

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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EDITORIAL

The business of reports

One field of activity in wildlife research that is flourishing is the business of producing reports. Researchers, NGOs, the government - are all always busy and working hard towards this end. This issue of the *PA Update* (see Pg 18) has a brief list of reports on wildlife related issues that have been released in the last few weeks. There is a comprehensive report on human-elephant conflict in the country; a set of guidelines on management of human-leopard conflict; another on the status of the extremely threatened Lesser Florican; and one on the evergreen subject of tiger numbers in India.

That these and most other reports are the outcome of hard work, sincere effort and of commitment to find solutions to vexing problems is undeniable. That they are welcome and valuable is also something most will agree to. But the question, and this is what most researchers always dread, is related to what use these reports are being put to. Are they being used at all? Are they having impact? How does one evaluate the reach and influence of an outcome that so much time, money and energy has gone into? These are questions that have no easy answers and often there is disappointment and frustration that the reports get into the shelves of various institutions, particularly the government, and gather dust.

Comparing the reports of two government constituted task forces, one on the tiger and the recent one on the elephant, does throw light on what can actually happen. Many of the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force were implemented with considerable urgency and the National Tiger Conservation Authority was constituted with a renewed mandate and greater political commitment. Additional resources were made available and even a new method for tiger census was put in place. One may not agree with some of the policies or the way others have been implemented but there is no denial that things have moved on the ground.

The same can certainly not be said of the recommendations of the Elephant Task Force. Eight months have passed since it was agreed that

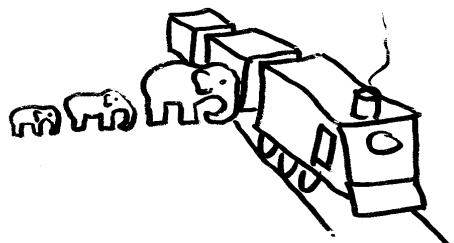
the elephant would be the National Heritage animal and yet nothing is to be heard of the National Elephant Conservation Authority (NECA). The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has in fact decided against the constitution of the NECA. Some commentators have argued that the interests of the mining and industrial sectors might be playing a key role because if the NECA is formed and the recommendations are implemented, large land and forest areas will become unavailable for extraction. If this is indeed true, it points to a rather sorry state of affairs - one that can only invoke hopelessness.

If an animal like the elephant can be let down in this manner what hope might be there for the floricans, the leopards and the many other forms of less glamorous wildlife. What then is the use of all this research and towards what end are the recommendations sought and many reports commissioned? Wildlife surely does not have time on its side and the government certainly needs to show more sincerity and commitment than this.

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ASSAM

Train-elephant collision averted in Deepor Beel



Quick thinking and prompt action by members of the joint patrolling team deployed to prevent train-elephant collisions along the critical Deepor Beel railway stretch near Guwahati, recently averted an accident saving a herd of about 15 wild elephants.

Initiated in November 2008, the patrolling along railway tracks in Assam has successfully prevented more than 80 accidents

till date. It is jointly implemented by the Assam Forest Department (FD), the Northeast Frontier Railways and Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) with support from the UK-based charity Elephant Family (EF), under the Train Hits Mitigation Project. 23 accident prone sections in eight forest divisions in Assam have been identified and patrolling is now carried out in seven of these 23 sites.

Each joint patrolling team comprises six members, two each supported by the FD, the Railways and WTI-EF. The teams walk along the tracks at night, keeping watch for elephants among other animals. On sighting, the information is conveyed to the drivers of approaching trains through the nearby railway control rooms. The alerted drivers of the approaching trains reduce their speed and warn the animals of their arrival by sounding the whistle.

Elephants from Rani-Garbhanga Reserve Forest move to the Deepor Beel WLS for water, crossing the track between Azara and Kamakhya Railway Stations. According to forest officials the efforts of the patrolling team have ensured that elephant mortality in this stretch has been reduced to zero in the last one year, with 35 potential accidents averted.

Assam is among the states with the highest elephant mortality due to train hits, with about 65 elephants killed in train accidents since 1987. The frequency of accidents saw a steep increase in the late 1990s and early 2000.

(Also see PA Updates [Vol. XVI, No. 4](#); [Vol. XIV, No. 3](#) and [Vol. XIII, No. 5](#))

Source: 'Train-elephant collision averted in Deepor Beel, Assam',

www.wildlifetrustofindia.org, 04/05/11.

Contact: DFO, Assam State Zoo Division, I/c Deepor Beel WLS R.G. Baruah Road, Guwahati - 781 024, Assam. Tel: 0361-261363(O), 263331(R).

Commercial fishing threat to Missamari beel

Large-scale commercial fishing has been identified as a serious threat to the Missamari beel and adjoining wetlands at Jhanjimukh - a riverine area at the confluence of the Jhanji river in Jorhat district. Missamari, an Important Bird Area (IBA) is the largest of these beels with an area of around 780 hectares.

There are six major beels in the Missamari complex - Missamari, Chengamari, Laojan, Digholi, Kaoimari and Rupohitoli and around 228 avian species have been reported here. This area lies within the Teok revenue circle.

According to the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), sustainable fishing by locals is not a very serious problem but the Missamari beel is leased for commercial fishing. Gradual reclamation of the fringe areas of the beels for seasonal cultivation as well as fish farming is also steadily reducing the area of the wetlands.

The BNHS, together with its local partner Keteknee, is reported to be working out a strategy to involve the local populace in the conservation efforts for Missamari. They have submitted a proposal to the Deputy Commissioner, Jorhat to develop the wetland complex as a community conservation area.

Source: Sivasish Thakur, 'Fishing affecting Jhanjimukh wetlands', [The Assam Tribune](#), 15/03/11.

Contact: Dr. Asad Rahmani, Director BNHS, Hornbill House, Shahid Bhagat Singh Marg, Mumbai 400 023 Maharashtra. Tel: 022-2821811. Fax: 2837615. Email: bnhs@bom3.vsnl.net.in

Elephants' count decreases in Kaziranga

According to the 2011 elephant census, there are 1165 elephants in the Kaziranga National Park. This is 128 elephants less than those counted in the 2008 census. Of 1165 elephants counted, 297 were male, 460 were female and 226 are calves. Sexes of another 182 elephants could not be identified. The census was conducted over a week-long exercise starting February 20 and the park was divided into 81 parts for the purpose.

Reduction in the number of animals within the park has been attributed to natural deaths, poaching and the fact that the animals often move to adjacent forests in search of food.

Source: Slump in Kaziranga jumbo count: Census, www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com 08/03/11.

Contact: **Director**, Kaziranga NP, PO Bokakhat, Dist. Golaghat – 785612, Assam. Tel: 03776-268095(O), 268086(R). Email: unicornis@sancharnet.in

Three forest staff killed in animal attacks in Kaziranga NP since January

Three foresters have been killed in animal attacks in Kaziranga National Park (NP), since the last week of January 2011. The most recent incident occurred in the first week of April near the Kartik forest camp under Kohora forest range. Bharat Das, a B-category forest guard died on the spot when a rhino attacked him. He received critical injuries on the head, legs and chest leading to his death. On February 6, a forest guard had been attacked and killed by a rhino at the Mohkhuti forest camp in the Agoratoli range. The deceased was identified as Nitul Dutta, a home guard who had been temporarily engaged as a forest guard for wildlife duty.

The first of the three incidents occurred on January 23, when a forest guard was killed in an attack by a wild buffalo near the Amkathoni forest camp under Bagori forest range.

Source: 'Another forest guard killed in Kaziranga rhino attack', www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com 08/04/11.

Genetic assessment of tigers at Manas TR

The Assam Government has asked the wildlife NGO, Aaranyak, to carry out a genetic assessment of the tiger population in the Manas Tiger Reserve (TR). This follows the success of the NGO researchers in a similar exercise carried out in the Buxa TR in North Bengal.

