around the forests of the Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary. 215 mines in the area had been shut down following orders of the Supreme Court (*PA Update* 55), but around 40 have recently started operating again in Jaisinghpura, Malana, Goverdhanpura, Palpura and Jamwa Ramgarh.

The information that provided by the Alwar based Tarun Bharat Sangh has also been confirmed by independent researchers. They have pointed out that while public sector mines remain closed as per the apex court's ruling, many mines in the unorganized sector have again started mining marble in the belt.

In villages like Tilwad and Tilwadi marble mining operations are taking place right in the middle of the villages on private agricultural land. Many large landholders in the villages are keen on selling their land as they are getting high returns for it. Local people are playing the roles of contractors and middlemen and are also employed as cashiers and administrators.

The state government has in fact sanctioned these leases on the grounds that the Aravalli range, where stone mining had been sanctioned, had contours less than 100 feet, which is not considered as a hill as per state government norms.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court had banned quarrying for stone in the Aravallis of neighbouring Haryana state, holding the mining companies guilty of violating zoning laws and not filling up excavated craters. Later it said some mining may be allowed but only when Haryana government adopts a mining policy based on an SC-appointed committee's guidelines.

The new leases in Sariska, it is reported, are being operated by a few Haryana-based companies

Source: Rachna Singh. 'Illegal mining threatens Sariska',

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>,

12/10/10

Rachna Singh. '40 new mining leases granted near Sariska',

www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com,

21/10/10

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

SIKKIM

Gangtok Himalayan Zoological Park to be upgraded

The Himalayan Zoological Park in Gangtok that houses high altitude endangered wildlife species is to be upgraded at an estimated cost of Rs. 30 crore over the next five years. The park's revamp is being taken up as part of the Rs. 330.57 crore Sikkim Bio-diversity Conservation and Forest Management project funded by the Japanese International Co-operative Agency (JICA). An agreement to implement the bio-diversity conservation project was signed between Indian and Japanese governments earlier in 2010. The Sikkim Forest Department is the nodal agency of the project that spans over 10 years.

Spread over 235 hectares at an altitude of 5,840 ft, the park has the Red Panda, Himalayan black bear and snow leopard among other animals. The zoo has been designed to allow people to see high altitude animals in a semi-wild environment. It has been showing good results in captive breeding of Red Pandas and the animal's population at the facility has risen to 11 now. They are kept in three separate enclosures. Upgradation of the ex-situ conservation facilities at the park is also part of the project. Offices and an interpretation centre would also be set up. Funds from the JICA will be spent on the scientific mapping of wildlife species and to derive ways of improving the economic status of the people living on the fringes of forests. Some other features of the project are sustainable bio-diversity conservation, afforestation, eco-tourism and non-consumptive management of the forest. A butterfly park will also come up in North Sikkim under the project.

Source: 'Japan to fund Gangtok zoo upgrade - Rescue centre for trespassing animals on the anvil', *The Telegraph*, 05/10/10

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Government of Sikkim, Forest Secretariat, Deorali, Gangtok, - 737 102, Sikkim. Tel: 03592-281240 Fax: 281778

TAMIL NADU

Minister suggests inclusion of Segur plateau in buffer zone of Mudumalai

The Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr Jairam Ramesh has written to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr M Karunanidhi suggesting that the 321 sq. kms Segur Plateau in the Nilgiris be declared the buffer zone of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (TR). He has argued that this would help strengthen the population status of the tiger, its co-predators and the prey in the landscape. The Segur Plateau links the Mudumalai TR with the Sathyamangalam forests, Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Wildlife Sanctuary and the Bandipur TR. The buffer zone status is expected to enhance ongoing conservation efforts in the wildlife sanctuaries of Wayanad and Nagarhole as well.

However, the proposal has triggered apprehensions among the locals, who fear the forest department would impose curbs on their movements and routine activities.

Source: KA Shaji. Expand Mudumalai buffer zone, Jairam tells TN', *The Times of India*, 05/10/10

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Mudumalai WLS, Mt. Stewart Hill, Udhamandalam - 643001 Tamil Nadu. Tel: 0423-244098

WEST BENGAL

No new resorts to be permitted around PAs in North Bengal

The West Bengal Forest Department (FD) recently issued a ban on construction of new tourist resorts within and around the one kilometre periphery of the seven wildlife sanctuaries in north Bengal.

The initiative has been taken to avoid human-animal conflict. The state forest minister pointed out that there were already around 100 resorts- government and private ones – that had come up in and around these PAs over the years.

He also said that there had been an increase in the number of wild animals like the elephant, rhino and deer in the forests of North Bengal and this had increased the possibility of conflict.

Some concerns have, however, been expressed over the impact this decision will have on the revenues generated by the government and also the prospects of the tourism industry here.

