

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

Vol. XX, No. 5

October 2014 (No. 111)

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Protected Area Update

Vol. XX, No. 5, October 2014 (No. 111)

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Publication of the PA Update has been supported by

Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)

<http://fes.org.in/>

**Duleep Matthai Nature Conservation
Trust, C/o FES**

**World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) -
India**

**Bombay Natural History Society
Action Aid India**

**Donations from a number of individual
supporters**



EDITORIAL

Speed breakers or broken necks?

The preceding two issues of the *Protected Area Update* had explicitly highlighted concerns regarding the new government's agenda related to the environment and wildlife governance and protection framework of the country. The directions that were to be taken were quite clear and even then the rapidity and the scale at which the existing framework is being unraveled has taken most by surprise.

The Prime Minister has lost no opportunity to express his government's commitment to 'growth and development' and to laying out the red carpet for the corporate world from around the globe to roll in; one of the most common refrains of the environment and forest minister has been that the environment won't become an impediment in the country's growth trajectory even as he spouts homilies on protection, on India's commitment to arresting climate change and on wildlife conservation; and no stone is being left unturned where projects on the ground are concerned, either.

We saw the magnitude of this thrust (and the callousness, too) in the pushing through of nearly 140 projects that were before the National Board for Wildlife for clearance (see pg. 12 for the full list) and in the fact that in the first 100 days of the government the Forest Advisory and Expert Appraisal Committees combined cleared 240 projects listed before them for approval. We are seeing this further in the constitution and mandate of the high level committee (HLC) to re-look at five environment and forests related laws – all in two months "so as to bring them in line with current requirements to meet objectives". The powers of the National Green Tribunal are likely to be diluted, the Forest Rights Act is to be diluted, the environment impact assessment (EIA) notification is being toned down, provisions for forest diversion under the Forest Conservation Act are being relaxed and a desire has been expressed to amend the Right to Fair

Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (RFCLARR), 2013.

To say that social, socio-economic and ecological concerns are being given the go-by would be a gross understatement. This is an unprecedented assault and one that's coming from all fronts. The environment and those calling for environmental and social concern are being berated as impediments and speed-breakers.

We need to remember, however, that speed not controlled and moderated breaks necks ruthlessly. It's called breakneck speed! This is not to say that the trajectory of economic growth and development we have taken at the moment is the right one and that it only needs moderation. We certainly need fundamental re-thinking and while we do that, the proponents of speed might want to carefully weigh their options – do they want broken necks or would they rather prefer some moderation? The choice should be an obvious one.

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Villagers oppose eco-sensitive zone around Binsar WLS

The villagers of the area surrounding the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary have opposed the declaration of an eco-sensitive zone within a 10 km radius of the sanctuary. They organised a demonstration recently at the sanctuary's gate at Ayarpani and boycotted the meeting called by the forest department (FD) to talk to the villagers about the declaration. It is their contention that the declaration will restrict their access to the forests and increase their hardship where collection of resources from the forests are concerned.

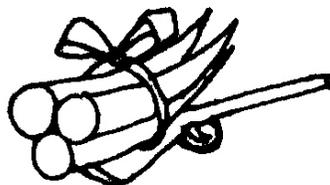
The FD has proposed another meeting with the villagers to discuss and sort out the matter.

Source: 'Opposition over declaration of eco-sensitive zone', *The Tribune*, 14/08/14.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Askot & Binsar WLS, Dist. Almora, Uttarakhand. Tel: 05964-225234/225390. Fax: 285376

KARNATAKA

Karnataka criticized for giving elephant tusks to defence forces



The Karnataka Forest Department has given away 210 pairs of elephant tusks to the defence forces between 2008 and 2014 to display in their establishments. Since 2011 as many as 78 pairs were given to various defence units, including the Madras Regiment, Rajputana Rifles and Garhwal Rifles. The state has an ivory stockpile of 2,200 pairs seized from poachers or collected from natural elephant deaths. In Karnataka, until April 2014, requests for tusks for defence units could only be made by the Ministry of Defence. The state government recently eased access to tusks by allowing requisitions directly from defence officers 'not below the rank of a Colonel' for their regiments. Hundreds of requests have been made by defence units across the country seeking tusks to put up in their messes and halls.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests had, in 1994, asked all states to destroy their ivory stockpiles, adding, however, that some specimens could be kept aside for research, education or be given to government institutions. These tusks are acquired free of cost because selling and buying Asian ivory is banned internationally as well as in the country.