The authorities at Buxa TR had asked Aaranyak to carry out a genetic assessment of the tiger population as the NGO has its own wildlife genetics laboratory. There are at present 15 tigers in Buxa of which three are male and nine female. The gender of the remaining three could not be ascertained following the methodology used for the study. The Buxa study had shown that DNA-



based techniques of tiger identification were a practical and low cost option to estimate the population of the big cat and for the long-term monitoring of this species in the protected areas of the country. Unlike camera trapping, where huge costs and lot of logistics are involved, this method is cheaper, as faecal samples are easy to collect.

Following the request of the Manas TR authorities, faecal samples have been collected from Bansbari and part of Panbari range. Manas is estimated to have a tiger population ranging from 15 to 18 animals.

It is relevant in this context that the National Tiger Conservation Authority has been talking to experts in genetics to standardize a uniform protocol for field data collection and analysis.

Source: Roopak Goswami, 'DNA study of Manas tigers', The Telegraph, 22/03/11.

Contact: **Director**, Manas NP, PO Barpeta Rd. Dist. Barpeta – 781315, Assam. Tel: 03666 – 261413. Fax: 232253 / 260253 **Aaranyak**, Samanwoy Path (Survey), PO Beltola, Guwahati – 781028, Assam. Tel: 0361-636768 / 266087. Fax: 266087. **Chief Wildlife Warden** – Assam, Rehabari, Guwahati – 781008, Assam. Tel: 0361-2566064. Fax: 2547386.

GUJARAT

First satellite tagging of Whale shark in Gujarat

In a joint venture involving the Gujarat Forest Department (FD) and the Wildlife Trust of India, a team of researchers under the Whale Shark Conservation Project has installed, for the first time, a satellite tag on a whale shark. Satellite tagging is the latest development in the Whale Shark Conservation Project that had earlier initiated photo-identification, genetic analysis and visual tagging of whale sharks in India.

This individual was caught offshore at Sutrapada. As with other such individuals in the past, the local fishermen along with the project team freed the whale shark. There

have been several rescues in the past, but this case was favourable for tagging as the tail was suitably exposed and the tag could be deployed efficiently and swiftly.

The tag was attached to the caudal fin of the animal. The tag is the marine equivalent of a satellite collar with the data collected being transmitted to the satellite every time the individual surfaces. This tag is expected to last for about six months and give information related to movement of the fish, its preference of water temperature, diurnal and nocturnal activities as well as swimming patterns between different layers of water.

The first set of data received indicated that the 6.5 metre long male had reached the coast of Maharashtra.

Source: 'First whale shark satellite-tagged in India', <http://www.sify.com/news/first-whale-shark-satellite-tagged-in-india-news-national-ldqvhcefih.html> 16/03/11.

Maldharis petition government opposing their relocation from Gir

The Maldhari community has written to Union Minister for Forests and Environment, Mr. Jairam Ramesh, requesting that they should not be moved out of the Gir sanctuary. They have said that the authorities should not consider them enemies of the big cat.

The community has sent a memorandum to the minister in the month of February, through a non-government organisation, Setu, opposing the rehabilitation. Since 1972, the government has officially resettled 952 Maldhari families and many other inhabitants from the Gir forests. It is now being noted that these relocated families have suffered badly as they were deprived of basic requirements like drinking and irrigation water, electricity, and school and transportation facilities. The memorandum said that they did not even get the benefit of the Rojgar Yojana and other government welfare schemes.

They also said that the eight acres of land, which they got in compensation, put them in the category of big farmers and disqualified them from government schemes and thus made them poorer. A report by Gujarat government's directorate of evaluation on the rehabilitation programme of Gir Maldharis scheme too has

acknowledged that, "It has not been possible to achieve the objective of bringing the socio-economic uplift of the Gir Maldharis. On the contrary, the net income earned by the shifted families in 1986-87 is significantly less than the net income earned by families still inside, 10 years after rehabilitation."

The Maldharis have also urged the minister to understand that the lion has been part of their lives and culture and their survival is mutually interlinked. A similar appeal had been sent to the President, Smt Pratibha Patil in October 2009 (*PA Update Vol. XV, No. 6*).

Source: 'Maldharis want to live close to lions', www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 02/02/11.

A DECADE AGO
From the Archives
Protected Area Update 30 & 31,
June 2001

Lion census in Gir

The once-in-five-years census of lions in the Gir National Park was to be held in the middle of the month of May. The count had to be suspended last year following heavy unseasonal rains just before the census operations began (*PA Update 26*). The decision to use buffalo calves as live bait also had to be scrapped following protests from various quarters and a public interest litigation in the Gujarat High Court (*PA Update 25*).

Live bait will not be used this year as well, and forest officials have expressed concerns that the count will not be as accurate as before. The authorities will now use the 'beat system', under which local officials keep track of the lions in areas assigned to them. The help of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has been sought for the purpose.

The last lion count held in 1995 had put the lion population at 304 while the present population is estimated to be between 315 and 320.

Source: Pradeep Mallik, Count lions by 'beating' not 'baiting' in Gujarat', *India Abroad News Service*, 23/04/2001.
"Beat' to replace bait in lion census', *The Times of India*, 24/04/2001.

Mobile van to deal with human-animal conflicts around Gir

The Gujarat Forest Department (FD) is introducing a mobile van to deal with issues of human-wildlife conflict being reported from the periphery of the Gir forests. It will move around in the villages along the boundary and help in the conservation of the big cats, while understanding the problems of the locals and issues related to the local beat guard and the FD. The van will also have trackers who will help in case of emergency and rescue.

The van will have two foresters, one guard and two trackers. The team, apart from talking to the sarpanch and to local residents, will also keep an eye on the movement of the lions and leopards. The team will survey the number and location of the lions in the peripheral areas and look for reasons when a new pride of lions shifts into the particular area. The team will also tell villagers what they should do and what they should not, if they spot a lion in their fields.

The FD is also looking forward to create a local network to ensure that it is the first to receive information in the case of any major event. If the team gets a complaint of some serious conflicts between the big cats and the people, they would call a rescue team and shift the lion to the sanctuary.

The team would maintain a register of their visits to the villages and will also be accompanied by the local staff from the area. It would also take down the details of the killing of domestic animals and figure out if compensation was paid in all such cases. Pending cases would be brought to the notice of the higher officials and would be compensated immediately.

Based on the feedback and reports from this team, the FD will deploy two more such vans before the beginning of the monsoon.

Source: Himanshu Kaushik, 'Mobile van to keep an eye on man-lion conflicts in Gir',
<http://www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com>,
26/03/11.

Contact: **CF (Wildlife)** Junagadh, Sardar Bag,
Junagadh - 362001, Gujarat. Tel: 0285
2631678 Fax: 2631211. Email:
cwfwildlife_ad1@sancharnet.in

HARYANA

Master-plan for Sultanpur NP

The Gurgaon district administration has directed officials to prepare a zonal master-plan for an eco-sensitive zone in the five-km radius of the Sultanpur National Park as per the guidelines of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF).

A monitoring committee, with a maximum of 10 members, would be constituted to oversee compliance with the provisions of the notification. The committee might have as members, representatives from the MoEF, from an NGO working in the field of environment, the regional officer of the Haryana Pollution Control Board and a senior town planner. An action-taken report would be submitted to the MoEF every year. The senior town planner has been directed to deploy the enforcement wing to ensure that no un-authorised construction takes place in the prohibited area.

The plan would demarcate all existing and proposed urban settlements, village settlements, types and kinds of forests, agricultural areas, fertile lands, green areas, horticultural areas, orchards, lakes and other water bodies. It would exempt all canals and drainage works.

Mining and crushing activity would not be allowed in a one-km radius from the boundary of the park, while construction will be allowed only 300 m beyond the boundary. Only a tubewell chamber of dimension not more than 1,000 cubic inches will be permitted. Ground water extraction too would be permitted only for bonafide agriculture and domestic consumption of the occupier of the plot and no sale would be permitted. Similarly, no untreated or industrial affluent would be permitted to be discharged into any water body within the eco-sensitive zone. Laying of new high-tension transmission wires would also not be allowed within a distance of 500 metres from the park, while the felling of trees on Forest and Revenue land would be subject to the approved management plan by the Central government. (Also see PA Update Vol. [XV, No. 2](#) & [Vol. XII, No. 5](#))

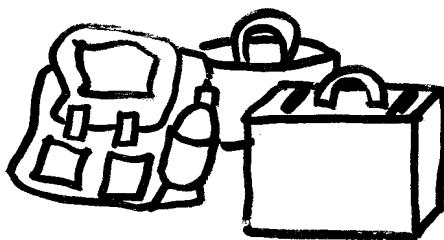
Source: Tuhin Dutta, 'Gurgaon charts masterplan to protect Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary',
<http://www.indianexpress.com> 12/04/11.

