

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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EDITORIAL

The enduring tiger obsession

India's mainstream English print media is, as readers would have noticed, the main source of news carried in the *PA Update*. About 90% of the stories we carry come from the news reported in these newspapers from around the country. If what the media carries can be considered a barometer of the issues that concern India's policy makers, wildlifers and conservationists, it is evident that the obsession with the tiger endures unabated. In that sense the *PA Update* reflects the same as well. On an average nearly 20% of every issue of the *PA Update* (including this one) is related to issues of tiger conservation in general and on tiger reserves in particular. It is a significant statistic considering that tiger reserves (TRs) account for less than 8% of the total number of protected areas in the country.

There sure are convincing arguments in favour of the focus on the tiger – it is at the top of the ecosystem and ensures protection for the habitat and other species, that its charisma helps garner at least some interest in and resources for conservation and it's a great way to get the general public and policy makers interested in wildlife in the first place.

This also does reinforce the often made point, however, that India is obsessed with the tiger and this obsession comes at a cost. Every small detail of tiger poaching, of the endless controversies over tiger numbers, of what happens in a tiger reserve, of new proposals for TRs and the need to relocate people to ensure tiger conservation is religiously reported. This is in addition to the financial resources and mindspace that gets dedicated to the tiger at the cost of almost everything else.

The same kind of sustained interest, for example, is rarely seen when it involves other species such as the Great Indian Bustard, that is certainly far more threatened than the tiger and where issues might indeed be more complex. The less said of the less glamorous and charismatic species such as insects, amphibians or plants, the better. As far as the media is concerned,

everything seems lost in the shadows of the great cat.

What is needed is to increase the focus on and coverage of other issues and species, but not by reducing that of the tiger. It need not be the one at the cost of the other, and this is a challenge that the media and the wildlife conservation community, both, need to take up if the full potential of the media is to be realized and conservation of India's increasingly threatened wilderness areas and wildlife communities is to be best ensured.

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

Kawal WLS to get TR tag

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has agreed, in-principle, to recognise Kawal Wild Life Sanctuary(WLS) in Adilabad district as a new Tiger Reserve (TR). This would become the second TR in Andhra Pradesh after the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem TR.

The 892 sq km Kawal forest is located in northern Andhra Pradesh adjoining Chandrapur and Gadchiroli forest areas in Maharashtra.

The area was first surveyed jointly by a team comprising the Satpuda Foundation, Sanctuary Asia and the Hyderabad Tiger Conservation Society (HYTICOS) in 2003. The corridor mapping, along with documentation of the wildlife and tiger potential of the area was done from Maharashtra to Andhra Pradesh.

The proposal for the tiger reserve has been under consideration of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) since then.

Source: Vijay Pinjarkar, 'Kawal in Adilabad to be new tiger reserve', [The Times Of India](#), 28/06/11.

Contact: **DFO Wildlife**, Kawal WLS, Jannaram, Dist. Adilabad - 504 205. Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 08739-236224

ASSAM

Brahmaputra threatens Orang NP



The changing course of the Brahmaputra river and erosion caused by it has been threatening the Orang (Rajiv Gandhi) National Park (NP). The river had changed course devouring the Borkhe and Jawani camps. The Forest Department (FD) had to reconstruct the Borkhe anti-poaching camp at a new location in 2010 while another camp is also under serious threat with the river flowing just a few metres away.

However, new land has also come up on the northern side of the river and several animals have started taking shelter on these new forest land which is part of the NP.

No effort has been made so far to mitigate the situation and forest officials have said that a proposal would be prepared soon to undertake anti-erosion projects in the park.

Source: 'Erosion threatens Orang park - Brahmaputra devours anti-poaching camps', [The Telegraph](#), 08/06/11.

Contact: **DFO**, Orang NP, Mangaldoi Wildlife Division, P.O. Mangaldoi, Darrang - 784 125, Tel: 0914-22065(O), 22349(R)

Firing range inside Sonai Rupai WLS to stay

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has ruled out the 'dismantling' of the short firing range located within the Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary (SRWLS) but has asked the army not to practise there until it obtains the necessary clearances. The issue of the firing range had been taken up by the MoEF following representations from various quarters, including the members of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife, on the construction and use of the firing range behind the Lama camp within the sanctuary.

Gajraj Corps, stationed at Missamari, had established the short firing range on forestland within the sanctuary, without following the legal procedures. The troops were also practicing at the range in violation of the provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and orders of the Supreme Court. The Forest Department (FD) had constituted a five-member committee in the last week of April to examine the entire matter but the report has not been submitted yet.

Senior wildlife officials have said that the MoEF decision to maintain status quo on the range was a set back as having the firing range was against wildlife laws. In April, earlier this year, the FD had tried to dismantle the firing range but was prevented by the forces from doing so.

Source: Roopak Goswami. 'Status quo over Sonai Rupai firing range', [The Telegraph](#), 02/06/11

Contact: **DFO, Sonai-Rupai WLS**, Sonitpur West Division, P.O. Tezpur, Dist. Sonitpur - 784 001, Assam. Tel: 03712-220093(O), 220091 (R)

School teacher held for rhino poaching in Pobitara

A school teacher resident in the Kurahibori village adjacent to the Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary was arrested recently in connection with the poaching of a rhino in the sanctuary.

He was arrested for allegedly giving shelter to the poachers who killed a male rhino in the sanctuary. The poachers shot dead the rhinoceros and fled with its horn.

Source: 'School teacher held for rhino poaching', [www.timesofindia.com](#), 16/06/11.

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

Manas TR taken off World Heritage danger list

The UNESCO has upgraded Manas National Park from the list of 'World Heritage in Danger', reflecting the revival of the formerly beleaguered protected area. The decision to remove the 'in danger' tag was announced during the recently held 35th Session of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) in Paris. The decision was an outcome of voting by 22 member countries to the WHC. An independent review on the status was done by the IUCN to apprise the committee on the present situation in Manas.

It was in 1992, amidst the civil unrest of the 1980s and 90s, that Manas was declared 'a World Heritage in danger'. The turn around in Manas is believed to be a combination of the resolution of political strife resulting in the creation of the Autonomous Bodoland Territorial Council under the Bodo Accord (February 2003) and the concerted efforts by successive governments and local people assisted by committed NGOs and individuals.

Till date, the WHC has deleted two sites from the World Heritage List. These include the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in Oman, delisted in 2007, and Dresden Elbe Valley in Germany, in 2009.

Source: 'India gets back its pride: Manas no longer 'in danger' of losing World Heritage status', www.wti.org.in, 21/06/11

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

Manas to get more Swamp deer

The Forest Department (FD) is planning to increase the population of Swamp deer at Manas National Park (NP) in accordance with the suggestion given by UNESCO's World Heritage Committee (WHC).

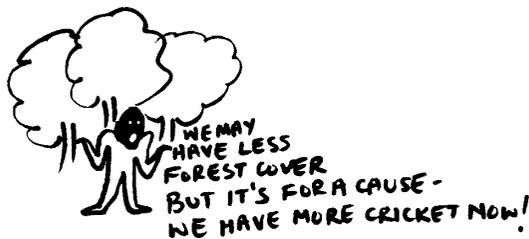
According to the FD, a plan has already been charted out for exploring the prospects of translocation of Swamp deer based on deliberations at a workshop held in February. The FD and the Wildlife Institute of India had organized the workshop. The relocation project will be for a period of three years and would be

carried out after it gets the nod from the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests.

It is expected that some of the 1200 deer found in the Kaziranga NP will be moved to Manas that has a present population of about 20. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) has insisted that a proper assessment of habitat and number of swamp deer to be introduced will be carried out before actually implementing the translocation plan.

Source: 'After rhinos, forest dept plans to increase swamp deer population in Manas', www.economictimes.indiatimes.com, 02/07/11.

NGOs express concern over illegal activities in Dibru Saikhowa NP



Wildlife and environment NGOs have expressed concern that poaching of wild animals and illegal tree felling has led to the rapid shrinking of forest cover in the Dibru Saikhowa National Park (DSNP).