Environmentalists have pointed out that to put up elephant tusks serves to commodify the species, and, sends out the wrong message. The Mysore-based Nature Conservation Foundation has said that a trophy-style display of elephant tusks — even if they are legally

acquired — contradicts the spirit of the ivory-trade ban that aims to discourage poaching and the use of ivory in any way.

A senior defence officer concurred with this view, saying that it is unethical to display material that has been declared illegal in the country, and, highly priced items like ivory could find their way into the civilian market. Ecologist at the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, R. Sukumar, said that procuring tusks through the Ministry of Defence would have at least made tracking these pieces easier, whereas it is difficult to stock-take ivory that is scattered across the country without a centralised system in place.

Source: Divya Gandhi, 'Karnataka's ivory given away to armed forces', *The Hindu*, 25/08/14.

Displaced tribals of Rajiv Gandhi (Nagarhole) NP become landless labour

A three-member Karnataka High Court committee has pointed out that a majority of the tribal families displaced from the Rajiv Gandhi (Nagarhole) National Park area in three taluks of Mysore and Kodagu districts have become landless agricultural labourers. The committee, headed by Muzaffar Assadi, Professor at University of Mysore, was asked 'to look into the actual number of families and persons who had to move on account of establishment of the park'.

The committee, in its report titled 'On the tribal issues of Rajiv Gandhi (Nagarhole) National Park Area' (July 2014), which was submitted to the High Court and to the state government, revealed that families cultivating land have not been able to obtain formal credit owing to allotment of *bagair hukum* and *gomal* land. It noted that only 24.54 per cent of the displaced tribal families owned land and that the small size of their land-holdings had failed to alleviate them from poverty.

Tribes such as the *Jenu Kuruba*, *Soliga*, *Yerava*, *Betta Kuruba* and *Paniyara Yerava* were most affected by the displacement. Denial of formal credit had also forced the tribal folk to fall back on private lenders for loans in the form

of seeds and fertilizers, creating the possibility of perpetual indebtedness, the report said.

Source: Nagesh Prabhu, 'Displaced tribals landless and poor: panel', *The Hindu*, 11/08/14.

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

23 leopard deaths in road accidents in Karnataka since 2009

A recent study conducted by Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore and Panthera, New York has found that 23 leopards were killed in road accidents in Karnataka in the last five years. The numbers have been put together from forest department data and from reports in the media.

19 of the 23 big cats were killed outside protected areas. Nine of these deaths were around Bangalore, in areas like Bannerghatta, Kaggalipura, Ramanagaram and Tumkur. This, according to the study, points to out the adverse impact of the urban sprawl on wildlife and also on the need for the re-alignment of roads and highways to deal with the problem.

Source: Rohith BR, 'State roads turn killer for big cats', *The Times of India*, 05/08/14.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden - Karnataka**, 2nd Floor, 18th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bengaluru – 560003, Karnataka. Tel: 080-3341993 Email: pccfwl@vsnl.com

MAHARASHTRA

Tiger estimates for Vidarbha TRs: preliminary results

Assessment of tigers under Phase III (camera traps) in wildlife sanctuaries and national parks under Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) and Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) have shown a presence of a minimum of 37 tigers. The population does not include cubs. The preliminary results are part of the 2014 national tiger assessment exercise conducted every four years by the National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Institute of India. The final results of the estimation exercise will be

announced in December. These latest figures include 23 tigers in Pench & Mansinghdeo; four in Bor & New Bor, four in Umred-Karhandla, and six in NNTR.