Contact: **Divisional Inspector, Wildlife**, Sultanpur National Park, Dist. Gurgaon., Haryana.
Tel: 0124 – 26322057

Chief Wildlife Warden, Haryana, C-18, Forests Complex, Sector-6, Panchkula – 134109, Haryana. Tel: 0172-2561224/2560118. Email:
cplg@yahoo.com

JAMMU & KASHMIR

Two day workshop on 'Practicing Responsible Tourism'



The World Wide Fund for Nature – India (WWF-India) and the Ecotourism Society of India (ESOI) organised a two-day training workshop on the theme of 'Practising Responsible Tourism' on April 6 and 7, in Jammu. The workshop was supported by the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department and the Pacific Asia Travel Association –India (PATA).

The workshop was attended by tour operators, hoteliers and other service providers, environmentalists, government officials from the departments of tourism and environment, students and various NGOs. It was aimed at helping participants understand the importance of safeguarding the ecosystem and raising awareness on sustainable tourism practices in the high altitude Himalayan region.

In relation to the high altitude Himalayan region, the panel of technical experts spoke on topics like solid waste management, eco-friendly architecture, community-based home stays in Ladakh, viable alternatives to conventional energy, checks and balances in ecotourism, the policy and legal framework of ecotourism in India, certification, and communication with tourists.

Present on the occasion were the Chief

Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Omar Abdullah; Mr. Nawang Rigzin Jora, Minister for Tourism & Culture; Mr. Robin Singh Mehta, Director Tourism, Jammu, Government of Jammu & Kashmir; and Mr. Sujit Banerjee, Former Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; Mr. Ravi Singh, Secretary General & CEO, WWF-India; Mr. Mandip Singh Soin, President ESOI; and Mr. Atal Dulloo, IAS, Commissioner and Secretary, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Source: Helping the Indian tourism industry go green', <http://www.wwfindia.org>, 08/04/11

JHARKHAND

MoEF issues draft notification for Dalma Eco-Sensitive Zone

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) recently issued a draft notification for the Dalma Eco-Sensitive Zone (DESZ) that will include the Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary and an area within five kms of the sanctuary boundary.

A Zonal Master Plan for the DESZ is to be prepared by the state government within a year from the date of the notification which was issued in March 2011. A monitoring committee for the ESZ has also been formed as per the draft notification.

Source: 'Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary as Eco-sensitive Zone, Draft Notification.' www.moef.nic.in

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Dalma WLS Wildlife Division, Ranchi, Jharkhand.

KARNATAKA

Petitioner seeks stay on Banerghatta night safari in Supreme Court

A petitioner has sought a stay in the Supreme Court on the Karnataka Government's proposal to introduce a night safari in the Banerghatta National Park (NP). Hearing a special leave petition (SLP) by B R Deepak, a

Bangalore-based advocate, a division bench of Justices R V Ravindran and A K Patnaik ordered the issue of notices to all the respondents - the chief secretary of Karnataka; the Union Ministry for Environment and Forests (MoEF); the State Forest Department, Central Zoo Authority of India (CZAI); Zoo Authority of Karnataka; and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Wildlife.

In 2010, the High Court division bench of Justices Manjula Chellur and B S Patil had given a nod to the night safari stating that it could not interfere in the state's decision for such a safari.

In the Supreme Court, the petitioner contended that the proposed night safari was a violation of provisions of the Forest Conservation Act and the Wildlife Protection Act. The petitioner noted that the government had obtained permission from CZAI, but it is not a permitting authority.

The bench expressed its surprise by asking why the High Court did not consider the case even when the petitioner had the documents. The SC, however, said it was not necessary to issue a stay as the proposed work had not commenced.

The site chosen for the night safari is part of the Ragihalli reserve forest which has been declared an elephant corridor and is also mentioned in the recent Elephant Task Force report 'Gajah'.

(Also see PA Updates [Vol. XVI, Nos. 4 & 2](#))

Source: Subhash Chandra NS. 'BNP night safari issue goes to SC', *Deccan Herald*, 20/04/11.

Contact: DCF, Bannerghatta NP, Bannerghatta, Dist. Bangalore – 560083, Karnataka. Tel: 080-28429366. Fax: 28428540. Email: bnpblr@gmail.com

Public hearing held to declare Konchavaram Wildlife Sanctuary

A public hearing to declare the forests of Konchavaram as a wildlife sanctuary (WLS) was held in April. The hearing was chaired by Anil Kumble, vice-chairman of the Karnataka State Board for Wildlife; senior officials of the Forest Department; Sunil Valyapur, chairman of the High-powered Committee for Implementation of the recommendations of Nanjundappa Committee;

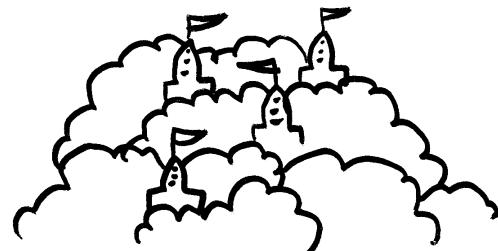
and Amarnath Patil, MLA and chairman of the Hyderabad Karnataka Area Development Board.

While the Konchavaram forests have been recognised as ecologically sensitive and economically important, lack of protection meant that they were being systematically denuded by timber smugglers and poachers from both within the state and from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh.

If declared a sanctuary, Konchavaram would be the 23rd WLS in Karnataka and the first in the entire Hyderabad- Karnataka region.

Source: 'Tag will protect flora and fauna of Konchavaram', www.hindu.com, 14/04/11.

Small temples mushrooming in Bandipur, Nagarhole NPs



Increasing number of small temples are said to mushrooming in the Bandipur and Nagarhole National Parks (NP) that are already under threat of encroachment from villas, resorts and housing layouts. It has also been alleged that the illegal structures have been trying to exploit religious sentiments to pursue illegal activities.

Temples that have sprouted across the Nagarhole wildlife zone include a Maramma temple in Hosur on the Hunsur-Gonikoppa Road in the Anechowkur wildlife zone and a Chowdamma temple in the Handigere reserve forest area. A Mastyamma temple has also come up on the Mysore-Manandawadi Road near the wildlife zone in D B Kuppe. A few more temples near Hosur bus station, Kadegadde Hadi and an Ayyappa temple at Bavalı on the Mysore-Manandawadi Road are the new structures in the block.

A Madeshwara temple in Beladakuppe in the Hediyalā wildlife zone, H

D Kote; a Bommadevara temple in Moliyur; a Marigudi temple in Alaganji, Karnegala; a Basaveshwara temple in the Begur reserve forest area; and a shrine dedicated to Gundre Maramma in the Gundre wildlife zone are some of the structures built recently in the Bandipur NP.

Residents from nearby villages gather at the temples to sacrifice animals, chop trees for firewood to cook food and dump leftovers and meat waste. The wild animals attracted to the leftovers, if not killed by the speeding vehicles on the highway, are easy prey for poachers. It has been pointed out that these temples have encouraged construction activities in the vicinity of the NPs, and gambling and intrusion into forest areas are happening on the pretext of religious events.

Though environmental activists have brought this issue to the notice of the FD, no action is reported to have been taken so far.

Source: Rajesh Srivana, 'Temples, new threat to State forests', www.deccanherald.com, 17/03/11.