The Dibru Saikhowa Conservation Committee has claimed that the forest resources of the national park were depleting because of encroachment of land and illegal cutting of trees. *Salix tetrasperma*, for instance, is one of the many rare and valuable trees found here that is in demand for making furniture and cricket bats for sale in the national as well as international markets. It is reported that more than 1,000 trees, mostly of this particular species, have been felled in just a couple of weeks in the month May.

Poachers too are reported to have access to interior areas of the park and animals like wild boar, deer, wild buffaloes and elephants are being poached regularly. In March, elephants were killed by poachers near the Paulami camp of the park.

Source: 'Concern over 'threat' to wildlife and natural resources at Dibru Saikhowa National Park', [The Sentinel](#), 13/05/11.

Contact: **DFO** Tinsukia Wildlife Division Dibru-Saikhowa NP, P.O. Tinsukia - 786125. Assam. Tel: 0374-331472(O), 333083(R)

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

CHANDIGARH

First ever census at Sukhna WLS

The first ever census at the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) has recorded nine species of mammals and 63 species of birds.

The nine species of mammals include leopard, sambhar, chital, wild boar, Indian porcupine, Indian pangolin, Blacknaped hare, Golden jackal and Grey langur.

The census report stated that the presence of predators such as the leopard, which requires enough prey for its sustenance, suggests the importance of Sukhna and its rich biodiversity.

Source: 'Sukhna sanctuary's first ever census reveals 9 mammal, 63 bird species', www.indianexpress.com, 06/07/11.

CHATTISGARH

Centre seeks TR tag for Guru Ghasidas NP

The Centre has asked Chattisgarh to submit a proposal to the National Tiger Conservation Authority to declare the Guru Ghasidas National Park (NP) as a tiger reserve (TR).

The national park is situated between Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh and Jharkhand's Palamau TRs. It is also contiguous with Madhya Pradesh's Sanjay-Dubri TR. The area was surveyed in 2010 by the Wildlife Institute of India, which noted that though the prey population in the habitat was low, it had considerable diversity.

The letter sent to the Chattisgarh Government states that the creation of a TR reserve would ensure use of the largest landscape within Central India for tiger conservation. With good management and protection the area has a

potential for supporting a viable tiger population along with the Sanjay-Dubri TR.

Source: 'Chhattisgarh asked to propose tiger reserve status for Guru Ghasidas park', [The Hindu](#), 01/07/11.

GUJARAT

Leopard and Sloth bear count rises in Gujarat



A recent three-day wildlife census has revealed that the population of sloth bears and leopards in Gujarat has increased by 18.62% and 8.41% respectively.

There are now 1160 leopards in the state with the highest density being in Junagadh district which has 385 leopards. In the last census in 2006, there were 310 leopards reported in Junagadh district. There are 445 leopards in the four national parks and 22 sanctuaries, 508 in other forest areas, while the remaining are found close to human habitations.

The Saurashtra-Kutch region has 565 leopards which is 48% of the total population in the state. Amreli district reported a total of 105 leopards. 20 of the 26 districts in the state reported presence of the big cat while their occurrence in the remaining six has also not been ruled out.

The census data also shows that five districts — Junagadh, Amreli, Dahod, Vadodara and Panchmahals — accounted for 70% population of the states leopard population.

The presence of sloth bear was marked only in seven districts. Of these, only one sloth bear was seen in Mehsana and 11 in Panchmahals, while the remaining were found in Banaskantha, Dahod, Narmada, Sabarkantha and Vadodara districts.

Source: 'Leopards, bears' population rise by 18.62%, 8.41%', [The Times of India](#), 31/05/11.

28 housing projects proposed in the vicinity of Gir; hotels banned in two km radius around sanctuary

As many as 28 applications for housing projects in the vicinity of Gir sanctuary are said to be pending for approval with the Forest Department (FD). The proposals have come at the same time as the government's declaration of an eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) within a five km radius of the sanctuary (see story below).

At least a couple of projects are proposed near Mendarda located about seven km from the boundary of the sanctuary. The FD has to give a no-objection certificate before the collectorate gives the final approval. The Junagadh collector has said that they have not granted approval to any such project so far.

The FD has meanwhile also issued a notification to ban the setting up of new hotels within a two km radius of the sanctuary. Existing hotels and farmhouses will be exempted from this notification and can function as earlier. The increase in interest around Gir is attributed to the popular advertising campaign starring Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan (*PA Updates* Vol XVI, Nos. [6](#), [5](#) & [4](#)).

Source: Himanshu Kaushik, 'Realtors push for hsg projects in Gir', www.indiatimes.timesofindia.com, 06/06/11.

'Gujarat forest department bans setting up new hotels near Gir National Park', www.travelbizmonitor.com, 20/05/11.

Contact: **CF (Wildlife)** Junagadh, Sardar Bag, Junagadh - 362001, Gujarat. Tel: 0285 2631678 Fax: 2631211. Email: cfwildlife_ad1@sancharnet.in

ESZs around four sanctuaries in Gujarat

The Central government has declared the setting up of eco-sensitive zones (ESZ) in a five-km radius around four sanctuaries in Gujarat. These include Gir and Purna in the Dangs, the Vansda National Park in Navsari and Narayan Sarovar in Kutch.

The move has come in response to the apex court's directive, which insists that state governments should identify ESZs around wildlife reserves. The new guidelines on ESZs ban

construction, mining, other industrial activities and some tourism activities in these areas. They also regulate felling of trees, change in agriculture systems, commercial use of natural water resources, setting up of hotels and resorts, flying over in an aircraft or hot air balloon and discharge of effluents and solid waste in natural water bodies.

According to the notification issued for Gir, 8,318 hectares (ha) have been declared eco-sensitive in Junagadh and Bhesan talukas of Junagadh district. For Narayan Sarovar, 22,588 ha in Abdasa, Lakhpat and Nakhatrana talukas in Kutch have been considered for declaration as eco-sensitive. The ESZ of Purna sanctuary will cover Ahwa and Songadh while that of Vansda sanctuary will cover parts of Ahwa, Vansda and Vyara.

The ESZs will be monitored by a committee headed by the district collector. Other members will include a representative from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), the regional officer of the Gujarat Pollution Control Board, the local town planner and the deputy conservator of forests.

The MoEF is reported to have been considering Balaram-Ambaji in Banaskantha, Marine National Park in Jamnagar and Shoolpaneshwar sanctuary for similar zones.

Source: Himanshu Kaushik, 'Eco-sensitive zones around 4 Guj sanctuaries get nod', The Times of India, 13/05/11.

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Hangul population on the rise.

The recent census has put the population of the hangul at 218 in the Dachigam National Park and its surrounding areas. This is substantially higher than the figure of 175 from the last census. The State Wildlife Protection Department in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India has been regularly monitoring the Hangul population in the region since 2004.

The J&K Government is also planning to start captive breeding as part of a Rs. 22-crore 'species recovery plan for conservation for different endangered

animals'. Conservation breeding centers for the Hangul are being set up at Shikargah-Tral and Darwudri-Mamar.

Source: Ishfaq-ul-Hassan, 'Hangul numbers in Kashmir Valley galloping high', www.dna.com, 26/05/11.

A DECADE AGO
From the Archives
[Protected Area Update 32](#),
August 2001

Hangul to be relocated from Dachigam NP

The Jammu & Kashmir Wildlife Department has proposed to move the entire population of the endangered Kashmiri stag, the hangul, from its present home in the Dachigam National Park to the Kishtwar National Park in Ladakh and the Gulmarg and Overa Aru Wildlife Sanctuaries. The main two reasons being cited by the officials for this are a) the increased population of leopards in Dachigam and b) foot and mouth disease.

The Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) of the state has explained that one leopard kills two hanguls a week in the park and this could endanger its population. The department says that the proposal for the relocation was made after consulting scientists of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and has been forwarded to the State and Central governments earlier this year.