As per the assessment carried out in 2010, there were 69 tigers in Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, 35 in Melghat, 21 in the Sahyadri TR, 20 in NNTR, 12 in Bor, and 65 in Pench (Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra).

Source: Vijay Pinjarkar. 'Decline in tiger numbers in several Vid sanctuaries', *The Times of India*, 29/07/14.

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

Moratorium on mega projects in the Sawantwadi-Dodamarg wildlife corridor to continue

In an interim order passed recently, the Bombay high court stayed the decision of the Union ministry of environment and forests (MoEF) to lift the moratorium on large-scale projects in the Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts that fall in the Sawantwadi-Dodamarg wildlife corridor. The court said that the October 2013 moratorium on development projects would continue (*PA Update* Vol. XIX, No. 6).

The order came in response to a petition filed by Sumaira Abdulali of the Awaaz Foundation, which said that corridor acts as a crucial link between forest areas in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa. The 35-km long and 10-km wide green corridor connects the protected areas of Anshi Dandeli, Bhimgad and Radhanagari and environmentalists have been demanding that it should be declared as eco-sensitive.

The MoEF had on July 25, 2014, lifted the moratorium on development projects in 38 of the 51 villages in Dodamarg, justifying its decision by saying that they were not part of the ecologically sensitive areas of the Western Ghats as described by the high-level working group headed by K Kasturirangan.

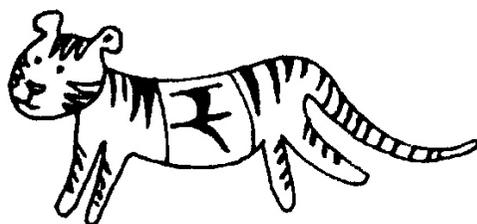
Source: Shibu Thomas. 'Bombay HC stays lifting of moratorium on mega projects in

Dodamarg corridor', *The Times of India*, 13/08/14.

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

ODISHA

Odisha seeks Rs. 76 lakh from NTCA for shifting tiger from Nandankanan to Similipal TR



The wildlife wing of the Odisha Forest Department (FD) has sent a Rs 76 lakh proposal to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for relocating and monitoring the tiger which had strayed into Nandankanan in April last year. It will be shifted to Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR).

The Wildlife Institute of India has prepared the proposal, and the FD will fix a date for shifting the tiger to the STR once NTCA approves the proposal and sanctions funds. Part of the money will be used to procure a radio collar for the tiger. The STR authorities have selected two sites for the feline - Nawana (north) range and Chahala range - keeping in view the density of prey population, water bodies and standard forest density.

The tiger had strayed into Nandankanan on April 30, 2013 and was put in an enclosure about three weeks later. The animal scaled the enclosure fencing and fled the zoo after 10 days but walked back to the zoo in about three weeks' time. (Also see *PA Update* Vol. XX, No. 4).

Source: 'State seeks Rs. 76 lakh for shifting feline to Similipal Tiger Reserve', *The Times of India*, 07/08/14.

Contact: **Director**, Similipal Tiger Reserve, P.O. Baripada, Dist. Mayurbhanj – 757002, Orissa. Tel: 06792-252593(O), 252773(R) Fax: 256705

Captive breeding of gharials to be re-started at Satkosia WLS



A fall in the gharial population in the Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary has prompted the authorities to restart the captive breeding program for the species, that had been stopped here in 2004. Satkosia presently has two big gharials in the wild, and five females that were brought from Nandankanan zoo a year ago are being reared in captivity. The forest department (FD) has now requested the zoo authorities to provide them five male gharials for the purpose of the captive breeding program.