Source: Rajib Chatterjee. 'Ban on resort construction around sanctuaries', www.thestatesman.net, 01/11/10

Contact: **CF (Wildlife)**, North Bengal West Bengal Forest Dept. Aranya Bhawan (Near Court) Jalpaiguri, West Bengal Tel: 03561- 25627(O) 25596 (R)

Rs. Four crore for tourism development and promotion in Buxa TR

The Union Tourism Ministry has sanctioned Rs. four crore for projects in the Buxa Tiger Reserve. The move aims at attracting more tourists while preserving the historical importance of the area. The state Tourism Ministry had sent a proposal to the Centre to develop the region as a tourism destination.

A major focus of the project is the Buxa fort located inside the tiger reserve. The fort, which is located 32 km from Alipurduar, was built in 1873 and used by the British as a deportation camp for political prisoners during the freedom movement. Now, the state ministry plans to utilise the funds to maintain and renovate the fort and to develop a trekking route in the tiger reserve in collaboration with the forest department (FD).

The FD would develop the trekking route with four watchtowers along the path. Rest sheds, view points and a nature interpretation centre are also being planned. An existing lodge in the reserve is to be renovated in order to accommodate more tourists and a cafeteria will be constructed. A small museum where traditional items used by the Dukpa community are kept will also be expanded.

Source: 'Rs 4 crore for Buxa hills - Plan for history tour', *The Telegraph*, 13/10/10

Contact: **Field Director**, Buxa Tiger Reserve, P.O. Alipurduar, Dist. Jalpaiguri - 736 122. West Bengal. Tel: 03564-256333 /255979. Fax: 03564-255577. Email: buxatiger@dte.vsnl.net.in

No river-linking project through Buxa TR

The Union Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr Jairam Ramesh, has said that the project for the linking of two major rivers in north Bengal, the Sankosh and Teesta will not be allowed through the Buxa Tiger Reserve.

24 kms of the 137 kms long link canal will run through the Buxa TR and another nearly 35 km through other forest areas. Considerable concern has been expressed of the impact this project would have on the forests and wildlife in the region (*PA Update* Vol. XVI, No. 4). The West Bengal Forest Department is reported to have brought the issue to the notice of Mr. Ramesh during his visit to the region in the month of October.

Source: Ananya Dutta, 'River-linking project won't be allowed through tiger reserve', *The Hindu*, 04/10/10

CWLW, Government of West Bengal, Vikas Bhawan, North Block, Salt Lake, Calcutta 700 091, West Bengal. Tel: 033-3346900/3583208. Fax: 3345946. Email: wildlife@cal.vsnl.net.in

NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

India, Norway to collaborate for protecting biodiversity

India and Norway will work together for developing professional expertise in dealing with policy and legal issues relating to protection of biodiversity. Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh and his Norwegian counterpart Erik Solheim recently signed an agreement for establishing a Centre for Biodiversity Policy and Law (CEBPOL) in the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) in Chennai.

The objective of CEBPOL will be to develop professional expertise in the complex and

still-evolving policy and legal issues relating to biodiversity, including access and benefit sharing, through research, development and training.

Source: 'India, Norway to collaborate for protecting biodiversity', www.sify.com, 19/11/10

National Board for Wildlife reconstituted

The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) was recently constituted. The board, which is constituted for three years, has Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh as its chairman and Environment Minister Mr Jairam Ramesh as its vice-chairman.

The NGO members of the board include the Mumbai-based Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), Aaranyak from Guwahati, Satpuda Foundation from Amravati, Nature Conservation Foundation (Mysore) and Wildlife Society of Orissa (Bhubaneswar).

Among those representing the board in their individual capacities as wildlife experts are Valmik Thapar, Brijendra Singh, MK Ranjitsinh, Divyabhanusinh Chavda, Bittu Sahgal, AJT Johnsingh and Perna Bindra. Rajya Sabha member Karan Singh and Lok Sabha MPs Chandresh Kumari and Dushyant Singh have also being nominated as its members.

The special invitees to the board would include forest officials from the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Source: 'National Board for Wildlife reconstituted', *The Pioneer*, 21/09/10

Save Western Ghats meet in Moodubidri in January 2011

The next meeting of the Save Western Ghats Movement will be held from January 28-31, 2011 in Moodubidri near Udipi in Karnataka. The meeting in 2010 was held in Kotagiri in the Nilgiris in Tamil Nadu (*PA Update* Vol XVI, No. 2). For details contact: swgm11@gmail.com

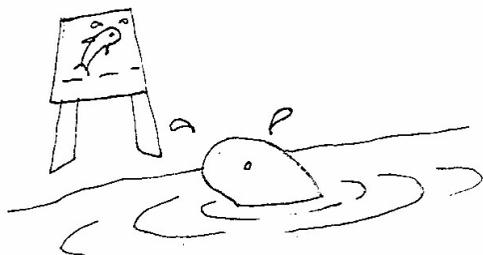
CEE to implement gibbon conservation programme in five North-Eastern states

The Centre for Environment Education will implement a Gibbon Conservation Program in eight clusters in five states in North East India. These are Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura. A total of 130 - 150 schools will be covered under the program.