Many Wildlife department officials in the state and wildlife experts have strongly criticised the proposed plan. They argue that the two problems of increased population of the leopard and the foot and mouth disease will be there in the new places where the relocation has been proposed as well. Dr Mir Mansoor, a veterinarian with the Wildlife Department has even questioned the assumption that leopards kill a lot of hanguls. There have also been apprehensions on how the relocation programme will be carried out, and if it happens how the hangul will adjust to the new situation.

The official figure for the hangul in Dachigam is around 450 animals. Some experts however feel that this number is an exaggerated one and the population is more likely to be around 200 individuals.

Source: Mufti Islah. '[A habitat for the hangul](#)', *The Indian Express*, 24/05/2001.

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

Rs. 400 crores for restoration of Wullar Lake; two million willow trees to be uprooted



The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has sanctioned Rs. 400 crores for the restoration of Wullar Lake, a Ramsar site in Jammu & Kashmir. The large water body has shrunk substantially on account of large scale tree plantation that was undertaken in the mid 80s to solve the problem of serious flash floods ([PA Update 45](#)).

It is now proposed that nearly two million willow trees will be removed as part of the restoration plan and an expert committee is to be set up to study the consequences of this removal.

Source: 'Expert committee to be set up for Wullar Lake restoration: Ramesh', www.kashmirwatch.com, 05/06/11

KARNATAKA

In-principle approval for Kudremukh TR

The Union Government has granted in-principle approval for constituting the Kudremukh National Park (NP) as a tiger reserve (TR). Informing the state government of the approval, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), has asked the Chief Wildlife Warden of Karnataka to submit a detailed proposal in this regard.

The core of the TR will be spread over an area of 600.32 sq km while the buffer zone will be 168 sq km. Over 6200 people are known to reside in the proposed core zone, while the population in the buffer zone area is 5816.

Source: Soumita Majumdar, 'Govt working on Kudremukh tiger reserve project proposal', www.dna.com, 24/05/11.

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

Transfer to tiger reserves result in staff shortage in other divisions of the FD

A recent order of the state government transferring 178 forest watchers to the wildlife division, has created a serious shortage of personnel in the Forest Department (FD).

The order issued by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) directed all the Deputy Conservators of Forests, Assistant Conservators of Forests and Range Forest Officers to relieve the forest watchers immediately to take their positions in four tiger reserves (TRs) namely Nagarahole, Bandipur, Bhadra and Anshi.

The order transfers 60 watchers from Chamarajanagar, Kollegal, Mysore, Hunsur, Mandya, Chikmagalur, Koppa, Sirsi, Yellapur, Haliyal, Honnavar and Haveri to Bandipur TR, 63 from Karwar, Shimoga, Tumkur, Gulburga, Yadgir, Madikeri, Virajpet, Bellary, Chitradurga, Davanagere, Koppal, Ramanagar and Belgaum to Hunsur wild life division, 37 from Mangalore, Bangalore Urban and Bangalore Rural districts to Bhadra wild life division, Chikmagalur and 18 from Kundapur and Kolar to Dandeli wildlife division in Uttara Kannada district.

Concern has been expressed that this transfer will leave a large number of forest areas unprotected and open to exploitation.

Source: M Raghuram, 'Green alert: Karnataka transfers 178 forest watchers to tiger reserves', www.dna.com, 08/07/11.

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

Court seeks standard rule for resorts near protected areas

The Karnataka High Court has observed that the Government needs to have a standard rule for granting permits to resorts near protected areas,

saying that it should either grant permit to all, or ban them.

The observation comes in the wake of a petition filed by R Ram, owner of Water Woods Resorts located at Karapur village in HD Kote, outside the Rajiv Gandhi National Park at Nagarahole. The petitioner sought directions from the Court directing the state not to prevent them from carrying out tourist activity. The resort has been operating here since 1999. While doing so the petitioner claimed that they followed all norms related to conservation of wildlife and forests.

With the declaration of Wildlife Tourism Policy in 2004, the Government physically stopped the operation of the resort in January 2010. The petition stated that the resort was situated about five km from the park, whereas many resorts situated only a km from the park were allowed to continue their operations without any restrictions.

The petitioner had contended that physically stopping their operations without any notice amounted to arbitrary action and violated Articles 14, 19 (1)(g) and 21 of the Constitution.

Source: 'Permits to resorts in protected forest areas under scanner', [Deccan Herald](http://www.deccanherald.com), 23/06/11.

KERALA

Periyar and Parambikulam TRs adjudged among best five in the country

The Periyar and Parambikulam Tiger Reserves (TRs) in Kerala have been adjudged two of the five best managed tiger reserves in the country. The National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) had jointly evaluated 41 TRs for management effectiveness, including tiger conservation programmes.

The TRs were evaluated on 30 parameters with scores assigned to each criteria, including habitat management. The tiger population patterns were also evaluated using the tiger data generated during the 2006 and 2010 tiger counts.

While assessing the reserves in southern India, the evaluators observed that record keeping and documentation of wildlife offences needed to be improved. The experts highlighted the absence of well-trained personnel in these reserves. Inadequate arms and ammunition, lack of storage and maintenance of arms and equipment were also pointed out.

The findings were presented by the dean of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) at a meeting of Chief Wildlife Wardens of the States and the Field Directors of the reserves in New Delhi in the month of May.

Source: K.S. Sudhi, 'Acclaim for Periyar, Parambikulam tiger reserves', [The Hindu](#), 17/05/11.

Kerala farmers can kill wild boars

The Kerala cabinet recently decided to grant special permission for killing wild boars that destroyed crops. It has been noted that the state was losing crops worth crores of rupees to damage by wildlife and there were also threats to the lives of farmers living near forests. A committee, constituted by the previous government, too, had recommended granting of permission to kill wild animals for the sole purpose of protecting crops.

Permission would have to be obtained from forest officials and the permits would carry clear stipulations. Officials have noted, however, that some of the conditions laid down will make the situation very difficult. Lactating boars, for instance, cannot be killed and neither can they be shot in illegally occupied land and farmland which are protected by trenches built using government funds. The killing has also been banned in farmlands protected by solar fencing and embankments.

The crop raiders cannot be killed in forestlands except in recognised Scheduled Tribe colonies. If the animal escapes to a forest area in the act of being shot at, the shooter is not allowed to follow it into the forest area and then kill it.

For obtaining the permit, the farmer should approach the Forest Ranger or the Assistant Wildlife Warden with a request with details regarding the number of animals, the location of the farm and the loss sustained due to crop raiding. The official has to then communicate to the farmer within three days his decision on the application after consultations with the president of the Eco Development Committee or Vana Samrakshana Samity and the civic representative.

Source: 'Kerala farmers can kill wild boars', [The Hindu](#), 16/06/11.

K.S. Sudhi. 'Shoot order puts officials in a spot', [The Hindu](#), 29/06/11

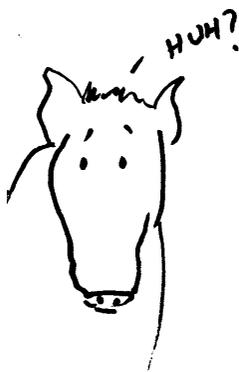
Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden** – Kerala, Vazhudacaud, Trivandrum – 695014, Kerala. Tel: 0471 2321610, 2529300. Fax - 0471 2320554. E-mail – cww@forest.kerala.gov.in

MADHYA PRADESH

Discord between Ramesh and Congress MPs over Ken-Betwa project

The Ken-Betwa river linking project has created a discord between some Congress MPs and former Union Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr Jairam Ramesh. The project to link the Ken river in Uttar Pradesh with the Betwa in Madhya Pradesh has been the subject of controversy on account of its negative impact on the Panna Tiger Reserve ([PA Updates Vol XVII, No. 3](#)).

The minister was opposed to the project but members of parliament from his political party, particularly from Bundelkhand, want it implemented to deal with the situation of water scarcity being faced there. The Ken-Betwa inter-linking project is said to be a key element of the Central Government's Bundelkhand package, which is being pursued by political parties in this area. The Planning Commission, which is implementing the package, is reported to have got the commitment to this project from the both the state governments.