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

KERALA

Proposal to declare Kattampally a Ramsar wetland

The Kannur district panchayat has proposed to the Kerala state government to include Kattampally in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. The 3,000 acres of wetland in Kattampally, spread over eight panchayats, has already been recognised as an Important Bird Area (IBA). If selected, it will become the fourth wetland area in the state - after Vembanad Lake, Ashtamudi and Sasthamkotta - to be included in the Ramsar list.

The Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment is the responsible body in the state for the project. The proposal will be finally submitted to the Ramsar Convention by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Source: Sam Paul A. 'Kattampally wetland to find place in Ramsar list', <http://www.expressbuzz.com>, 14/03/11.

Prolonged summer rain reduces wildfires in Idukki WLS

Prolonged summer rains have considerably reduced the chances of wildfires in the Idukki Wild Life Sanctuary (WLS) that occur during the peak summer season resulting in large loss of forests. Only two instances of minor wildfires have been reported so far this summer.

The grasslands in the Idukki WLS are most prone to wildfires in the district. Summer rain has helped grow a complete green cover in the grasslands, something that has not been seen in the recent past.

Source: 'Rain prevents wildfires in sanctuary', www.hindu.com, 28/04/11.

Contact: **Wild Life Warden**, Idukki Wildlife Division, Painavu P.O. Idukki – 685603, Kerala. Tel: 0486- 2232271

E-mail: ww-idukki@forest.kerala.gov.in

MADHYA PRADESH

Environment minister 'No' to rail and river linking projects for fear of impact on Panna Tiger Reserve

The Union Environment Minister, Jairam Ramesh, recently said that the Lalitpur-Singrauli rail link and the Ken-Betwa river linking project would not be cleared as they would have a negative impact on the Panna Tiger Reserve. This position has drawn criticism and protests from the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), the youth wing of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) who handed him a memorandum asking him not to oppose the river linking project.

The BJYM has also protested against his announcement of demarcating a buffer zone around the Panna. The locals, too, are opposing the proposed buffer zone fearing that it will displace them.

Source: 'Panna's BJYM activists protest as Ramesh disapproves local', www.ibnlive.in, 17/04/11.

Fourth tiger shifted to Panna TR

A six-year old tigress from Kanha Tiger Reserve (TR) was translocated to Panna TR in the month of March as a part of the ongoing efforts to revive the tiger population there. It has been radio-collared for the purpose of monitoring. With this, the number of translocated tigresses to this reserve has increased to three.

This tigress had been raised in an enclosure in Kanha as her mother had died shortly after delivering the cub. Panna TR's Field Director has informed that for the first time in the country a tigress has been put in the wild directly; usually animals are first kept in an enclosure before shifting them to the wilderness.

Last year, two tigresses and a tiger were shifted to Panna. A tigress from Bandhavgarh TR was brought in March 2009 and another one was translocated from Kanha in the same month. (Also see *PA Updates Vol. XV, Nos. 4, 1*)

Source: 'Panna reserve gets another tigress', www.indianexpress.com 28/03/11.

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

MAHARASHTRA

Forest union threatens to shut down tiger reserves

In a development in the last week of April, the Maharashtra Forest Guards, Forest Employees and Forest Workers' Sanghatana (MFGFEFWS) threatened to close down the Pench, Tadoba-Andhari and Melghat tiger reserves if wages of van majoors (forest workers) were not paid immediately. It was reported that over 1,500 of these forest workers in the three tiger reserves had not been paid wages for since December. A similar problem had occurred in the past as well (*PA Update Vol. XV, No. 5*).

The Sanghatana noted that forest workers were the backbone of any protected area as they man the protection huts deep inside tiger reserves and conduct patrolling. Their neglect had become

a chronic problem and forest officials had failed to address it. The Sanghatana threatened to prevent entry of tourists into the three tiger reserves if the dues were not settled within eight days.

According to wildlife and forest officials the problem had arisen because the tiger reserves did not receive the second installment under the centrally sponsored scheme (CSS). The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is reported to have released Rs 41.39 lakh for TATR; Rs 13 lakh for Pench and Rs 61.35 lakh for Melghat towards second installment only on March 31, and this meant the money could not be spent as it was the last day of the financial year. The officials said that they would have to keep the funds in abeyance unless the Centre revalidated the payment.

The apathy of the state government also reportedly plays its own rule. While the financial year begins in April and the MoEF releases its share under the CSS in September, the state government issues a government resolution (GR) to release this money only in January. This results in the delayed submission of the utilisation certificates (UCs) for the first installment leading to the delayed release of the 2nd installment by the MoEF.

It is not clear how the stand-off was resolved and when, if at all, the wages were paid to the forest workers.

Source: 'Forest union threatens to shut tiger reserves', www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 26/04/11

High Court not against windmills in and around Koyna WLS

The Bombay High Court has noted that windmills cannot be displaced from within and around the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) as they are important for power generation. The observation was made by a division bench of justices Ranjana Desai and RJ Ketkar while hearing a PIL seeking the protection and preservation of the sanctuary.

Though the judges maintained that the corridor had to remain free of encroachments, the windmills are necessary

for employment generation and hence, cannot be displaced. They also remarked that a balance between environmental concerns and the right of the people to earn their livelihood has to be found.

The Additional government pleader also submitted a report of the state chief secretary. The state government has taken a position of supporting the windmills in the area for promoting power and employment generation. It noted that the windmills contribute about 140 million units of power to the state grid, that the energy generated was one of the cleanest energies and the land occupied for the windmills was not very large. It also pointed to the financial relief that has been provided by windmills to the people/villages who gave up lands for setting them up.

The petitioner also drew the court's attention to a newspaper advertisement of housing projects in the New Mahabaleshwar area. The judges subsequently directed the state to submit a report on the exact status of the New Mahabaleshwar project.

Source: 'Windmills can't be displaced: Bombay high court', www.dnaindia.com, 15/04/11.

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

Reshuffle at the top of the Maharashtra FD

A major shuffle has happened at the top of the Maharashtra Forest Department (FD). Additional PCCF, SK Khetarpal has been named as the new PCCF (Wildlife). The post was lying vacant after DC Pant retired on March 31. Khetarpal has been holding the additional charge since then.

Prakash Thosre, who was APCCF (Human Resource & Management) at Nagpur, has been promoted as PCCF (Production & Management). Tasneem Ahmed, who was CCF- Protection at Nagpur, has been promoted as PCCF & Director General of Social Forestry, Pune.

The government had promoted eight 1978 and some 1979 batch IFS officials as APCCF. Those CCFs who have been promoted include Nandkishore, Alinda Chandra (on deputation at Centre), VK Mohan, Krishna Mohan, Sarvesh Kumar, AK Saxena, Ashok Sharma and Sarjan Bhagat. Apart from the IFS cadre posts, it has been agreed to create ex-cadre posts of two PCCFs, 11 APCCFs, 25 CCFs, 5 CFs.

Source: Vijay Pinjarkar. 'Prodded by Ramesh, Maharashtra creates two more posts of PCCF', Times News Network, 20/04/11.

Naxals trying to make inroads into Tadoba Andhari TR

A senior Naxal cadre has allegedly corroborated the police's suspicion that Naxals are trying to constitute a 'dalam' (military unit) for villages in and around the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR). A state committee (CPI-Maoist) member and secretary of Chandrapur Area Committee was arrested along with his wife in the Gondia district a day before Home Minister P Chidambaram's visit to Gadchiroli in December last year.

He is reported to have admitted that a survey was done in TATR and surrounding villages in the recent past with the intention to form a dalam. A series of raids followed the couple's arrests in places such as Mul and Sindewahi, situated near the tiger reserve. Some hand-written material, most of it survey reports, was seized. One of the reports was about the survey in the tiger reserve.

The report mentions the "demarcation of a 8-km road from Mul to Somnath" (a Shiv temple nestling in the north-eastern TATR fringe) and identification of men in the villages along it. It mentions the names of prominent villages such as Ghodazari, Piparda, Madnapur, Khutwanda, Mudholi, Pangdi, Moharli, Kolara, Karwa, Vasera and Shivni which the cadre had visited.

Source: Vivek Deshpande. 'Naxals trying to make inroads into tiger reserve area: cops', The Indian Express, 20/04/11.