The project is being implemented as a follow up to The United States Fish and Wildlife Services grant to the Government of India in 2009 for gibbon conservation under its Great Ape Conservation Fund

Source: Akankshya Chaliha , 'Project to protect gibbons', *The Telegraph*, 20/10/10

CEE to initiate two year education program for river dolphin conservation



The Centre for Environment Education (CEE) has initiated a two year project on the Ganges river dolphin in the north and north eastern region of India. 20 locations are being identified for the same. The CEE team is visiting various dolphin habitat locations in Uttar Pradesh (Allahabad, Bahraich - Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Narora) and in Bihar (Bhagalpur - 'Vikramshila Dolphin Sanctuary', Patna, Arra, and Vaishali).

The organization is also identifying partner agencies and schools who will work in these locations, focusing on conservation education. The programme aims to reach 500 schools in these 20 locations.

Source: 'As Tiger is to Forest , Dolphin is to Ganges' *Ceenario 40*.

Contact: **Director, CEE**. Email: ceedo@ceeindia.org

2010 TOFT Wildlife Tourism Awards

The 2010 Tour Operators for Tigers (TOFT) Wildlife Tourism Awards were announced recently. The awards that are jointly given by HSBC and TOFT are intended to:

- Highlight the important work being done by the tourism industry in support of tiger and forest conservation
- Increase awareness of responsible tourism as a force in conservation and habitat renewal
- Reward and encourage best practice operations
- Encourage sustainability in tourism enterprises
- Promote community enterprises and initiatives around Tiger Parks.

The winners and Runners up in the each of the award categories is as follows:

Category	Winner	Runner Up
Lodge Naturalist of the Year (Rs. 15,000)	Kartikeya Singh Chauhan, Mahua Kothi, Bandhavgarh TR, MP	Jagat Narain Chaturvedi, Tiger's Den Resort, Bandhavgarh TR- MP
Wildlife Tourism Community Initiative of the Year (Rs. 25,000)	Village Ways, Binsar WLS, Uttarakhand	Kaati Trust, Eaglenest WLS, Arunachal Pradesh
Wildlife and Tourism Award of the Year (Rs. 25,000)	Help Tourism - North East India and Bengal	Mangalajodi Ecotourism Project, Orissa
The Billy Arjun Singh Memorial Award for best Wildlife Guide of the Year (Rs. 15,000)	Rajesh Kumar Dwivedi, Bandhavgarh, Madhya Pradesh	Mujibur Rehman, Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan
The John Wakefield Memorial Award for Most Inspirational	Camp Forktail Corbett Tiger Reserve, Uttarakhand	Shergarh Tented Camp Kanha TR, MP & Kanha Jungle Lodge Kanha - MP

Eco Lodge of the Year		
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Contact: **Julian Mathews**, TOFT,
Email: toftigers@gmail.com

Former SC judge, LS Panta to chair National Green Tribunal

Former Supreme Court judge, LS Panta has been appointed as the chairperson of the recently constituted National Green Tribunal (NGT) (*PA Updates* Vol. XV, No. 4). He took charge in October, when the tribunal was notified.

Former judge of Madras High Court Prabha Sridevan was also appointed as one of the members of tribunal. The government is said to be on the lookout for other members for the NGT. A minimum of ten judicial and ten expert members will have to be appointed.

It was also decided that the NGT will operate from Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi till it gets its own office.

Source: 'Former Madras HC Judge nominated as member of green tribunal', *The Times of India*, 08/10/10

Task force for Dugong conservation

The Ministry for Environment and Forests (MoEF) will set up a task force (TF) to chalk out dugong conservation program. The nine-member task force would develop a national conservation strategy and action plan for dugongs and their habitats in the country in the next six months.

The major threats that these slow moving marine mammals face include pollution of marine waters, destruction of coral reefs and sea grass beds and unregulated mechanized fishing.

The TF is expected to examine issues related to the fishermen-dugongs interface and recommend appropriate short-term and long-term solutions. It would also recommend an appropriate methodology and institutional framework for monitoring the status of the animal with their habitats in the country as well as in the South Asia sub-region

The members of the TF include officials from the MoEF, representatives of the Central

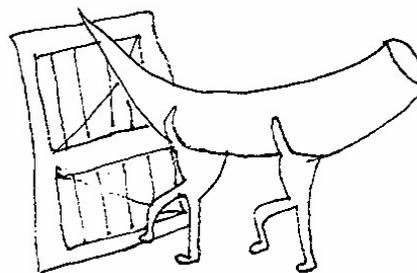
Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Reefwatch Marine Conservation, the Wildlife Institute of India and the Chief Wildlife Wardens of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Source: 'Task force to suggest measures for Dugong conservation', www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 16/10/10

SOUTH ASIA

BANGLADESH

Stricter wildlife law proposed in Bangladesh



A new wildlife conservation act has been proposed in Bangladesh with stricter punitive measures against poachers and new additions to the list of wild animals and plants that require protection.