Source: 'Ramesh differs with party on Ken-Betwa', www.hindustantimes.com, 21/06/11.

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

MAHARASHTRA

Census figures from Sanjay Gandhi NP and Tungareshwar WLS

A recently conducted census has revealed that carnivore numbers in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) and the Tungareshwar Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) are on the decline. The leopard population in SGNP has gone down from 23 in 2009 to 21. No Civet cat was spotted this time as against the four that were seen in the 2009 census.

The population of herbivores, however, has gone up. Between 2009 and 2011, the number of langurs grew from 280 to 305, macaques from 435 to 530, Spotted deer from 390 to 494 and sambhar from 27 to 37.

At the Tungareshwar WLS the leopard population remained the same as two years ago at five and the Jungle cat figure grew from zero to one. The population of spotted deer was reported to have declined from 24 to 13, of wild boar from 28 to 23, langurs from 90 to 41 and macaques from 128 to a mere 37. It has also been pointed out that 85 Spotted deer that were released in the sanctuary in 2009 have all disappeared.

The census was carried out using traditional methods like patrolling, counting pugmarks and sightings of animals at water holes.

Source: Simit Bhagat, 'City's animal kingdom in decline', The Times of India, 10/06/11.

Contact: **Dy. Conservator of Forests**, SGNP,
Borivili (East), Mumbai – 400066,
Maharashtra. Tel: 022-28860362,
28860389(O), 8862780(R) Email:
sgnpmumbai@gmail.com

FD issues eviction notices to windmills in Koyna WLS

The Maharashtra Forest Department (FD) has issued eviction notices to 49 windmills stating that they have illegally encroached on forest land in the Koyna Wild Life Sanctuary. The parties have

been told to remove the windmills within two months or face legal action.

The FD action has come following the Bombay High Court observation which highlighted that around 206 windmills and resorts have been illegally built by private parties inside the sanctuary. The high court had, on October 18, 2010, directed the FD to take appropriate action against the erring windmills and resorts. The direction was given in a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by social activist Nana Khamkar.

The PIL stated that the Collector should cancel all illegal land deals which have taken place in violation of Section 20 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 as regard to illegal erection of windmills, resorts, tree cutting and construction of roads. It also asked the court to cancel all illegal land transfers that have taken place after 1985.

(Eds. Note: This news report however appears contradictory to the report in the last issue of the *PA Update* ([Vol XVII, No. 3](#)) where the same High Court was reported to have said that windmills cannot be displaced from within or around Koyna WLS as they were important for power generation.)

Source: Mustafa Plumber, 'Windmills in Koyna forest told to evict', www.dnaindia.com, 06/06/11.

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

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

RAJASTHAN

Cheetal and sambhar to be relocated to PAs in Rajasthan

The Rajasthan State Wildlife Board has decided to relocate cheetal and sambhar to various protected areas in the state. The

Wildlife Institute of India, and the Central Zoo Authority have given a nod to the move.

The animals are to be moved from the Delhi Golf Club which has an excess sambhar population. The relocation sites include the Kumbhalgarh and Kailadevi Wildlife Sanctuaries where the prey base for the big cats is said to be scarce. It has also been reported that many sambhar and cheetal roam on the outskirts of the Sariska Tiger Reserve. They are sometimes killed in road accidents and also often stray into nearby farms causing damage to crops. They are to be moved out and relocated to other sanctuaries in the state.

The state had tried to relocate sambhar and cheetal from Sariska some time back but the plan had to be abandoned as the necessary permission was not given (*PA Update Vol. XVII, No. 1*).

Source: 'After tigers, sambhars to be relocated', www.indiatimes.timesofindia.com, 15/06/11.

Rajasthan government opens dialogue over cess with hoteliers around PAs



The Rajasthan Government has started consultations with operators of private hotels around the Ranthambhore National Park (NP) in Sawai Madhopur and Sariska Tiger Reserve in Alwar districts to finalise the quantum of cess to be imposed by the end of the year.

The Tiger Task Force headed by the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh had suggested a flat 30 per cent cess on private hotels, which fall within five km of protected areas (PAs). But later, owing to opposition, it allowed state governments to decide the quantum of cess as per the local conditions.

The guidelines issued by the MoEF to develop eco-tourism direct that the funds

generated from the proposed cess would be used for upkeep of these PAs.

Source: Lokpal Sethi, 'Hotels around tiger reserves to cough up cess', [The Pioneer](http://ThePioneer), 16/06/11.

Proposal to increase area of Tal Chappar WLS

The Standing Committee of the Rajasthan State Wildlife Board has recommended expanding the area of the Tal Chappar Blackbuck sanctuary in Churu district. This is to be done by acquiring 1257.56 hectares (ha) of land of the three adjoining villages – Surwas, Devani and Beed Chappar – under Section 18 of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

Tal Chappar spread over an area of 719 ha and has seen considerable growth in the population of blackbucks. It has also been noted that the animals face an acute problem of space during the monsoons when the low lying depression gets inundated. (Also see *PA Updates Vol XIV, No. 3*)

Source: 'Move to reserve share for Keoladeo Park from Panchana dam', [The Hindu](http://TheHindu), 16/06/11

Contact: **I/c Tal Chappar WLS**, Dist. Churu, Rajasthan. Tel 0291-2544371 / 2433656. Fax: 0291-2629038

State wildlife board recommends water from Panchana dam for Keoladeo NP

The Standing Committee of the Rajasthan State Board for Wildlife has recommended that a share of water from the Panchana dam in the neighbouring Karauli district be reserved for the Keoladeo National Park (NP) to tide over the water shortage being faced here for the last few years.

The recommendation is for an annual commitment of 200 MCFT water and for providing an additional 62.5 MCFT from the drinking water project for Bharatpur for which the source would be the Chambal River. The park needs 550 MCFT of water a year while its availability has remained at an average 300 MCFT for the last decade or so.

In the year 2010, following the intervention of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, 200 MCFT water was released from the Panchana dam for the park. The first meeting of the wildlife board, presided over by Mr. Gehlot that year, had also favourably considered ensuring a share of the Panchana dam water for Keoladeo NP.

A series of other steps are also underway to ensure availability of water for the park. The most prominent one is for the construction of a canal – the Govardhan drain (see *PA Updates* Vol XV, No. [2](#); Vol XIV, Nos. [5](#) & [1](#); Vol XIII, Nos. [6](#) & [1](#); and Nos. [54](#), [53](#), [50](#), [43](#), [40](#) & [39](#)) – to carry the flood waters of the Yamuna during the monsoon period to the park and channelizing waters from the Chambal. Experts, however, say that only an assured supply of water from a source like Panchana would mitigate the water shortage of the park.

A little more than Rs. 50 crore have been sanctioned for the Govardhan drain project and nearly one km of the canal has been completed so far.

Source: 'Move to reserve share for Keoladeo Park from Panchana dam', [The Hindu](#), 16/06/11

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

CWLW Government of Rajasthan, Van Bhavan, Vaniki Path, Jaipur – 302005, Rajasthan. Tel: 0141-2380832 / 2540531. Fax: 2380496/ 2380832.

SIKKIM

300 Red pandas in Sikkim



A recent survey conducted by the Sikkim Forest Department (FD) and the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) – India has revealed that there are

around 300 red pandas in the state. The Red panda is the state animal of Sikkim and is found in six protected areas of the state.

The project that started in 2008, was conducted in Pangolakha and Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuaries. The first phase of the project, 'Long Term Survival of Red Pandas in Sikkim', that began in Pangolakha was completed recently while a preliminary survey has started this year in Barsey.

By combining the findings at Pangolakha and Barsey the FD has estimated the total population of red pandas in Sikkim to be around 300. It has been suggested, however, that this is a rough estimate and more surveys are needed to come up with the exact number.

The FD also plans to initiate surveys in the Kanchenjunga Biosphere Reserve and Kanchenjunga National Park, which covers West and North districts of Sikkim, from 2012.

Source: 'First survey on red panda - Reports say around 300 animals in Sikkim', [The Telegraph](#), 09/06/11.