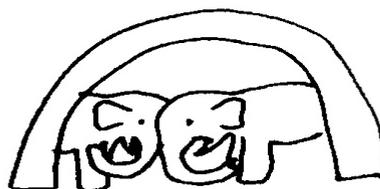
The gharial population in the sanctuary is reported to have started dwindling a decade ago. There is no trace either of the nearly 800 small gharials, which have been released in the wild over the years. While some are believed to have fallen prey to big crocodiles, others reportedly died a natural death. The FD has now said that only adult gharials will be released into the wild so that they are able to sustain themselves.

Source: 'Satkosia seeks male gharials from Nandankanan', *The Times of India*, 14/08/14.

Contact: **Divisional Forest Officer**, Satkosia Wildlife Division, at/P.O./Dist. Angul – 759143, Orissa. Tel: 0674-230218(O), 230219®
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TRIPURA

Elephant reserve proposal in Tripura



The Tripura government has sanctioned a plan for the creation of an elephant reserve spread over 123.84 sq km in the Baramura and Debtamura hill ranges of the state. The proposal is aimed at ensuring restoration of the existing habitats and migratory routes of elephants, promoting measures for mitigation of human-elephant conflict in crucial habitats, reducing the impact of human and domestic activities in crucial elephant habitats and strengthening measures for protection of elephants from poachers and unnatural causes of death.

As per official records 13 major incidents of man-elephant conflict were reported in the state in the last five years. Three elephants have been killed in the state since 2008, including in a recent incident of poaching. The population of wild elephants has increased substantially in the state in the last six years. There were 40 elephants in the state in 2002. This rose to 59 elephants, including 10 calves, in the latest survey with at least 25 being seen in the Atharamura-Baramura-Debtamura stretch.

Source: Biswendu Bhattacharjee. 'Tripura to create jumbo corridor', *The Times of India*, 21/08/14.

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Tripura, Aranya Bhawan, Nehru Complex, Agartala – 799001, Tripura. Tel: 0381-225223. Fax: 0381-225253/224013, 2422249

UTTARAKHAND

Shooting training inside the Corbett TR violates WLPA: NGO

The Wildlife Protection Society of India has alleged that the two-day shooting training

workshop held for foresters and forest guards in August at a shooting range in the Kalagarh range of the Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR) was a violation of the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA). It has pointed out that the Kalagarh range has a high population of tigers, elephants and leopards, and, the presence of the shooting range here is itself a violation of the law.

CTR officials have, however, denied that the exercise was in violation of the WLPA and said that the spot where the firing range has been set up has been chosen after ensuring that animals do not visit there. The Principle Chief Conservator of Forests is reported to have had no information about the said shooting training session that took place in Kalagarh.

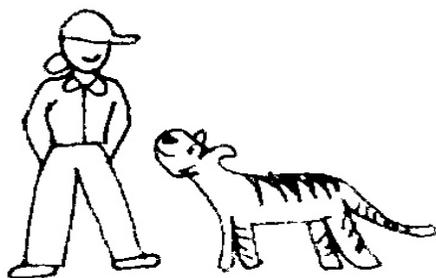
The firing range, which is located in an area that connects the CTR and the forests in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, has been used regularly for many years for training forest employees.

Source: Seema Sharma, 'Shooting range in forest area, flouts Wildlife Act', *The Times of India*, 10/08/14.

Contact: **Field Director**, Corbett Tiger Reserve, Ramnagar -244715, Nainital, Uttaranchal. Tel: 05947 - 285489. Fax: 285376

UTTAR PRADESH

Women home guards for Dudhwa Tiger Reserve



24 women home guards, many from the Tharu community, have recently joined the security and patrolling staff at the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. These women are among 82 personnel trained as home guards by the department of youth welfare and Prantiya Rakshak Dal (PRD) of the Uttar Pradesh government. Most of the 82

PRD personnel are in the 25-30 age group and belong to the Tharu community that lives in the vicinity of the tiger reserve.