The draft Wildlife (Conservation) Act - 2010 provides for fining up to Tk 5 million and up to 12 years in prison for killing the tiger. The draft has already been sent to the law ministry for its opinion, and it will then be submitted to the cabinet for final approval. Killing elephants or carrying parts of its tusk or other body parts as trophies can earn a person prison sentences ranging from 7 to 10 years, or fines of Tk 1m-2.5 million, or both.

Killing of other endangered species such as the clouded leopard, crocodiles and dolphin or carrying their body parts as trophies or parts of trophies can lead to prison sentences from 2 to 6 years or fines ranging between Tk 7 and 15 lakhs, or both. Hunting migratory birds and wild animals using poisonous baits for commercial purposes can

lead to similar jail sentences or fines between Tk 3 and 7 lakhs, or both.

The proposed law also permits the trial of violators through mobile courts. In such circumstances, executive magistrates or empowered forest officials, who must hold posts above assistant forest conservator, cannot however fine above Tk 50,000.

Bangladesh's first wildlife conservation ordinance was adopted through a presidential order on May 27, 1973. The first law came into force on July 17 the same year following amendments. It was amended again in 1974.

Source: Moinul Hoque Chowdhury. 'Strict new law to protect wildlife', <http://bdnews24.com/details.php?id=177176&cid=2>

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

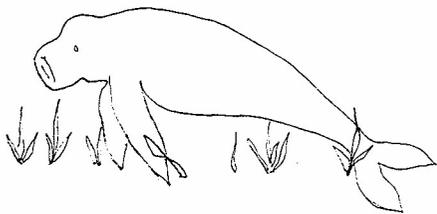
India elected secretary in Interpol's Wildlife Crime Working Group

India has been elected for the post of secretary in the Wildlife Crime Working Group of the Interpol for the first time. Additional director, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, Rina Mitra will represent India. India will hold the position for a period of four years.

The group comprises of all the 188 member countries of Interpol and meets annually to discuss issues regarding wildlife crime and identify emerging trends in the illegal trade of flora and fauna.

Source: 'Wildlife post', *The Telegraph*, 20/09/10

UN conference for protection of dugongs



In an international meeting convened in the first week of October by the United Nations Environment Program, Convention on the

Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (UNEP/CMS) in Abu Dhabi, governments, international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and experts discussed solutions to protect the dugong, the world's only herbivorous mammal living in marine waters.

It was noted that an assessment undertaken in 2008 had revealed that the dugong is now extinct in the Maldives, Mauritius and Taiwan, and declining in other waters in at least a third of the areas where it is found. Manmade threats - poaching, unsustainable hunting by local communities, severe injuries from ships and vanishing seagrass beds - are said to pose the greatest risk to the animal. The use of gillnets has also led to the incidental entanglement in fishing gear.

A newly developed innovative toolbox to mitigate threats to dugongs offered at the meeting includes incentives to replace harmful gillnets with alternative fishing gear to reduce by-catch and minimize the mortality rates. Other solutions that seek to protect valuable dugong habitat as well as breeding and feeding areas include establishing spatial closures as marine reserves and temporal constraints to fishing operations. Incentives, such as loans for buying new boats, for fishermen to use line-fishing gear were also discussed at the meeting as were educational campaigns and measures to improve the livelihood of local communities as a way to complement conservation efforts.

Bahrain, Palau, Seychelles, Vanuatu and Yemen also signed the CMS Dugong agreement at the meeting bringing the number of signatories to 18. More countries are likely to follow. The agreement provides a platform for cooperation among governments and regions to develop and implement conservation measures to ensure the long term survival of this unique marine mammal.

Source: 'International Efforts Save Dugongs, The World's Last Remaining Mermaids', UNEP/CMS Press Release on conservation activities for dugongs, 07/10/10.

Contact: **Veronika Lenarz**, UNEP/CMS

OPPORTUNITIES

Openings for research with the Wildlife Research and Conservation Society

The Wildlife Research and Conservation Society (WRCS), Pune, is actively involved in field-based wildlife research and conservation projects. The organization is looking for researchers to work in their various projects related to:

- Ecological studies on mammals and birds
- Population monitoring of tiger and prey base in Central India
- Study of conflict between people and wildlife
- Conservation of private forests
- Implementation of mitigation measures in conflict-prone areas
- Implementation of conservation action in critical ecological areas

Contact: Prachi Mehta. WRCS. Tel: 020-65222903/25871310.