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

TAMIL NADU

WCCB border unit at Ramanathapuram

In an effort to curb smuggling of endangered species through the seas between India and Sri Lanka, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has proposed to set up a border unit in Ramanathapuram.

The national level crime bureau was set up in June 2008 (*PA Updates* Vol. XIV, Nos. [4](#) & [2](#); Vol. XIII, No. [5](#) and Vol XII, No. [4](#)) and functions under the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF). It has two Joint Directors at the national level and six Regional Directors including one at Chennai. Ramanathapuram will have its border unit at the field level considering its proximity to Sri Lanka. The second such unit would be based near the Indo-Tibet border.

The border unit would specifically focus on intelligence gathering and crime detection related to smuggling of marine and other animal species protected under the Wild Life Protection Act 1972. It will further strengthen the ongoing efforts for control of poaching and illegal trade. The unit will consist of experts from multiple disciplines.

Source: 'Wildlife Crime Control Bureau to set up border unit at Ramanathapuram', [The Hindu](#), 16/06/11.

Coral mining sinks two islands in Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve

Two small islands in the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve (GOMBR) are reported to have sunk mainly on account of coral reef mining here. Reserve officials say that fishermen have indiscriminately and illegally mined the coral reefs around the islets of Poomarichan and Villanguchalli for many decades and this has led to their disappearance.

While some experts have suggested that rising sea levels were the cause, local officials are certain that in this case the damage had been caused by the mining activities.

Source: Sivaramakrishnan Parameswaran. 'Mining to blame for islands to sink beneath waves', [BBC News](#), 13/05/11.

Contact: **Shekhar Kumar Niraj**, Director GOMBR, Virudhunagar Circle, Collectorate Campus, Virudhunagar 626 002, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 04562-252158. Email: shekhar.niraj@gmail.com

Census of Nilgiri tahr in Grizzled Giant Squirrel WLS

A three day census to estimate the Nilgiri tahr population was conducted recently in the Grizzled Giant Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary, Srivilliputhur. Sanctuary officials, representatives of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – India and the Wildlife Association of Rajapalaym (WAR) and 100 volunteers participated.

The results have estimated the population of the animal to be 150 as against a number of 120 counted in 2010. The highest possible count has been estimated at 219.

Source: Shekhar Kumar Niraj. Email dated 23/06/11.

Contact: Shekhar Kumar Niraj. Email: shekhar.niraj@gmail.com

UTTAR PRADESH

Three elephants electrocuted in Dudhwa

Three wild elephants were electrocuted after they toppled a high-tension electricity line in Dudhwa National Park. According to the officials, they were part of a herd of 15 to 20 elephants. The elephants uprooted a utility pole and three of them got trapped under the live cable while the others fled.

Source: 'Elephants killed by electrocution', www.news.scotsman.com, 09/07/11, 'Elephants electrocuted in northern India', www.couriermail.com.au, 10/07/11.

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

WEST BENGAL

Elephants injured in train accident in North Bengal despite call alert

Two elephants were injured by a train near Banarhat station in North Bengal although the driver had been informed minutes before about a herd's movement in the vicinity of the tracks. The Diana range officer had informed the control room of the Northeast Frontier Railway's Alipurduar division that a herd of elephants was close to the tracks near Red Bank tea estate, eight km from Banarhat. This is the same area where the accident killing seven elephants had taken place in September 2010 (see *PA Update* XVI, No. 6).

The Asansol Express that was on its way to Siliguri hit two elephants. A female aged around 15 was hit on the left side of the waist. The other elephant, also a female, aged around 35, suffered injuries on the leg.

The foresters could not take any immediate steps as other members of the herd were around and it was difficult to identify the injured animals at night. Later the sub-adult

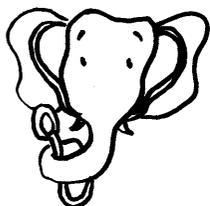
female was lifted with the help of a crane onto a truck and taken to the Gorumara National Park for treatment while the adult elephant was being treated near the accident spot.

The Railway officials are reported to have claimed that though the train left Banarhat station at a very slow pace, the accident occurred as it was raining heavily and visibility was low.

A week before this incident, a joint meeting of the railways and forest officers held in Alipurduar had decided that a committee would be formed to exchange feedback on the movement of wild animals along the tracks in the Dooars. Since 2004, when the 167 km-long track between Siliguri and Alipurduar was converted into broad gauge, scores of elephants have been mowed down by trains (See Edit *PA Update* Vol XVII, No. [1](#); Vol. XVI, Nos. [6](#) & [4](#). Also see *PA Updates* Vol. XVI Nos. [6](#), [5](#), [4](#) & [1](#); Vol. XV, No. [1](#); Vol. XIV, Nos. [5](#) & [1](#); Vol. XIII, Nos. [6](#), [3](#) & [1](#); Vol. XII, No. [3](#) and Nos. [49](#), [47](#), [39](#), [36](#), [34](#), & [29](#)).

Source: 'Train injures elephants - Slow run fails to avert accident', [The Telegraph](#), 27/06/11.

North Bengal FD to set up animal hospital



The North Bengal Forest Department (FD) is considering setting up a hospital for the treatment of wild animals. The immediate trigger seems to be the incidence in which two elephants were injured

by a speeding train in the last week of June, 2011 (see earlier story).

At present, veterinarians from the Animal Resources Development (ARD) Department look after the injured animals from the Dooars forests. As there are no courses available in the state on wildlife medicine, one has to go to the wildlife department of the Assam Agricultural University in Guwahati or the Indian Veterinary Research Institute in Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh.

The Chief Conservator of Forests, North Bengal is reported to have said that the FD has to rely solely on the ARD Department for surgeons. Hence, it is planning to set up a hospital and would select forest guards for special training. The hospital would function like a rescue centre besides having several facilities for treatment like

enclosures for the injured animals, x-ray, ultra-sonography, scanning facilities and a pathology unit. Animals will be treated there and then rehabilitated and released back in the wild.

More than 50 elephants have been mowed down by moving trains in the Dooars in recent years. 16 bisons and six leopards have also been killed on the Dooars rail tracks during the same period.

Source: 'Dooars clinic plan for wild animals', [The Telegraph](#), 29/06/11.

Protected area status proposed for Apalchand forest

The Apalchand forest under Baikunthapur division in North Bengal has been proposed as a protected area, mainly for the protection of rhinos. The forest has been home to a pair of rhinos who moved here from the Gorumara National Park about two years ago. Forest Department (FD) officials have made several attempts to drive back the two rhinos to the national park located about 40 km away, but have been unsuccessful.

The Apalchand forest that is around 80 sq km in area, is close to the Teesta river and has good grassland areas. The area also supports other wildlife that includes leopards, elephants and deer. In winter several migratory birds are also seen on the banks of the Teesta in the Gajaldoba area.

Source: 'Rhino home tag on Apalchand', [The Telegraph](#), 13/06/11.

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

NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

IAVP urges wildlife veterinary service

The third South Zone Conference of the Indian Association of Veterinary Pathologists

(IAVP) has urged the government to launch a wildlife veterinary service in the country.

A two-day national seminar on 'Wild Life Pathology' and a workshop on 'Diagnostic Oncology', held in connection with the conference at the College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Pookode, in Wayanad district, in May, reviewed the alarming increase of wild animal diseases in various parts of the country.

The conference urged the veterinary pathologists to play a proactive role in the research on exposure of animals to chemical pesticides as the signs of toxic exposure could be first reflected in animals.

Source: 'Call for wildlife veterinary service', [The Hindu](#), 04/05/11.

NTCA committee on abandoned tiger cubs

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has constituted a three-member committee for examining issues related to abandoned and orphaned tiger cubs found in the wild. The move comes in order to explore the feasibility of their in-situ rearing and release in low tiger density habitats. The committee members are Prof P C Tyagi, Y V Jhala, both scientists with Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, and S P Yadav, Deputy Inspector General of NTCA as the member convener.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the committee will include country-wide assessment of the wild caught orphaned and abandoned cubs; identification of low density tiger reserves; to give recommendation for rehabilitation of such cubs vis-a-vis the NTCA guidelines; to prescribe 'minimum standards' for creation of tiger safaris; and to examine feasibility of ex-situ to in-situ linkage in the context of tiger. The committee will submit its report in 60 days.