The 24 women were employed by DTR to bridge the shortage of security personnel here as only 70% of the sanctioned 297 forest guard posts are occupied. Further, more than 70% of these forest guards of Dudhwa are above 50 years of age.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority has sanctioned Rs. 30 lakh for wages of PRD personnel and the forest department plans to continue using their services in the long term as well.

Source: Neha Shukla, 'Women throw security ring around Dudhwa tigers', *The Times of India*, 14/08/14.

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

WEST BENGAL

Captive tigress released in the Sunderbans

In a first of its kind exercise in the Sunderbans, a tigress that was in captivity for a year and a half was released into the wild recently. The animal was released in a forest near Netidhopani, where it had been undergoing treatment in a big enclosure. A doctor from the Wildlife Institute of India had certified that the four-year-old tigress was fit to be released. A German-made satellite collar was also fitted to help track her movements, post release.

The tigress was captured a year-and-a-half back from the forests of Pirkhali-I with weak hind legs and brought to Sajnekhali for treatment. Following orders from the National Tiger Conservation Authority she had been shifted to Netidhopani so that she could get acclimatized to the wild.

Source: Krishnendu Mukherjee, 'In a first, tigress set free in Sunderbans', *The Times of India*, 17/08/14.

Contact: **Field Director**, Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, PO Canning, Dist. South 24 Parganas 743329, West Bengal

Restriction on using wood fired stoves by fisherfolk in the Sunderbans

The forest department (FD) has put into place a new set of rules in the Sunderbans in an effort at protecting the forests and also checking human-tiger conflict here. A restriction has been imposed on the use of clay ovens by the villagers during fishing trips in certain pockets of the mangroves and the FD has started imposing fines if there is any violation. The violation of the rule incurs a fine of Rs. 500 in the first offence. The fine is Rs. 1,000 for the second offence and Rs. 2500 for the third one. The fishermen will, however, be allowed to carry axes for self-defence.

The rule aims at stopping the fishermen from getting off their boats to collect firewood from the forest. The fishermen often need to stay back in the forest, where fishing is allowed, for three to five days for a good catch. Most of the tiger attacks happen when they get off the boats and go to collect firewood from the forest. They are expected to now use stoves or LPG cylinders and the FD is planning to tie up with an NGO to provide them with the cylinders.

The Sunderbans Janashramajibi Mancha (SJM) has, however, termed the proposal 'impractical' as most of the fishermen don't have gas ovens or LPG cylinders, and cannot afford the expensive LPG cooking system. Several agitations have been held at Gosaba, Pakhirala, Kumirmari, Basonti, Choto Mollakhali, Samsernagar, Satjelia, Kultoli, and the SJM has requested the FD to revoke the order. It has also alleged that though the axes are allowed, fishermen have been fined on a few occasions for carrying them inside the mangroves.

Six persons were killed in tiger attacks here in 2013, and 11 persons have been killed so far in 2014 (*PA Update* Vol. XX, No. 4). Unofficial figures of the deaths are said to be much higher. The FD used to collect Rs. 12 per fisherman per trip against firewood collections. It has, however, stopped this practice now.

Source: Monotosh Chakraborty, 'Bid to check conflict in Sunderbans', *The Times of India*, 20/08/14.

11th victim of tiger attack in Sunderbans this year

47-year-old Sanyasi Mondal of Deulbari in Kultoli became the 11th victim of a tiger attack in the Sunderbans this year. He had ventured into the Dhonekhali forests along with his neighbours, Kalipada Ruidas and Modhu Mondal to catch crabs, when a tiger pounced on him and dragged him into the forest by his shoulder.

10 other fishermen have been killed by tigers this year so far in the Sunderbans, most of them inside the core of the Sunderbans Tiger Reserve (see story above).

Source: 'Tiger kills fisherman in Sunderban', *The Times of India*, 25/08/14

West Bengal to set up Eco-Tourism Board; major tourist hub planned in Dooars forest

The West Bengal government has decided to set up an Eco-Tourism Board to project the state as a major tourist destination. A task force composed of a host of professional consultants and senior officials has been set up to implement the decision.