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

Corridor adjoining Tadoba Andhari TR threatened by Gosikhurd Canal project

Concern has been expressed that ongoing work and the creation of the Gosikhurd Right

Canal will damage forests and a wildlife corridor adjoining the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR). The impacted forests will include those under the Brahmapuri Division and those in the adjoining Paoni area of Bhandara district.

This area is experiencing severe human-wildlife conflict and it is feared that this project would further complicate matters. Two persons were killed and one was seriously injured in tiger attacks between March 18 and March 27 here, while two leopards were found dead in Brahmapuri Division between April 4 and April 7. The second leopard was found trapped in a stack of centering materials used in the construction of canal under Gosikhurd Irrigation Project near village Bhujgaon.

Source: 'Wildlife corridor in eastern Maharashtra threatened', www.dnaindia.com 10/04/11.

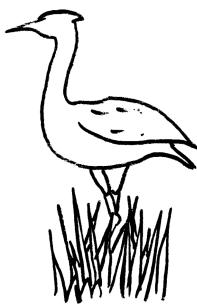
Joint meeting to discuss conservation of Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary

The Grasslands Indians Bustards (GIB) Foundation conducted a two day meeting in March involving villagers, forest department (FD) staff and NGO representatives to discuss conservation of the Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary in the Solapur district.

The first day event was a community level meeting involving villagers from Nannaj, Mardi, Akolekati and Karamba which are located around the areas of the sanctuary where bustards are still seen. Nearly 600 villagers and village heads attended and expressed their views related to the hardships they face and also on the involvement of the community in bustard conservation.

The 2nd day event was a workshop on ecology and conservation of the bustard that was aimed at updating the knowledge of FD staff and to involve people related to acquisition of 434 ha of land and those living around areas where the birds are found.

The topics discussed during the workshop included prevention of grassland fires, impact of grazing and prevention of overgrazing, organic farming, community benefits, traditional farming, permission for the construction of the Shirapur



Canal, crop damage by blackbucks, cattle damage by wolves and related compensation; and rationalization of the sanctuary boundary.

Source: 'Community Involvement in Bustard Conservation' - A Report on Community Meeting and Workshop held at Bustard Sanctuary, Maharashtra (IBA'). [GIB Foundation](http://www.gibfoundation.org).

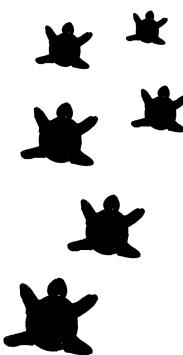
Contact: **Dr. Pramod Patil**, GIB Foundation, Tel: 09960680000. Email: gibpramod@gmail.com Web: www.projectbustards.org

Contact: **DCF, Wildlife Pune**, New PMT Building, 3rd Floor, Shankarseth Road, Swarget Pune-411042. Maharashtra. Tel: 020-24471465

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

ORISSA

More than 3.5 lakh turtles nest at Gahirmatha in February – March, 2011



An estimated 3.6 lakh Olive Ridley sea turtles were reported to have nested between February 26 and March 7, earlier this year at Nasi II (South Nasi) beach of the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary.

In last year's nesting season, about the same number of turtles had nested in two phases. The period from February 24 to March 6, 2010, had seen an estimated 1.87 lakh turtles visit the South Nasi beach whereas in the second phase another 1.70 lakh turtles laid eggs from March 19 to 25, 2010. The breakup of the figures of the previous years' *arribada* is as follows: 75,000 in 2003, 2.38 lakh in 2004, 2.36 lakh in 2005, 2.74 lakh in 2006, 1.47 lakh in 2007

and 1.67 lakh in 2009. No nesting was reported in 2008.

The forest department (FD) has implemented a series of measures to ensure safety of the nesting turtles. They have imposed a ban on fishing activities in the Gahirmatha sanctuary and upto a distance of 20 km from the shore from November 1, 2010 to May 31, 2011. Help from the Coast Guards and Marine Police was also sought to step up surveillance in the sanctuary by restricting illegal entry of trawlers for fishing in the restricted zone.

Source: '3.6 lakh Olive Ridley turtles lay eggs at Gahirmatha', www.dailypioneer.com, 10/03/11.

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

RAJASTHAN

Clearance to five major projects in and around PAs

The National Board for Wildlife has cleared five major projects in Rajasthan, that will be located in and around protected areas. These include the mega drinking water and irrigation project on Parwan river in Khanpur tehsil of Jhalawar district that will be executed at a cost of over Rs. 1942 crores and will facilitate drinking water supply to 820 villages and provide irrigation water across 1.31 lakh hectares (ha) in Kota and Jhalawar districts.

The clearance of the Parwan project is considered a major breakthrough by the political and administrative leadership in the state. There has been tremendous pressure on the political leadership for implementation of the project as delegation after delegation of farmers kept meeting Chief Minister to press the demand. Environmental groups have expressed concern that the project would lead to submergence of 9,810 ha of land in Baran and Jhalawar. The project will also help generate 2935 MW electricity from a proposed thermal power station and has provision for an extra pipeline for providing water for the Sherghat Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS). There is also a condition that construction of Parwan dam would be carried out during daytime so that wildlife is not disturbed.

No night camping will be allowed at the dam site during the construction.

The other projects cleared are Gas Authority of India Ltd's proposed Kota-Bhilwara gas line project through the Chambal WLS; a 33-KV electricity line from Mount Abu to Anadara; the Chambal-Bhilwara water supply project; and repair of the Orai Dam, situated in the Bassi WLS.

In the case of the Mount Abu-Anadara 33-KV transmission line, no labour camps will be allowed in the Mount Abu WLS during construction.

Source: 'Five major wildlife projects cleared', www.hindu.com

CEC orders stoppage of construction work inside Ranthambore TR



The Supreme Court appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) has directed the state government to stop ongoing earth excavation and construction activities in the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (TR) as they are in violation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the directives of the apex court. The CEC directive came in response to a petition filed by Belinda Wright, executive director of the Wildlife Protection Society of India, alleging that the forest department (FD) was undertaking massive construction work inside the reserve in violation of the law.

20 big dams each costing between Rs. 35 lakh and Rs. 75 lakh are reportedly under construction inside the reserve. The FD has already constructed more than 100 small anicuts and 20 ponds. Excavation work was reported to be going on, for instance, for the Bhanwardha Dam in the Berdha area. It was noted that heavy excavator machines, explosives and pneumatic drills were being

used and blasting conducted for the construction would cause immense stress to the wild animals and the ecosystem.

Source: 'Stop constructions inside Ranthambore, SC panel tells state',
www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com.
'Construction will hit eco-system'
www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com.

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

Rajasthan Government announces Amrita Devi Vishnoi Smriti Puraskar

The Rajasthan Government has selected the Forest Protection and Management Committee (Van Suraksha Evum Prabandhan Samiti) of Balicha range in Pratapgarh district for the Amrita Devi Vishnoi Smriti Puraskar for 2010. The annual award, given to non governmental agencies, societies and groups engaged in exemplary acts of forest conservation and wildlife protection in the state, carries a cash component of Rs. 50,000.

The samiti, located at Bansi village, did an excellent job in protecting young trees and saplings in the Balicha range thus improving the tree cover. It also successfully spread awareness on forest protection and conservation of the flora and fauna of the area among the local population.

The award committee also announced the second award in the individual category to Swaroop Singh Chundawat, the forester (vanpal) posted at Nakha (Chowki) Kone in the same forest range in Pratapgarh. The award carries a cash award of Rs.25,000. Mr. Chundawat was selected for his diligent work in forest protection and wildlife conservation. The awards would be presented at a State-level function during the "Van Mahotsav" celebrations in July.

Source: 'Award for forest conservation announced',
The Hindu, 02/04/11.

Forest Training Centre at Jaipur

The World Bank and the Union government will help the Rajasthan state government to set up an international-level training centre for forest staff and tiger conservationists in Jaipur district.

According to the state forest minister Ramlal Jat, the centre would conduct research on various issues related to wildlife conservation and on near-extinct species found in the semi-arid region, such as the tiger, other wild cats, the Great Indian Bustard and gharials.