Source: Vijay Pinjarkar, 'NTCA committee on orphaned tiger cubs', www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 05/07/11.

Tiger population to be monitored annually

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has planned to monitor tigers across the 41 Tiger Reserves in the country annually instead

of the four-year cycle tiger census. The annual monitoring system has been charted out through Phase IV of the National Tiger Estimation Programme. It will begin in November 2011.

The decision was taken at a workshop on 'Best Management Practices in Tiger Conservation' held in May. The methodology for the annual monitoring will be developed by the Wildlife Institute of India and the National Tiger Conservation Authority in consultation with other experts. Together they will decide on a uniform protocol, which will be carried out by the respective Chief Wildlife Wardens in tiger states.

The monitoring system will include use of camera traps at a density of 25 double-sized cameras for 100 sq km and a minimum trapping effort of 1,000 trap nights for 100 sq km. Prey population monitoring will be conducted simultaneously using distance sampling protocols.

Source: 'Tiger population to be monitored annually', [The Hindu](#), 16/05/11.

Contact: **Dr. Rajesh Gopal**, NTCA, Annexe No. 5, Bikaner House, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi-110011. Telefax: 2338 4428. E-mail: dirpt-r@nic.in

Nearly 450 tiger deaths in India in last 12 years: NTCA

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has said that 447 tigers were found dead between 1999 and March 2011 across the entire country. 197 of these were said to have been poached. The information was provided in response to an application filed by PTI under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The highest number of 36 tigers each were poached in 2001 and 2002, followed by 24 each in 1999 and in 2010. According to the reply 20 wild cats were killed in 2003, 17 in 2009, 10 in 2007, nine each in 2000 and 2008, and five fell prey to hunters in 2006.

Source: 'Nearly 200 tigers fell prey to poaching in last 12 years', [The Hindu](#), 05/06/11.

Nationwide online survey to find status of the Golden jackal

The Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) has launched a nationwide online survey to find out more about the 'golden jackal' and has invited wide participation to get an idea of the status of jackals in India. Titled 'Jackals: Past and Present', the survey was launched in the first week of June and will continue till the first week of August.

The results of the survey are to be made available regularly on the NCF website and on <http://www.facebook.com/ncfindia>

Contact: Email: jackal@conservation.in

SOUTH ASIA

Workshop on dugong conservation in South Asia

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve recently organized the first South Asia Sub-regional workshop on conservation and management of dugongs. The workshop that was held at Tuticorin in June 2011 was supported by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)- Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) program. Those participating included representatives from dugong range countries in South Asia, viz. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and India.

The workshop was aimed at enhancing regional cooperation for conservation of this species in the common waters, standardizing methods to survey dugongs and their habitats, i.e., the sea grass ecosystems, and work towards preparing a coordinated dugong conservation and management plan in South Asia.

The workshop discussed the need to:

1. Provide updates on the status of dugong populations and associated habitats
2. Introduce standardized survey methodologies that will identify key dugong habitats, estimate population numbers, and trends, and evaluate impacts including take from the population, habitat degradation and fisheries by catch

3. Train and build capacity on monitoring and surveying
4. Seek grounds for future collaboration in the fields of both research and management
5. Monitor dugong conservation in South Asian sub region

Source: Shekhar Kumar Niraj. Email dated 05/07/11

Contact: **Shekhar Kumar Niraj**, Director, Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve, Email: shekhar.niraj@gmail.com

BANGLADESH

Award for Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh

The Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB), was recently awarded Bangladesh's top honour, the 'Bangabandhu Award for Wildlife Conservation'. The award was given by the Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina and was received by Professor Dr Md Anwarul Islam, Chief Executive of the WTB. Established in 2003, WTB undertakes research, training and raising public awareness among others to protect the natural heritage of Bangladesh.

Source: Sheren Shreshtra, Email dated 07/06/11.

NEPAL

Genome-mapping of tigers in Nepal

A two-year Nepal Tiger Genome Project, funded by the US Agency for International Development, is to be executed by the Kathmandu-based Center for Molecular Dynamics Nepal (CMDN) in collaboration with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Virginia Tech University and the University of Idaho.

From September-October, teams will visit the four NPs, Parsa, Bardiya, Chitwan and Kailali districts and other areas where tigers are reported, to collect faeces. These will then be analysed at CMDN's laboratory to create a DNA database of Nepal's tiger population.

With wild animals from Nepal, including elephants and rhinos, straying into Indian forests and vice versa, the DNA bank

would help Nepal assess whether tigers found killed in the border areas were from Nepal or from India. It could lead to an assessment of favoured habitats as well as areas where poaching gangs are active and help boost security measures.

Source: 'Nepal to 'fingerprint' tigers for conservation', www.economicstimes.indiatimes.com, 01/07/11.

UPCOMING

International Conference on Indian Ornithology 2011

The International Conference on Indian Ornithology -2011 (ICIO) is being organized by the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) in Coimbatore from November 19-23, 2011. The conference is being supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) Govt. of India. The theme of the conference is 'Status of Indian Birds and their conservation'. The list of proposed symposia at the conference include threatened birds, common birds, birds and agriculture, means of conservation action, bird conservation in landscape perspective, bird taxonomy and distribution, bird migration, birds and climate change, policy, advocacy and bird conservation and bird surveys and field ornithology.

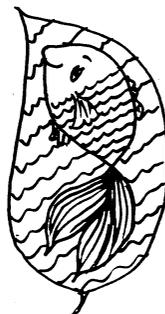
Contact: The Organising Secretary, ICIO, SACON, Anaikatty PO, Coimbatore – 641108, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 0422-2657101/131. Fax: 22657088. Email: icio@sacon.in; salimali@vsnl.com Web: www.sacon.in

11th Conference of the Parties to the CBD to be held in Hyderabad in October 2012

The 11th Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will be held in Hyderabad from October 1 to 19, 2012. Representatives from 194 countries including many heads of state are expected to participate.

Source: Y Mallikarjun. 'Hyderabad to host global biodiversity meet next year', [The Hindu](#), 07/06/11.

9th Indian Fisheries Forum



The 9th Indian Fisheries Forum (9IFF) will be held in Chennai from December 19-23, 2011. The forum is being organized by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Cochin.

The main theme of 9IFF is 'Renaissance in Fisheries: Outlook & Strategies' with the objectives to:

1. Provide a scientific platform to deliberate on research accomplishments and to identify the research and development needs of the sector
2. Prepare strategies for bringing in awareness on environmental issues and socio-economic benefits for better technology transfer
3. Understand modern techniques of resource management and sustainable utilization
4. Encourage young scientists to undertake need-based and resource specific research
5. Address the issues of resource constraints and species diversification for the expansion of fish production

The Technical Sessions at the forum include:

1. Fishery Resources, Recreational Fisheries and Sustainable Management
2. Aquaculture Production, Nutrition and Fish Health
3. Genetics, Breeding and Biotechnology
4. Environment Impacts and Aquatic Health
5. Harvest and Post-harvest Technology
6. Socio-economics, Marketing and Livelihood
7. Fisheries Trade, Policies and Governance
8. Climate Change and Natural Disaster Management

Contact: **Dr. G. Syda Rao**, Convener, 9IFF,
CMFRI, P.B. No. 1603, Ernakulam North
P.O., Kochi - 682 018, Kerala. Tel: 0484-
2394867, Fax : 2394909. Email:
contact9iff@gmail.com Web: www.9iff.org

Indian Forestry Congress 2011

The Indian Forestry Congress (IFC) 2011 is to be held from November 22 to 25 in New Delhi. The central theme of the congress is 'Forests in a changing world' and it seeks to bring together various stakeholders of forestry, including the researchers, planners, implementers and beneficiaries.