The Dooars forest in north Bengal will be an area of major focus and will cover places such as Gajaldoba in Jalpaiguri district, Sylee that is adjacent to Malbazar, and Kunjanagar near Falakata in the Dooars. Sylee, situated around 62 km from Siliguri, is adjacent to the Sylee tea garden, while Kunjanagar is around 105 km from Siliguri and close to the Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary. A Nature Interpretation Centre will also be developed at Tilabari and Batabari in the area. Tourism projects have also been planned at Jharkhali in the Sundarbans, Sabujdweep (an island on the Ganga) and at Jharkhand in West Midnapore district.

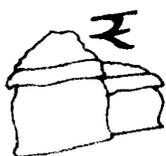
As estimated Rs. 1000 crores are to be invested in the various tourism related projects.

Source: 'West Bengal to set up Eco-Tourism Board; major tourist hub planned in Dooars forest in North', *DNA*, 25/08/14.

Contact: **DFO, Wildlife Division - I-**
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CWLW, Government of West Bengal,
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NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

NTCA announces ration allowance for frontline staff at tiger reserves



The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has announced an additional ration allowance of Rs. 860 per month for frontline staff of tiger reserves and their buffer zones. Currently, a tiger reserve forester is paid Rs. 1,200 per month as tiger allowance and a forest guard is paid Rs. 700. The Rs. 860 allowance will be in addition to this. A notification in this regard has already been issued and over 10,000 foresters, forest guards, van majoors, fire-watchers, and jawans of special tiger protection force are expected to benefit from this. The ration allowance was recommended first by the Tiger Task Force in 2005.

Another recommendation was for housing camps for families in neighbouring towns, where the tiger reserve headquarters are based. Creation of a staff welfare fund for medical benefits out of the income from tourism had also been recommended.

Source: ‘Rs. 860 per month extra pay for tiger reserve staff’, *The Times of India*, 01/08/14.

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

Gharial Spatial Database launched

The Gharial Conservation Alliance and the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust have launched a Gharial Spatial Database <http://gharial.info/> that seeks to serve as a freely accessible platform for monitoring gharial population and their conservation threats, inside and outside protected areas. This database will help assess the status of the gharial across its range in India and develop a prioritization mechanism to determine the most important areas for gharial conservation.

Contact: **Shakthi Sritharan**.
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SOUTH ASIA

NEPAL

Highest prey population at Bardiya National Park

Name of PA	Area (sq km)	Prey Density (animals per sq km)
Bardiya National Park	968	92.60
Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve	305	78.62
Chitwan National Park	932	73.63
Parsa Wildlife Reserve	-	25.33
Banke National Park	-	10.27

‘Status of Tiger and Prey in Nepal’ a report prepared by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Reserves in collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund - Nepal and the National Trust for Nature Conservation has noted that the Bardiya National Park (BNP) has the highest number of prey for tigers of all protected areas in the country.

The BNP, situated in the mid-western lowlands of Bardiya, Banke and Surkhet

districts, has a prey density of 92.6 animals per sq km. As many as 11 prey species were recorded in the BNP. It also shows that the prey population has increased over the last five years across the country and that this has led to a growth of 63 percent in tiger population from 2008 and 2013.

Source: 'Bardiya has more prey for tigers', www.myrepublica.com, 30/07/14.

21 killed in tiger attacks in Chitwan National Park over the past five years

21 people living near the Chitwan National Park (CNP) have been killed and 14 injured in tiger attacks in the last five years. The figures were put out by the park authorities on the occasion of World Tiger Day recently. The total tiger count in the park was estimated at 120.

It was also informed that around Rs. 4.5 million has been distributed to the families of the victims and an additional Rs. one million as compensation for the livestock losses and injuries suffered in attacks by tigers.