Email: mail.wracs@gmail.com

Web: www.wracsindia.org & www.envirosearch.in.

The WCS Research Fellowship Program

The WCS Research Fellowship Program (RFP) is a small grants program administered by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Institute. The RFP grants help build research capacity for the next generation of conservation practitioners worldwide by supporting individual field research projects that have a clear application to conservation.

The RFP has been re-designed and re-launched with a new focus of supporting work directly related to WCS priority land/seascapes, species, and/or the global challenges of wildlife health, climate change, human livelihoods, and natural resource extraction. The program seeks to support the field work of graduate-level students (Masters, PhD, DVM, or equivalent) who will work with WCS staff in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and in special cases, North America (limited to Native Americans and First Nations, Métis, or Inuit).

The deadline for applications is January 5, 2011. For more details check <http://programs.wcs.org/grants> or email fellowship@wcs.org.

Openings at the Nature Conservation Foundation

1) **Administrative Director**: The position is expected to provide administrative leadership and facilitation of Nature Conservation Foundation's research and conservation activities across the country. Specific responsibilities will include among others programme administration; direct supervision and coordination of the administrative and financial staff, financial matters and overall oversight of NCF's Doctoral Programme.

Qualifications needed: Relevant degree (B.Sc/BA, management degree, appropriate diploma), 3-5 years of work experience in project management.

Contact: **Rohan Arthur**, NCF.

Email: rohan@ncf-india.org

2) **Senior Associate, Research & Policy – High Altitude Programme**

The current opportunity is for a key position to coordinate research, wildlife management and policy work in the Indian Himalaya. The candidate will form a link between the Snow Leopard Trust India Program Director (Senior Scientist at NCF), and the research scholars, field coordinators and other field staff. The position requires spending considerable time at field locations in challenging environmental conditions in the Indian Himalaya, that include Spiti, Ladakh and other high altitude locations as well as extensive traveling. Among other aspects, the position will be responsible for carrying out research, student supervision, training, programmatic fund raising and coordination with relevant Government and Non-Government agencies.

Qualifications needed: A PhD degree in wildlife sciences/ecology/forest management or equivalent and experience of independent handling of projects and people is desirable.

Contact: **Yash Veer Bhatnagar**, NCF.

Email: yash@ncf-india.org

3) Conservation Coordinator – High Altitude Programme:

This is a key position to promote community-based conservation and conservation education amongst local communities in the Indian Himalaya. The position is expected to work closely with the Director of Conservation and coordinate the functioning, monitoring and other aspects of the ongoing conservation work with local communities, running conservation education programmes, and developing new initiatives. The candidate will also form the link between the Director of Conservation, the field coordinators and other field staff. The position requires spending considerable time at field locations in challenging environmental conditions in Spiti Valley, Ladakh and other high altitude locations, as well as extensive travelling.

Qualifications needed: A relevant post-graduate degree and experience in independent handling of projects and people is desirable.

Contact: **Pranav**, NCF.

Email: pranav@ncf-india.org

UPCOMING

First Indian Biodiversity Congress

The first Indian Biodiversity Congress (IBC) is to be held in Thiruvananthapuram from December 27-31, 2010. Initiated by the Centre for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA), the Kerala State Biodiversity Board, the University of Kerala and Navdanya, the congress will be held on the University of Kerala campus, Karyavattom.

The congress is being supported by the National Biodiversity Authority and aims to formulate developmental paradigms and policies for conservation and sustainable utilisation of biodiversity. It will also suggest strategies and formulate action plans to mainstream biodiversity into policy making, besides taking stock of the current biodiversity profile of the country.

There will be 10 parallel sessions in the congress and nearly 1500 delegates are expected to attend. There will also be a special session on 'Biodiversity conservation in Western Ghats - status, challenges and opportunities.'

The Indian Biodiversity Expo, to be organised in connection with the event for the

public, will showcase the rich biodiversity heritage of the country and present a kaleidoscopic spectacle of the variety of life in India.

An organising committee has been set up for the congress with Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan and Minister of State for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh as chief patrons, and Minister of State for Agriculture K.V. Thomas; Minister for Food and Civil Supplies C. Divakaran; Minister for Education and Culture M.A. Baby; Minister for Forest Benoy Viswom; Minister for Agriculture Mullakkara Ratnakaran; Shashi Tharoor, MP; and P.L. Gautam, Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority; as patrons.

Prof. Madhav Gadgil will chair the advisory committee and C.S.P. Iyer will be the convener. The national steering committee will be headed by P. Pushpangadan, Chairman, and J.K. Sharma, Convener. For further details see www.abc2010.org and the website of CISSA (www.cissa.co.in).

Source: 'City to host Indian Biodiversity Congress', *The Hindu*, 10/10/10.

READERS WRITE

The PA Update is very useful ...