The centre is likely to come up near Sanjay Van in Shahpura. It will have modern facilities for training of personnel and for research. To achieve this, the State government plans to take help from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), the World Bank and from industrialists. The Union Government had given its nod for such a training centre during the three-day International Conference on Tiger Conservation held recently in New Delhi.

Source: 'World Bank, Centre to help in setting up forest training centre',
www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com,
06/04/11.

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

TAMIL NADU

Field Learning Centre at KMTR

A Field Learning Centre is to soon come up in the Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR). Rs. 75 lakhs that have been provided by the World Bank will be used for the purpose with the approval of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The World Bank is said to have identified two TRs from the south - KMTR in Tirunelveli and Periyar TR in Kerala to start the Centres. After seeing the successful implementation of eco-development programme at KMTR, the World Bank agreed to provide grants for the centre to KMTR.

The centre would be run for five years with the World Bank funds and buildings will be created both in Mundanthurai and Kalakkad for conducting training and awareness programmes. The main objective of the centre would be to impart training to the field staff of the Forest

Department (FD), such as watchers, guards, foresters and rangers, on conservation and protection of flora and fauna. It would also train the villagers to operate a micro finance credit system. The centre would also conduct awareness programmes for local residents on the importance and need for conserving the forest and wildlife.

Source: P. Oppili , 'Field Learning Centre at KMTR soon', www.hindu.com ,15/04/11.

Contact: Field Director KMTR, NGO 'A' Colony, Palayam Kottai, Tirunelveli - 627007. Tel: 0462-273075, 2552663(O), 2580115(R). Fax: 0462-2580115.
E-mail: tvl-kmtrpt@sancharnet.in

Fear of forest fires results in closure of Mudumalai TR in April; mixed reactions

The Mudumalai Tiger Reserve was closed in April for fear of forest fires. Reservations for accommodation, van rides, etc. were not accepted for April resulting in disapproval by the tourism industry. Wildlife enthusiasts and conservationists, however, welcomed the move saying that the closure would benefit the wildlife and also reduce the fire hazard.

Officials said that the focus during the closure would be on the maintenance of water sources. A request was made to the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation to release water from Pykara into Moyar River which cuts through the reserve. It was also pointed out that the reserve would be opened earlier if an improvement was seen in the situation.

Source: D. Radhakrishnan, 'Mudumalai Tiger Reserve closure evokes mixed reactions', The Hindu, 02/04/11.

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

UTTARAKHAND

Rs. 65 crore for relocation of Sunderkhal village from Corbett TR

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has decided to release Rs. 65 crore for relocating 1,000 homes in Sundherkhal village, which falls in the tiger corridor connecting forests

on two sides of the Kosi river. Under the plan, each household will get either Rs. 10 lakh as compensation or alternative land. The relocation will be voluntary in nature.

The tiger population in Corbett is reported to have gone up to 214 from 164 in the last four years. Digital mapping shows that the new tiger population has spread to the outskirts of reserve, especially in the Ram Nagar forest division, where the Sunderkhal village is located. Tigers have killed at least a dozen people in the village in the last four months, while over 40 people and about eight tigers have died in tiger-human conflict in the Uttarakhand state in the last six months.

Union Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr. Jairam Ramesh has emphasised on a check on unregulated growth of hotel industry around Corbett. However, the NTCA has no plan to check the growth of hotels/resorts on the banks of Kosi around Sunderkhal. A state Forest Department (FD) official is reported to have claimed that most of these resorts have come up on revenue land which is not under the FD's jurisdiction.

Source: Chetan Chauhan, 'More green cover for Corbett tigers', Hindustan Times, 11/04/11.

Villagers given land for relocation from Chilla – Motichur wildlife corridor

31 families of the Khandgaon III village were recently handed over possession certificates of alternate land in Lalpani Compartment II (pf Rishikesh range) to facilitate their voluntary relocation from the Chilla-Motichur Elephant Corridor. The Corridor forms a vital connectivity in Rajaji National Park, thereby maintaining Rajaji-Corbett elephant population as a single entity. (Also see PA Updates [Vol. XVI, No. 5](#), [Vol. XV, No. 1](#); [Vol. XIV, Nos. 5, 4 & 3](#); [Vol. XIII, Nos. 5 & 3](#))

Source: 'Villagers given land for relocation from wildlife corridor', www.wildlifetrustofindia.org, 04/05/11.

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

NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

11th Carl Zeiss Wildlife Conservation Awards

The 11th Carl Zeiss Wildlife Conservation awards were given to five conservationists in a ceremony held in April in New Delhi.

Those chosen for the award were Goa based herpetologist and field ecologist Nirmal Kulkarni for his research and conservation initiatives in the Mhadei Bio region; Dr Dharmendra Khandal for his tiger conservation work, anti-poaching initiatives and efforts for a reform program for a community of people involved in poaching in and around the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve; Dr M Firoz Ahmed, a wildlife biologist from Assam; Sanjay Gubbi from Karnataka for his work on large mammal conservation and mitigation of human-wildlife conflict through science based advocacy and Pune based Vidya Athreya for her pioneering research on human-large cat interactions, especially leopards.

Source: Email from Nirmal Kulkarni. 04/04/11.

Funding Assistance in 2010-11 for village relocation under Project Tiger

Rs. in lakhs

No.	Tiger Reserve	2010-11
1	Achanakmar (Chhattisgarh)	723.98
2	Kanha (MP)	140.00
3	Simlipal (Orissa)	610.00
4	Sariska (Rajasthan)	1860.00
5	Mudumalai (TN)	200.00
-	TOTAL	3533.98

Source: Press Release, Press Information Bureau, MoEF, 11/04/11.

Army and ITBP help sought for snow leopard conservation

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has called upon the Indian Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) to help in the conservation of the snow leopard. The matter

came up during the 2nd meeting of the national steering committee for Project Snow Leopard (PSL) that was held on March 11. It was chaired by Minister of Environment and Forests Mr. Jairam Ramesh.

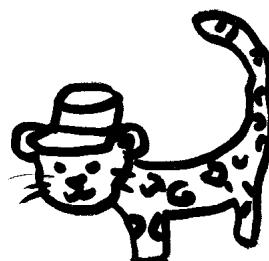
PSL was launched in 2009 for strengthening wildlife conservation in the unique high altitudes of India with the support of local communities, civilian organisations and scientists. The committee reviewed the progress made by individual states in identifying snow leopard landscapes on a scientific basis and preparing appropriate management plans.

In addition to senior officials from the five snow leopard states, the committee includes scientists and experts from the Nature Conservation Foundation, Wildlife Institute of India, World Wild Fund for Nature – India and the Wildlife Trust of India. All states suggested the need for greater capacity building, improvement of facilities, and providing ‘difficult-area’ incentives to field staff to improve on-ground monitoring and protection.

The Minister also proposed the idea of India hosting an international conference on conservation of snow leopards and mountain landscapes to involve international expertise on the topic.

Source: Meeting of the National Steering Committee for Project Snow Leopard' Press Note, MoEF, 12/03/11.

‘Army help sought for snow leopard conservation’, www.mangalorean.com , 15/03/11.



Population Estimate of Tigers in 2006 and 2010

Landscape Complex	Tiger Estimate (2006)			Tiger Estimate (2010)		
	Lower limit (2)	Population estimate (1)	Upper limit (2)	Lower limit (2)	Population estimate (1)	Upper limit (2)
Shivalik-Gangetic Plains	259	297	335	320	353	388
Central India and Eastern Ghats	486	601	718	569	601	651
Western Ghats	336	412	487	500	534	568
North East Hills and Brahmaputra Flood Plains	84	100	118	118	148*	178
Sunderbans	Not assessed			64	70	90
Total	1165	1411	1657	1571	1706	1875

1 Population estimate is a reliable statistical estimate of the tiger population number.

2 The numbers in the “Upper limit” and “Lower limit” column show the range of these estimates.

* Excluding the minimum population estimate of Buxa Tiger Reserve (12 tigers) based on genetic analysis conducted by the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB).