Source: '21 killed in tiger attacks in 5 years', www.ekantipur.com, 01/08/14.

SRI LANKA

Environmentalists allege illegal capture of elephant calves from the wild

Environmentalists have raised concerns over lack of transparency within the Wildlife Conservation Department (WCD) in Sri Lanka

in the matter of issuing permits, registration of captive elephants, and confiscation of illegally held elephants. They alleged that the 'Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery and Corruption' was trying to protect the officials of the WCD and others involved with issuing permits for illegally captured elephant calves without proper and thorough investigations.

Citing the audit query issued by the Auditor General's Department on July 22, a representative of an organization, Species Conservation Centre (SCC), said that it had clearly shown that the license bearing numbers 331, 334, 358 and 359 were illegal. All information related to those licenses was fake, certificates used to certify the ownership of the elephant calves were not authentic and that those calves had been captured illegally from the wild.

It was also pointed out that those licenses had been issued under the signature of former Director General (DG) of WCD Dr. Chandrawansa Pathiraja and present DG H. D. Rathnayake. However, Dr. Pathiraja has, in a letter addressed to Wildlife Resources Conservation Ministry on April 10, stated that his signature had been forged to issue elephant license number 338 and 226. He has urged the Ministry to take appropriate action.

Source: Maheesha Mudugamuwa, 'Environmentalists demand probe into corruption in WCD', *The Island*, 31/07/14.

Important Bird Areas Update

ASSAM

NIEST, Jorhat, seeks IBA status after sighting of Swamp francolin on campus

The Jorhat based North East Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST) has sought to be

declared an Important Bird Area (IBA) after the recent sighting of the Swamp francolin on its 130 acre campus. The bird was reported by NEIST scientist Mantu Bhuyan and if approved, NEIST could become the first urban area in the world to be given such a status.

Bhuyan has recorded 108 species of birds, about 70 species of butterflies and over 100 species of trees on the institute campus.

Source: Smita Bhattacharyya, 'Birdwatchers ahoy! Jorhat campus vies for limelight', *The Telegraph*, 28/08/14.

GUJARAT

Land for land, says Kutch WLS inspection team

A three-member expert inspection team comprising Dr M K Ranjitsinh, Mr Divyabhanusinh Chavda and Dr Asad Rahmani has recommended that land belonging to the Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary could be used for construction of the Narmada canal only when the forest department (FD) is handed over an equal amount of 5,197 ha of land in exchange. Construction of the Kutch Branch Canal is going on but work on a 13.3 km stretch that passes through the sanctuary has been kept in abeyance.

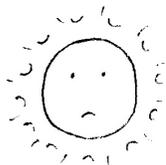
The inspection team report has also stated that local communities, whose members the team had met, want water and opportunities of work, which would be provided by the canal construction. The team has also suggested that 5% of the cost of the canal's construction through the sanctuary should be spent on habitat improvement and wildlife conservation in the sanctuary.

Source: Himanshu Kaushik, 'Compensate for Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary land: Experts', *The Times of India*, 12/08/14.

Contact: DCF, Kutch Desert Sanctuary, Kutch (East) Division, Old Remand Home, Building No.39/1, Bhuj - 370 001, Gujarat. Tel: 02832-250227; Fax: 02832-250236

RAJASTHAN

State Government may cancel solar power project near Sambhar lake



The Rajasthan government has indicated that it might cancel the 4,000-Mw solar ultra mega power project (UMPP) that was planned to come up near the Sambhar Lake (*PA Update*

Vol. XX, No. 4). The state government has cited the ecological and environmental impact that the plant could have. It has also written to the Centre that the area under consideration is a prime site

for migratory birds and these would be affected if a power plant or transmission line is raised there. It has been suggested by analysts, however, that there were political reasons too, as the project was one of the earlier United Progressive Alliance-II government.