Congratulations for the excellent collection of information in *Protected Area Update*, which we have been receiving at ENDEV in Kolkata since August, 2008

I need to know more about tourism in PAs (vide 'Perspective', *PA Update* Vol. XVI, No. 5, October 2010). Since I am a Visiting Professor at the University of Calcutta, Jadavpur University and Statesman Print Journalism School, all additional information will be of great help.

Dr AK Ghosh, ENDEV,
Society for Environment and Development,
Kolkata.

Email: cedkolkata@yahoo.com

The Forest Rights Act, Protected Areas and Wildlife Conservation

NATIONAL NEWS

MoTA, MoEF clarify that protected areas are not outside FRA ambit

In a letter (DO No. 17011/1/2010-FRA) issued in the first week of September the Secretary, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India has made clear the relationship between Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWH) as declared under the provisions of the FRA and the rights of people presently living within national parks and sanctuaries.

The letter states that:
- there is no provision in the FRA to defer the process of vesting of forest rights till critical wildlife habitats are determined and notified. In fact, the rights needs to be recognised first in the national parks and sanctuaries before undertaking any exercise for resettlement. No eviction and resettlement is permissible till all the formalities are completed and that - the Ministry of Environment and Forest has requested all the state governments to ensure that any

decision on under the tribal sub displacement of plan, and the scheduled tribes from government can't national parks and force the people to sanctuaries can be vacate the area by considered only after declaring it a CWH. the provisions of the Forest department (FD) FRA are complied with. officials have, however, claimed that The MoEF had also clarified the same in the CWH proposal is as per a tribal sub a letter sent to PCCFs of all states plan aimed at implementing the FRA in June earlier this and have argued that year. the CWH is carved out before initiating the process to recognize rights of dwellers under the tribal sub plan (see note above for clarifications on this).

Source: Letter issued by Mr AK Chugh, Union Secretary, MoTA, GoI, 03/09/10

NEWS FROM THE STATES

GOA

Villagers oppose CWH status for Cotigao WLS

Residents of Cotigao and surrounding villages have opposed the move to declare the 85.65 sq kms Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) as a Critical Wildlife Habitat (CWH) as per the provisions of the Forest Rights Act (FRA).

It has been pointed out that facilities such as electricity connections and road construction were in progress in the area

Source: 'Villagers against CWH for Cotigao', www.timesofindia.india.com, 28/09/10

Contact: I/c Cotigao WLS, C/o Chief Wildlife Warden, Wildlife Wing, Junta House, Panaji 403001, Goa. Tel: 0832 - 224747 / 223508 / 278891. Fax: 224747

KARNATAKA

Soligas oppose tiger reserve status for BRT Wildlife Sanctuary

The Soliga tribal community that lives in the forests of the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Wildlife

Sanctuary (BRT WLS) have opposed the proposed tiger reserve status for the sanctuary. More than a 1,000 members of the community recently marched silently to the Deputy Commissioner's office in Chamrajnagar to express their protest.

They had green scarves symbolizing the colour of the forest tied around their faces to protest and express their concern that more stringent forest protection would deny them access to resources and land upon which they have depended for generations for livelihood and survival.

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) recently gave its in-principle approval for tiger reserve status to the sanctuary. The subsequent declaration of the tiger reserve as a critical tiger habitat (CTH) could make the forests inaccessible to the over 5000 Soligas that live in 22 podus (settlements) in what will be the core area. Another 11000 Soligas live in 40 podus along the peripheries and are dependant on the BRT forests for their survival.

The Soliga Abhivrudhi Sangha has pointed out that research shows that the Soligas are harvesting

non-timber forest produce (honey, lichen, gooseberry and shikakai) sustainably and that tiger numbers in the sanctuary had increased in recent years. The organization also noted that the community was not consulted either by the state forest department or the central government before taking the tiger reserve decision. Members of the community have already been displaced once when the wildlife sanctuary was first created in 1972. 1,115 Soliga families here recently also received land rights under the Forest Rights Act and another 800 are expected to receive these soon. It is feared that these rights will have to be bartered away for a monetary rehabilitation package if the tiger reserve declaration comes through.

Source: Divya Gandhi.
'Soligas against making BRT sanctuary a tiger reserve', *The Hindu*, 29/10/10
Contact: DCF, BRT Wildlife Sanctuary, Wildlife Division, Chamarajanagar, Karnataka. Tel: 08226-222059(O), 222156(R)

ORISSA

Forest Rights Act being violated in Simlipal TR

Members of the committee appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoEF/MoTA) to look into the implementation of the Forest Rights Act visited the Simlipal Tiger Reserve in July earlier this year. They visited the villages of Bakua and Kabatghai that are both slated for relocation from the reserve and also the resettlement site of Ambadiha, where families of another village relocated from the core, Jenabil, are settled.