The main themes for the congress are Forests in Society, Forestry in an Expanding Economy, Expanding Frontiers of Forestry Sciences, Forest Biodiversity and Landscapes and Forests and Climate Change.

Contact: Sandeep Tripathi, IFC 2011, ICFRE, P.O.
New Forest, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Tel:
0135-2756497; Fax: 0135-2756497. Email:
Email: sandeeptrip@icfre.org. Web:
<http://ifc2011.icfre.gov.in/>

Student Conference on Conservation Science

The 2011 Student Conference on Conservation Science (SCCS) will be held at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore from September 14 to 16, 2011. Last year, more than 300 student participants attended SCCS-Bangalore, at which 100 students presented talks and posters. The presentations this year will be supplemented by workshops, discussions, and a session on Who's Who in Conservation.

The deadline for early registration for the conference is August 31.

The organizers of the conference are the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), IISc, the National Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)-India. The conference is funded by ADM Capital Foundation.

Contact: **Bharath Sundaram**, Conference
Administrator, SCCS-Bangalore.
Email: scs@scs-bng.org
Web: <http://www.scs-bng.org>

WHAT'S AVAILABLE

- Rangarajan Mahesh and K Sivaramakrishnan (Eds) (2011). *India's Environmental History: Vol. 1: From Ancient Times to the Colonial Period; Vol. 2: Colonialism, Modernity, and the Nation, Permanent Black, India*

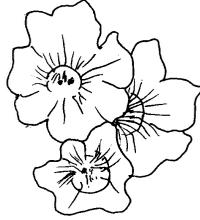
Vol. 1 contains essays that cover the period from prehistoric times to the middle of the nineteenth century, while Vol. 2 shows how colonial rule resulted in ecological change on a new scale altogether. Price: Rs. 1850, for the two volume set

- Kohli, Kanchi, Manju Menon, Vikal Samadariya & Sreetama Guptabhaya. (2011) *Pocketful of Forests: Legal debates around compensation and valuation of forest loss in India*, Kalpavriksh, India

The publication examines the steps that led to the setting up of the Compensatory Afforestation Planning and Management Authority (CAMPA) and the method of calculating the Net Present Value (NPV) of forests. The arguments that have taken place between the judiciary, the executive and the Parliament since 1999 are valuable material for those interested in matters of forest conservation and forest governance. They touch upon Centre-State relations, the political, administrative and technical notions of forests and the role of negotiation in policy-making.

This report was supported by WWF-India's Civil Society Collaboration for Environment Governance Initiative. Contributory amount: Rs. 200

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Seeking Support for the PA Update

The Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation Trust and the Foundation for Ecological Security have agreed to continue their support for the *PA Update* for 2011-12. This is now more than a decade of continued support and we are extremely grateful for their trust and belief in this newsletter.

While a good part of the needs will get covered we still need to raise substantial funds to keep the newsletter going. Any contribution, however small is welcome. There are various ways in which you can contribute - 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 on 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.

IN THE SUPREME COURT

PA related matters in the Supreme Court (SC) and the Central Empowered Committee in April and May 2011

- Road construction in the Valmiki Wildlife Sanctuary and Tiger Reserve, Bihar
- Diversion of forest land for a village road in the Balaram-Ambaji WLS, Gujarat
- Removal of a temple building from the Tungreshwar WLS, Maharashtra
-

'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 of India.

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

Member Secretary, Central Empowered Committee, II Floor, Chanakya Bhawan, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021 Tel: 011-26884921 /23 /26, Fax: 24101925

Denotification and diversion of PAs approved during the meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife held on April 25, 2011

- 1) Diversion of 7.281 ha of forest land for construction of Ropeway from Bhavnath Taleti to Ambaji Temple in Girnar WLS by Usha Breco Ltd., Ahmedabad Gujarat
- 2) Denotification of 14.12 ha area (10.98 for submergence and 3.14 ha for dam construction) from Radhanagari WLS for the Savarde minor irrigation project.
- 3) Diversion of 1500 ha of land from the Dampa Tiger Reserve, Mizoram for the construction of fending and patrol road along the Indo-Bangladesh border
- 4) Construction and upgradation of 12 existing rural roads under PMGSY in Bagdara WLS, Madhya Pradesh
- 5) Diversion of 0.205 ha of forest land from the Fambonglho WLS for construction of Sang Naya Bazar water supply scheme from Lalichok to Sang in East Sikkim

- 6) Diversion of 1.9718 ha of forest land from the Pangolakha WLS for construction of water supply scheme from Mithuney to Rhenock in South Sikkim
- 7) Diversion of 0.50 ha of forest land from Pangolakha WLS for construction of water supply scheme from Jelep la stream to Kupup in North Sikkim
- 8) Diversion of land for limestone mines located within 10 km boundary of the Son Gharial WLS as per the following break-up:
 - a) Badgawna Revenue, Dist. Sindhi – 68.91 ha (revenue land)
 - b) Majhigawan Extension, Dist. Siddhi – 54.825 ha (forest land)
 - c) Hinauti Extension, Dist. Satna – 258.864 ha (forest land)
- 9) Permission for the 330 MW Dholpur Gas based thermal power project state II to draw water from the National Chambal Gharial WLS, Dholpur, Rajasthan.
- 10) Permission for repairing and maintenance work on existing width of 7 kms national highway Road No. 221 (Jagdarpur-Sukma-Konta) in Kanger Valley National Park, Chattisgarh
- 11) Denotification of the entire area of the Trikuta WLS (31.4 sq. kms), Jammu & Kashmir
- 12) Diversion of 7.005 ha of the Bahu Conservation Reserve, Jammu & Kashmir in favour of the Revenue Department for leasing to the army.
- 13) Diversion of 21.132 ha of forest land from the Hazaribagh WLS, Jharkhand for widening of the existing lane of the NH-33 from Hazaribagh to Barhi
- 14) In-principle approval to the 13 proposals for construction/repair of roads passing through various sanctuaries in Madhya Pradesh
- 15) Repair of the Sakhya Sagar dam in Madhav NP, Madhya Pradesh
- 16) Installation of a ropeway in the Ralamandal WLS, Madhya Pradesh
- 17) Increasing the capacity of Baghwar (Sidhi) cement factory and construction of 2x60 MW captive power plant at a site 9 kms from the Son Gharial WLS, Madhya Pradesh
- 18) Upgradation of the existing two lane national highway, NH12A from ks. 185/600 to 192/400 in the Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh
- 19) Diversion of 25.976 ha of forest land for the upper Ghoghra reservoir located within 10 kms from the boundary of the Kheoni WLS, Madhya Pradesh
- 20) Laying of a 16 inch diameter underground gas pipeline from Kota to Bhilwara through the Chambal WLS, Rajasthan
- 21) Permission for the 33KV Anadara-Mount Abu electric transmission line passing through the Mt. Abu WLS, Rajasthan
- 22) Permission for the laying of an underground water supply pipeline of 2.1 meter diameter for the Chambal-Bhilwara project through the Jawaharsagar WLS, Rajasthan
- 23) Permission for the restoration of the existing earthen dam or the Orai irrigation project in Bassi WLS, Rajasthan
- 24) Permission for the proposed dam on the Parvan river for major irrigation and drinking water supply project just outside Shergarh WLS, Rajasthan
- 25) Diversion of 16.09 ha of forest land from the Keladevi WLS, Rajasthan for the Dohari Minor Irrigation project
- 26) Permission for the construction of Noval gravel road within Darrah WLS, Rajasthan
- 27) Road construction from Girab to Kubariya and Harsani to Girab in the Desert NP, Rajasthan
- 28) Laying of optical fibre cable in the Sawai Mansingh WLS, Rajasthan
- 29) Laying of a gas pipeline along the national highway passing through the Rajaji NP, Uttarakhand
- 30) Collection of minor minerals from river beds Song 1 & 2, in the Shivalik Elephant Reserve, Uttarakhand

Source: Minutes of the meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife held on 25th April 2011

SPECIAL SECTION
The Forest Rights Act, Protected Areas and Wildlife
Conservation

KARNATAKA

Workshop on community based conservation of BRT Sanctuary

A two-day meeting on community based conservation of the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Sanctuary was held recently in the sanctuary. The meeting was jointly organized by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), the Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Kendra (VGKK), Kalpavriksh and the Zilla Budakattu Girijana Abivruddhi Sangha - a federation of various adivasi groups. Nearly 100 Soliga adivasis from over 60 podus (Soliga settlements) in the sanctuary participated. Other NGOs and individuals were also present.