Source: ‘India Tiger Estimation 2010 released’, www.moef.nic.in

Funds Released under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme ‘Project Elephant’

(Rs. In lakhs)

No	State	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11 (till Dec. ‘11)
1	Andhra Pradesh	60.00	45.00	17.85.00	00
2	Arunachal Pradesh	54.50	65.00	60.00	10.00
3	Assam	144.00	175.19	160.26	100.00
4	Chhattisgarh	83.77	60.43	111.23	75.00
5	Haryana	00	00	00	00
6	Jharkhand	132.17	80.00	80.00	80.00
7	Karnataka	212.65	249.00	247.16	220.0
8	Kerala	147.70	356.80	286.700	180.00
9	Maharashtra	56.86	77.76	49.18	19.00
10	Meghalaya	68.39	50.00	80.483	80.00
11	Mizoram	1.33	00	00	00
12	Nagaland	26.60	17.45	50.00	20.00
13	Orissa	148.50	180.60	100.00	113.50
14	Tamilnadu	124.978	269.163	358.58	170.00
15	Tripura	12.00	28.96	14.80	00
16	Uttar Pradesh	55.33	58.24	38.45	60.00
17	Uttarakhand	126.46	209.45	221.55	148.69
18	West Bengal	185.725	176.096	207.06	333.37
**	Total	1640.963	2099.139	2083.303	1609.56

Source: Press Release. Press Information Bureau, MoEF, 11/04/11.

Recently released reports on wildlife and conservation issues...

- Socio-Economic survey of villages in the buffer & core areas of Bandavgarh Tiger Reserve. *Last Wilderness Foundation*, May 2011

Available at: <http://thelastwilderness.org/web/WildLifeConservation/Projects.aspx>

- Status, distribution and Conservation perspectives of Lesser Florican in the North-Western India: A Survey Report. *Wildlife Institute of India*, March 2011.

Available at : http://wii.gov.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=98:research-reports&catid=44:publications&Itemid=299

- Guidelines for Human-Leopard Conflict Management. *Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India*, April 2011.

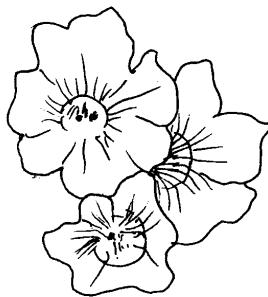
Available at: <http://moef.nic.in/>

- India – Tiger Estimate 2010. *Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India*, March 2011. (see page 17 for some details)

Available at: <http://moef.nic.in/>

- Action Plan for the mitigation of human-elephant conflict in India, *Asian Nature Conservation Foundation*, March 2011

Available at: <http://bit.ly/iZwweN>



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 ourselves 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.

Workshop on conservation of the Black-necked crane through regional cooperation

World Wide Fund for Nature – India (WWF-India), Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF), Government of India, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) jointly organised a two-day workshop called 'Cranes Calling: Regional cooperation for conservation of Black-necked Crane' among Bhutan, China and India on April 22 and 23, in New Delhi.

The workshop was attended by several government officials from the MoEF, NGOs working on conservation issues like Birdlife International and Wetlands International, environmentalists and bird experts from India, Bhutan and China. Also present were Mr. Jairam Ramesh, Minister of Environment & Forests, Government of India and Dr. Dasho Paljor Dorji, Chairman, National Environment Commission of Bhutan.

The primary objectives of the workshop were to facilitate knowledge-sharing and information exchange among conservation experts on the Black-necked Crane, to foster international cooperation among India, China and Bhutan, and to explore the opportunities of community exchange programmes between these countries.

The workshop provided a platform for presentations and collective discussions on the status, threats and conservation efforts made so far, as well as potential strategies to safeguard migratory birds like the crane during their breeding and nesting seasons. This included habitat modeling, mapping of migratory routes and flyways and formulation of new action plans and recommendations. The conservation plans adopted by the Indian states/regions of Ladakh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, and countries like China and Bhutan were also discussed. At the inaugural session of the workshop, the Chief Guest, Mr. Jairam Ramesh awarded the first 'Regional Crane Conservation Award' to Mr. Phurpa Wangdi for his 35 years of commitment towards Black-necked Crane conservation in Bhutan.

The workshop recommendations focused on the requirement of more regional cooperation in order to conduct coordinated surveys and scientific research such as telemetry studies which would help in learning more about the habitat ecology of the species, the need to standardize data collection, and a thrust on education and awareness for different stakeholders.

The development of a Single Species Action Plan under the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership has also been envisaged.

Source: 'Conserving the endangered Black-necked Cranes through regional cooperation',

<http://www.wwfindia.org/?5780/Black-necked-Cranes>, 22/04/11.

World Bank approves \$36 million for conservation in Bangladesh and \$3 million for Nepal

As part of its effort to strengthen regional co-operation for wildlife protection in Asia, the World Bank has approved a \$39 million financial package for Bangladesh and Nepal. The project, under which \$36 million will be granted to Bangladesh and \$3 million to Nepal, will address conservation threats to habitats in border areas and clamp down on the illegal wildlife trade of species such as the tiger, the snow leopard, rhinoceros and the elephant in increasingly fragmented habitats.

The assistance to Bangladesh is mainly for protecting the dwindling numbers of tigers. Bangladesh holds the largest remaining population of tigers in the Sundarbans region.

Nepal's biodiversity is also important for the country's economy as well as the well-being of its people. Forests, which comprise 29 per cent of Nepal's land area, contribute to about 10 per cent of the country's economy and represent a daily source of fuel wood, food, fodder, timber and medicinal plants for about 80 per cent of the country's population.

Source: 'WB approves \$39 million for wildlife project in Bangladesh, Nepal',
www.wildlifewatch.in, 12/04/11.

NEPAL

Red Pandas spotted in Ilam forests of Nepal

A joint team of wildlife experts from Nepal, America, Canada and Turkey is reported to have spotted Red Pandas in Dobate and Jumama in March. They were seen sleeping in Bante trees in Hagethan Community Forest and in Seti Gada trees in the Surke National Forest; which are the parts of Ilam forests of Nepal.

Source: 'Red pandas found in Ilam forests',
www.thehimalayantimes.com 11/03/11.

SRI LANKA

Elephant census in Sri Lanka

The Wildlife Conservation Department of Sri Lanka has planned to conduct a census of the elephant population in Sri Lankan forests in August this year. The last census of elephants in 1993 had not covered the northern area parts of the country. The census this year would be more comprehensive as it would cover all the provinces.

The enumeration will commence in the dry season in August 2011, when water holes and minor irrigation canals run dry, compelling wild animals to go in search of water to reservoirs and tanks. It is hoped the figures obtained will help in minimizing human-elephant conflict and also in identifying the areas that need electric fences.

Source: Amadoru Amarajeewa, 'Elephant census over the whole island',
<http://print.dailymirror.lk/news/provincial-news/42262.html>, 28/04/11.

OPPORTUNITIES

Positions at the Wildlife Trust of India

A) Project Officer - Van Rakshak Project (VRP):
The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) is looking for a Project Officer for its VRP which is the training and capacity building section of WTI through *Protected Area Update Vol. XVII, No. 3*

which it conducts various field training programmes for the front line field staff of the forest department across the country.

B) Trainer – VRP for Central India and Greater Manas: The candidate should be a Retired forest officer (Ranger / ACF / DFO), or a lawyer who is well versed in the Wildlife (Protection) Act - 1972 and experienced in booking and following up wildlife related offences. Regional language proficiency is desired. The incumbent will function as a Training Officer of WTI's Guardians of the Wild programme where the main job is training the front line forest staff (Rangers, forest guards, foresters and temporary staff) on the wildlife protection act, detection of wildlife crime, procedures to be followed while handling wildlife crime, patrolling, practical field crafts, etc.