In a report released in September the committee has noted the following regarding the implementation of the FRA in the above mentioned villages Simlipal:

1. The process of filing individual forest rights claims at Bakua began only in June 2009 and the filing of community forest rights claims (also in Kabatghai village) began only in July 2010. The CFR forms were filled by officials and were violative of the FRA and/or improper in many ways.

2. It was found in both the cases that

villagers were under the predominant impression that they have to move out of the reserve and that they cannot have rights in the core area. The fact that the FRA allows them to stay inside with various rights, was not explained to them.

3. Villagers of Bakua categorically stated they did not want to move out and that even though two *palli sabha* meetings have been convened to discuss this, they had refused consent to relocation.

4. 61 Kolha tribe households were relocated from Jenabil to Ambadiha earlier in 2010, with 40 taking Option 1 (land/homestead) and 21 Option 2 (cash compensation).

(Previous relocations from Jenabil include 11 Kharia and 12 Bathudi households in 1998, five Santhal and three Kolho households in 2003).

5. Relocation of at least some of the families from Jenabil was done pending verification of their claims and was in violation of Section 4(5) of the FRA.

For the full report visit
[http://fracommittee.icfre.org/TripReports/Orissa/Simlipal%20field%20visit%20report,%20final,%2010.9.2010.doc\[1\].pdf](http://fracommittee.icfre.org/TripReports/Orissa/Simlipal%20field%20visit%20report,%20final,%2010.9.2010.doc[1].pdf)

Contact: **Ashish Kothari**,
Member, MoEF/MoTA

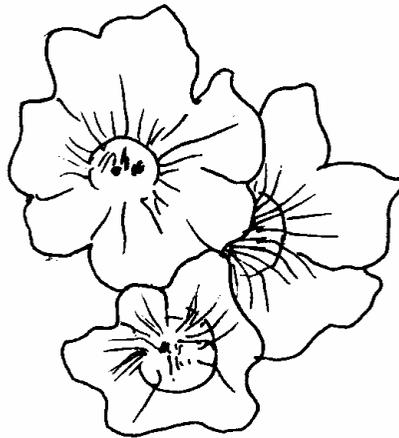
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ELEPHANTS IN THE NEWS

August – November 2010

No.	State	Incident	Source
	West Bengal	Male elephant calf found dead in Simulbari Tea Estate near Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary; poisoning suspected	<i>The Times of India</i> , 28/08/10
	National	The Elephant Task Force headed by Dr. Mahesh Rangarajan submits its report titled 'Securing the Future for Elephants in India'. Minister Mr. Jairam Ramesh says that the elephant will be declared the National Heritage Animal	<i>The Hindustan Times</i> , 31/08/10
	Orissa	Two elephant deaths - one electrocuted at Hindol in Dhenkanal district; the other shot dead by poachers at Ghantikhal, Cuttack district.	<i>The Pioneer</i> , 07/09/10
	West Bengal	Male elephant calf found dead in Simulbari Tea Estate near Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary; poisoning suspected	<i>The Times of India</i> , 28/08/10
	Assam	Male elephant found dead at the courtyard of a house inside Kalidan tea estate near Nagaon; electrocution suspected	Ndtv.com, 02/09/10
	Karnataka	Tusker shot dead by villagers for crop raiding in Periyapattan range	<i>The Times of India</i> , 04/09/10
	Karnataka	Plantation workers stage protest in Madikeri against 'wild elephant menace'; demand compensation, other benefits for families of those killed by elephants	deccanherald.com 07/09/10
	Kerala	Elephant herd destroys plantain and rubber crop at Marottichal under the Pattikad forest range near Thrissur	Ibnlive.in.com 20/09/10
	West Bengal	Seven elephants, including three female and a calf mowed down by a goods train near Banarhat in Jalpaiguri.	<i>The Statesman</i> , 23/09/10
	West Bengal	Meeting between Railway and Forest officials to discuss steps to prevent deaths on railway track in North Bengal	<i>The Telegraph</i> , 26/09/10
	Tamil Nadu	Elephant population in Sathyamangalam hills estimated to be 866	tribuneindia.com 30/09/10
	Orissa	Announcement by Chief Minister of an elephant management plan for state	Ibnlive.in.com 05/10/10
	Orissa	Forest Department expresses concern over proposed power plant of the Tata Power Company at Naraj due to its proximity to the Chandaka Wildlife Sanctuary	<i>The New Indian Express</i> , 05/10/10
	Chattisgarh	Elephant herd kills girl, destroys houses in Panekatel Village, Sarguja district	thaindian.com, 08/10/10
	Karnataka	Crop depredation worth lakhs of rupees by elephant herd, Sakleshwar Tehsil in the Western Ghats. Villages affected include Hodachahalli, Agani, Maragunda, Hanabalu hobli villages.	<i>Deccan Herald</i> , 10/10/10.
	Maharashtra	A man arrested in Mumbai for possession of two elephant tusks concealed in a polythene bag.	<i>DNA</i> , 13/10/10.
	Orissa	DFO petitions revenue administration to take action against illegal laterite quarries, located close to Chandaka WLS.	<i>The New Indian Express</i> , 16/10/10
	Assam	Four elephant deaths near Kaziranga NP between 7 th and 12 th October; two were calves that were found dead in the Diffloo Tea Estate bordering the park. Poising was suspected and the state instituted a one man enquiry committee	<i>The Sentinel</i> , 15/10/10 <i>The Asian Age</i> , 16/10/10
	Meghalaya	Villages and Balpakram National Park staff rescue elephant calf that had fallen into a deep gorge in community forests, South Garo Hills	<i>The Telegraph</i> , 16/10/10
	Assam	Case registered against Diffloo Tea Estate in matter of recovery of two dead elephant calves in the estate	<i>The Telegraph</i> , 19/10/10