The three key issues discussed during the workshop were conservation priorities, livelihood security, and governance/management of the sanctuary. It was decided that the framework for a community-based conservation plan would be worked upon and fleshed out through gram sabha meetings in the next few months, and with inputs from conservation/social action groups. It was also noted that the vesting of community forest rights under FRA was crucial and it is hoped that these will be granted. Reportedly, claims for about half the podus in the sanctuary are in the last stage of approval.

This workshop gains significance for being the first of its kind in the country and also because the area has recently been notified a tiger reserve – a development opposed by the Soligas and several civil society organisations (*PA Update* Vol XVII, No. 2).

Source: Ashish Kothari. Email dated 18/07/11.

Contact: **Ashish Kothari**, Kalpavriksh. Email: ashishkothari@vsnl.com

ORISSA

Community Forest Rights in PAs

This is a brief update related to individual forest rights (IFRs) and community forest rights (CFRs) in the protected areas of Orissa:

- IFRs have been recognized in Badrama, Karlapat, Kotgarh, Sunabeda WLS and the Simlipal Tiger Reserve

- CFRs have been recognised in the Simlipal TR. There is however some mismatch between traditional access area identified by the community and the rights that have been recognized. Also the allotted titles are incorrect in many respects.

- CFRs have been verified in five villages in the Badrama WLS. These have been submitted to the SDLC which has already processed the claims.

- The process for the conversion of a forest village into revenue village has been initiated in Badrama WLS.

Contact: **Tushar Dash**, Vasundhara. Email: tushardash01@gmail.com

Relocation of villages continues in Simlipal TR in violation of the FRA

In March 2010 *Jenabil*, one of the core village of Simlipal TR, was relocated to a far off colony in *Ambadiha*. The process for claim and recognition of forest rights under FRA was in progress when the relocation happened and it was found out that the relocation was carried out without complying to the provisions of FRA and WLPA.

The process for the relocation of villages from the Simlipal Tiger Reserve is reported to be continuing in violation of the FRA. Palisabhas to discuss the relocation were held in two core villages, Jamunagarh and Kabataghai, on 25th June 2011. The meetings were attended by government officials and civil society organizations.

The proposal of relocation was strongly opposed by the villagers who demanded implementation of the FRA and recognition of their forest rights. The villagers noted that they have claimed rights which were yet to be verified. They also shared their past experience where they are harassed many times during the submission of application and they appealed for better cooperation. The

villagers also pointed out that they had visited the Ambadiha colony, where inhabitants of Jenabil village had been relocated in March 2010, and they'd seen that the promised facilities had not yet been provided to the relocated families.

A letter addressed to the State Level Monitoring Committee opposing the relocation process was submitted by the villagers to the BDO with the request for completing the recognition of rights process. Another village Bakua has also passed a resolution against the relocation process and informed the government that the relocation process is going on without recognition of rights under the Forest Rights Act.

Source: Tushar Dash. Email dated 18/7/11
Contact: **Tushar Dash**, Vasundhara. Email:
tushardash01@gmail.com

NATIONAL NEWS

Community Forest Rights under the provisions of the FRA and issues related to protected areas.

Vasundhara and Kalpavriksh in collaboration with Oxfam had organized a two day National Workshop on Management of Community Forest Resources (CFR) under the Forest Rights Act in March 2011. Following are issues and recommendations from the workshop related specifically to wildlife conservation and protected areas:

CFRs in the context of Protected Areas (PAs), Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWH) and Critical Tiger Habitats (CTH)

Key issues

- Violation of FRA continues in many protected areas particularly in tiger reserves where the FRA process is being stalled, or relocations have either taken place or are in process. Most relocation is in violation of the provisions of the FRA and Wild Life Protection Act (WLPA), e.g. taking place without rights first having been established, or without establishing irreversible damage and lack of co-existence options. Cases of violations are reported from Achanakmar in Chhattisgarh, Simlipal in Orissa, Sariska in Rajasthan, Melghat in Maharashtra, and so on.
- Critical Wildlife Habitats process has not gone very far (with not a single CWH having been notified), and in many places is taking place

without the other provisions of the FRA having been implemented.

Recommendations

- There is a need to redefine what inviolate areas are, in the context of CWHs; they should not be considered necessarily human-free, but rather free of activities that are in violation of conservation objectives of the area. Inviolate areas should be identified with gram sabha and independent wildlife scientists and be decided through a public consultation processes.
- New guidelines for CWH should be formulated through a completely participatory process, and taking on board the inputs given by civil society organizations such as the proposed guidelines by the Future of Conservation network.
- Studies which need to be carried out before the declaration of CWH should have expertise of all involved including villagers, with a combination of modern and traditional knowledge.
- Wherever communities have engaged with a landscape for long, sacred sites, oral history, traditional knowledge and practices etc, can serve as evidence of co-existence which the gram sabha can provide to the expert committee while declaring a CWH/ CTH.
- Co-existence must always be considered as an option in CWHs, rather than assume that relocation is always necessary. Along with the options for relocation, communities must be given the option (as per the FRA) of being able to stay on within the protected area with relevant rights and responsibilities, and mutually agreed modification of rights where necessary.
- Governance and management of protected area, including formulation of management plans, implementation of activities, monitoring, and so on, should be done jointly by the FD and gram sabhas that have obtained CFR or other rights. For this, appropriate changes needs to be brought in the WLPA.

For more details and the entire report of the workshop write to Tushar Dash, Vasundhara; Email: tushardash01@gmail.com; or Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh, Email: ashishkothari@vsnl.com

PERSPECTIVE

Conservation issues are not easy to grasp!

As I registered for the Conservation Leadership Program by Tiger Watch at Ranthambore, I was constantly wondering what I would be taking back from the course considering that my day job is that of a software engineer. Also how could the field of wildlife conservation benefit from what I learn?

As I met the other twenty odd participants, I realized that they were from very different fields, just like me; very few, in fact were actively working in the field of conservation. Over the course of the next five days we discussed a diverse range of topics– the conservation value of zoos, viability of relocation of lions from Gujarat to Madhya Pradesh or the possibility of introduction of the cheetah, whether conservation should make the human inhabitants of the forests stakeholders or should exile (read rehabilitate) them to some other place, is it right to look at tourism as an anathema to conservation or should we treat the industry as an enablers – and many more.

One issue that always courts controversy and initiates debate is that of tourism and conservation. Having been on a few jungle safaris and nature treks, and having read some articles attacking tourism, I was in a state of confusion. The course definitely helped me understand these issues better.

It is clear to me that any relationship between tourism and conservation is, if at all, very remote. Nothing supports this fact better than the disappearance of the Tigers from

Sariska while tourism was in full flow. The case is cemented when you see scores of jeeps surrounding a tiger, and tourists in their brightest clothes chatting away, oblivious of the forest. In the Andamans, I hear, tourism has taken an altogether different meaning. Despite rules to the contrary, some tourists make contacts with the tribal population, “exposing” them to a world they are not used to. Having said all this, I also believe that there is no reason why well meaning nature lovers should be denied the joy of seeing a forest.

What we require is honesty of intent from all stakeholders – tour operators, tourists, the forest department and conservationists. None of us can claim to truly value our natural bounty if we forget it the moment we come out of the park gates. As tourists it is our duty to ensure that we do not just follow the general guidelines but also exhibit a curiosity towards the environment. We should respect the rights of all that constitutes wildlife and environment and spread awareness. Conservation is important, but it cannot be for the sake of tourism.

- **Aishwarya Mishra** is a software engineer who's getting increasingly interested in wildlife and conservation issues.

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