Contact: Jose Louies, WTI.
Email: jose@wti.org.in; jobs@wti.org.in

UPCOMING

Course on Geo-informatics and its application for Biodiversity

Aaranyak is offering a 12 day training session on geo-spatial technology and its application for biodiversity conservation. It will be conducted in Guwahati from September 15-27, 2011. The course hopes to bring about a basic understanding of the relevant topics for technical personnel, who are entrusted with the responsibility of planning, mapping and implementation of plans related to biodiversity conservation. Topics covered include remote sensing, aerial survey, GIS, GPS, and application. The registration fee is US\$ 2000, with a discount for early birders.

Contact: **Pranjit Kumar Sarma**, Geo-spatial Technology Application Programme, Aaranyak, 50th Samanwoy Path Survey, Beltola, Guwahati -781028, Assam. Email: pranjit@aaranyak.org; prangis@gmail.com

IN THE SUPREME COURT
PA related matters in the Supreme Court (SC) and the Central Empowered Committee
in February and March 2011

- Extension of the term of the Central Empowered Committee to look into matters related to forests and wildlife
- Construction of a film set in the Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary, Andhra Pradesh
- The Report on Disappearance of Tigers from Panna Tiger Reserve, submitted by the Special Investigation Team, 2009
- The construction of two border outposts in the Gangotri National Park, Uttarakhand

'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

SPECIAL SECTION

The Forest Rights Act, Protected Areas and Wildlife Conservation

MAHARASHTRA

FRA blamed for forest destruction in Yaval WLS and adjoining areas

The Satpuda Bachav Sangharsh Samiti (SBSS), a joint forum of NGOs, has alleged that the forest destruction has increased drastically in the Yaval Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) and surrounding forest areas after the notification of the Forest Rights Act (FRA). New settlers have been blamed for the denudation which is reported to be stark since 2008 according to satellite imagery as well. Many people are supposed to have arrived here in the hope of getting land rights and have been felling trees to clear land for agriculture. The SBSS has also alleged that the activists who campaigned for land for the settlers have either encouraged the tree-felling or ignored it.

Forest officials have said that the entire belt comprising Jalgaon, Nashik, Nandurbar and Dhule has been affected. They also noted that forest staff was being attacked and abused when attempting to stop the encroachments and that they had now

brought the matter to the notice of the state home minister. The Tribal Development Commissioner, too, acknowledged having received these reports of forest destruction and encroachment, but said that it was the duty of the Forest Department and the police to stop it.

The Lok Sangharsha Morcha, which has been fighting for rights under the FRA has admitted that encroachments have happened. They have, however, alleged that the encroachers are from Madhya Pradesh and that they have been occupying land in connivance with local officials. They also noted that locals had no means of livelihood other than agriculture and the delay in settling of their claims has resulted in the present situation.

Source: Vivek Deshpande. 'Lure of land pattas strips forest', www.indianexpress.com, 11/03/11



Concern over non-implementation of FRA in Bhimashankar WLS, surrounding areas

Kalpavriksh has recently written to the Tribal Commissioner, Maharashtra, highlighting various issues regarding the lack of clarity and the slack progress in the implementation of the FRA in the Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) and adjoining villages in the Khed and Ambegaon Talukas of Pune District. It was noted that the Andhra Wind Power Project was erecting windmills in the villages around the sanctuary forests also in violation of provisions of the FRA.

In the case of the Bhimashankar WLS it was pointed out that at least three villages, Yelahvali, Ahupe and Kondhwal, had filed their claims under the FRA (*PA Update Vol. XVII, No. 1*) but there had been no progress in their processing.

Contact: **Pradeep Chavan**, Kalpavriksh. Email: prdprn@gmail.com or **Neema Pathak**, Email: neema.pb@gmail.com

UTTAR PRADESH

Surma, Golbhji tribals get land titles in Dudhwa NP under FRA

Surma and Golbhji became the first tribal villages in the country, inside a national park, to get land titles under the provisions of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006. The two villages are located in the Palia block of Lakhimpur Kheri district and are home to over 5000 Tharu tribals.

The district administration recently handed over land ownership titles to 289 families in Surma and 58 families in Golbhji. The total land distributed was over 700 acre with each family entitled upto four acres as per the FRA. Over 1500 tribals and forest dwellers from different parts of Lakhimpur Kheri and adjoining districts came to witness the handover.

The District Magistrate has assured that the tribals will soon also get community rights over forest land to use forest produce for their livelihood. The two villages have also been given

the status of Ambedkar village. This means that they will have roads connecting them to the city apart from a school, primary health centre, community centre, drinking water facility, power supply and telecommunication. They are now also entitled to benefits of various welfare schemes of the government. Families left out this time, will get titles in the second round to be held soon.

The area under question had been declared a reserve forest in 1972 followed by the creation of the Dudhwa National Park in 1977. In 1980, the displaced tribals filed a petition in the High Court for the recognition of their rights but lost the case. The fight was recently taken up under the banner of the Tharu Adivasi Mahila Manch and National Forum for Forest People and Forest Workers (NFFPFW).

(Also see *PA Update Vol. XVII, No. 2*)

Source: Surma, Golbhji tribals get land titles under FRA,
www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com,
09/05/11

Contact: **Ashok Chowdhury**, NFFPFW.
Email: Ashok.chowdhury@gmail.com
Director, Dudhwa National Park, Dist. Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh. Tel: 05872-252106. Fax: 05872-252106

NATIONAL NEWS

New draft guidelines for declaration of Critical Wildlife Habitats

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has released revised draft guidelines for determining critical wildlife habitats as required by the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, based on feedback from a wide set of experts and stakeholders. (*PA Update Vol. XVII, No. 2*)

Comments and suggestions are invited on the same at cwhguidelines@gmail.com. Last date for submission is 04.06.2011.

The draft guidelines can be accessed at http://moef.nic.in/downloads/public-information/Draft_CWH_Guidelines_May_2011.pdf

PERSPECTIVE

When conservationists and journalists fail, wildlife is the loser

Talking about the insufficient coverage of wildlife issues in the news media is akin to flogging a dead horse. Certainly in conservationist circles. Conservationists never mince words about what they think of the media per se. Having worked on both sides of this divide, with both wildlife organisations as well as in the news media, I feel conservationists too should start owning up to their faults.

A journalist who reports or writes about wildlife faces a number of problems, apart from the well-known and well-accepted one of fighting for space/time in the news outlet itself.

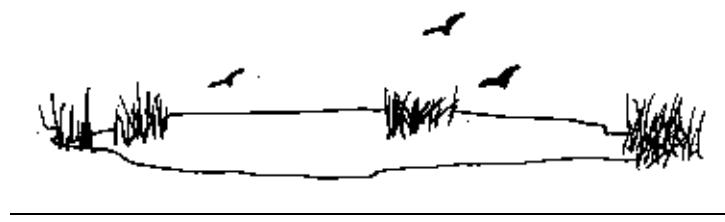
To start with, most wildlife organisations are woefully slack in breaking news. Press releases are either not sent out, and often when they indeed are, they are slightly outdated. A news event always has a trigger. A news event is immediate. Stale news is no news. For instance, a seizure made five days back makes no sense publishing today. And often the news does not appear even on the NGO's website for days. One reason could be slackness, the other may be lack of staff or adequate resources.

I have personally come across many wildlifers who are inordinately hesitant in sharing findings. They are all too willing to give their expert opinions about an issue or an

incident, but when it comes to ongoing projects, they needlessly clam up. One can understand the apprehension, but such misgivings would be more pertinent in cases such as a police investigation into a crime. At a time when few disagree that you need to have people on your side to save wildlife and forests, media coverage about ongoing projects could go a long way in building that support base. This is also one of the reasons why most of the news items that one sees in news outlets are about incidents rather than issues.

Many wildlife NGOs do a considerable amount of work that is both commendable, as well as worth writing about. It would only go in the interest of wildlife conservation if words of these reaches out to the masses. My personal experience of having run a wildlife newsblog tells me that the people are there to support conservation. If NGOs are not able to reach out to them, maybe they should sit back, do some introspection/retrospection, and then devise new strategies for a new world.

Subir Ghosh is a New Delhi based writer and journalist.
He blogs at <http://www.write2kill.in/>



For Private Circulation/Printed Matter

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