West Bengal	Two herds of elephants, totaling 140-odd animals was about to cross the sanctuary.	<i>The Telegraph</i> , 20/10/10
National	The Ministry of Environment and Forests declares elephant as national heritage animal	sify.com, 22/10/10
Uttarakhand	Wild elephant tramples woman and two children to death on national highway at Motichur near Rajaji National Park	newsonair.com, 22/10/10
Andhra Pradesh	Two elephants killed by villagers, allegedly by using the 'khedda' method, Kumbidi Itchapuram village in the Palakonda forest range. Incident occurred around 15 th October	<i>The Hindu</i> , 25/10/10
Assam	Crop depredation by two elephant herds of 80-100 and 4-5 animals respectively in Kalibor revenue circle. Farmers urge action.	<i>The Assam Tribune</i> , 27/10/10.
Assam	Elephant smuggling racket busted; wild elephants from Assam were being smuggled to Bengal, Bihar and Myanmar; estimated to be going on for at least five years	<i>The Times of India</i> , 01/11/10
Karnataka	Census reveals that elephant population in the Mysore Elephant Reserve is up from 4100 in the last count to 5630 now	deccanherald.com 03/11/10



Seeking Support for the PA Update

The *PA Update* continues to need the good wishes and financial support from its readers. Any contribution, however small is welcome. There are various ways in which you can support the *PA Update* - donations, individual subscriptions, gift subscriptions and bulk subscriptions for organisations that want to help reach out the *PA Update* to others as well.

If you want more information of how to contribute or have some questions or suggestions, please do write to me at psekhsaria@gmail.com
Please do consider contributing and all help, big or small, is most welcome.

PERSPECTIVE

WILDLIFE TOURISM

A Valuable Tool for Conservation

Our urban-centric worldview assumes that conservation is so self-evidently and obviously beneficial that it must be universally welcomed. For people living in the neighbourhood of a national park, however, its establishment can be an unmitigated disaster. Relocation, even with compensation, is disruptive to their lives. Increased protection leads to increased depredations on crops, livestock and sometimes even human lives are lost in attacks by wildlife.

Forests are the supermarkets for rural people. Protected areas lock them out of this resource base putting even greater pressure on their already impoverished existence. In such a situation, how do you make standing forests and living tigers more attractive to the locals than the siren song of consumptive development?

Let us be clear about one thing. Unless the locals have a real stake in it, conserving our wild places is going to be virtually impossible. In such a situation the only sustainable economic activity possible in our protected areas is tourism. It is also the only way our parks can earn the extra revenue to mitigate the huge financial burden of protecting and managing forests. While the Indian state undoubtedly remains committed to the principle of conservation, there are many pressing and competing demands on the public purse and wildlife carries no voter cards. If conservation could be made to pay its way, political will would only be strengthened.

Every other country with a successful conservation record - including the rich west and poor countries in other parts of the world - have harnessed tourism, through coherent policy and effective laws, to under-write their conservation programmes and reconcile local communities to

the long-term environmental and economic benefits. A stake has been built in revitalising rather than destroying their natural world. We, in India, nurture this perverse notion that we are somehow different and only unique solutions work here. Furthermore, that these solutions must be rooted and animated by high ideals rather than the grubby quotidian concerns of everyday life. Here is news. We don't have to re-invent the wheel, we can and must learn from others.

Of course all such tourism must be properly regulated; it must be responsible; it must ensure a much greater share of revenue to local communities; it must make the tiger at least as valuable alive to many, than it is dead to a few.

To be effective, tourism must be guided by coherent policy and a regulatory mechanism. Despite repeated calls over two decades – most persistently by people from within the tourism 'lobby' nothing has happened. The chaos resulting from this regulatory and policy vacuum is being criticized by the very people within government and the 'conservation' lobby who should have been responsible for their creation in the first place.

The result is there for all to see.

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PERSPECTIVE is a new column that features invited opinion, comment and critique.

For Private Circulation/Printed Matter

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