The project, aimed at a massive scaling up of solar power, was launched in September last year, and was to have been set up and run by a joint venture of public sector units - Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd, Power Grid Corporation of India, Solar Energy Corporation of India, Hindustan Salts Limited and Rajasthan Electronics and Instruments Limited. The estimated cost of the project was Rs 7,500 crore. 23,000 acres of land around the lake was to be used for the project of which only 5,000 acres, according to an official of the Union ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE), was ecologically sensitive. Around 18,000 acres were to be provided by Hindustan Salts as its equity in the project.

The MNRE is involved in this project through its subsidiary, the Solar Energy Corporation of India, and is now looking for new land for this project. The government, in the Union Budget this year, had announced the setting up of four solar UMPPs across the country, including one in Rajasthan. The state, in fact, was the first to announce a solar UMPP.

Source: Shreya Jai. 'Rajasthan to clip 4,000-Mw solar project to save birds', *Business Standard*, 19/08/14.

Contact:

TAMIL NADU

Greater flamingos extend stay in Pulicat

Greater flamingos that generally stay in Pulicat from September to March have stayed on for an additional four months this year. A big colony of nearly 1,500 of these birds is being seen in Annamalaicherry village that is located on the southern side, in the Tamil Nadu part of the lake. The birds are seen in the northern part of the lake (in Andhra Pradesh) during the first part of their stay here and once the water levels increase, they move to the southern part.

Naturalists have noted that the move of the Tamil Nadu state government to use 6.46 hectares of land from Annamalaicherry, Periamangadu and Pazhaverkadu falling within the sanctuary area will negatively impact the birds here. While fish-landing centres would come up at the first two places, the land will be used for constructing an evacuation shelter in the third.

Source: P Oppili. 'Greater flamingos extend stay in Pulicat', *The Hindu*, 27/08/14.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden, Pulicat WLS**, 259, Anna Salai, DMS Compound, Chennai – 6

Gram Sabha meetings provide platform for vulture conservation initiative in the Nilgiris

Gram Sabha meetings in Erode district have transformed into a platform for a vulture conservation initiative, leading to the adoption of a resolution urging veterinarians and druggists to avoid prescribing and selling Diclofenac.

The resolution was listed in the main agenda of 225 panchayats by the district administration due to fears expressed by conservationists that vultures that breed in Thengumarada area could become extinct if across-the-counter sale of the painkiller drug that was banned in the country in 2006 was not stopped here.

As per the last count made in February 2014, volunteers of Arulagam had enumerated 102 vultures in the forests of Sathyamangalam and Mudumalai.

Source: R. Krishnamoorthy, 'Grama Sabha meetings turn forum for vulture conservation', *The Hindu*, 16/08/14.

The Important Bird Areas Update is being brought out in collaboration with and support from the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB, UK)

List of projects listed for clearance before the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) in it's 31st meeting held on 12-13 August, 2014

(Note: 130 of these projects were cleared in the meeting but were eventually struck down by the Supreme Court on the grounds that the constitution of the NBWL itself was in violation of the law)

ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS	
East Island WLS	Diversion of 0.0225 ha of forest land for the establishment of a light beacon
ANDHRA PRADESH	
Coringa WLS	Laying of natural gas pipeline by GSPL India Transco Ltd. (GITL) within 10 km of the boundary of the PA
Kolleru WLS	Diversion of 0.249 ha of land from the sanctuary for construction of a high-level bridge at Perantalakanuma at km 4/2 of Alapadu by R&B department by replacing the existing wooden foot bridge with concrete bridge
Krishna WLS	Diversion of 154.42 ha of land in Survey No. 636 and 374 of Gullalamoda village, Nagayalanka mandal, Krishna district to set up test facility by the Defence Research and Development Organisation

Pakhal WLS	Laying of natural gas pipeline by GSPL India Transco Ltd. (GITL) within 10 km of the boundary of the PA
L M Sivaram WLS	Laying of natural gas pipeline by GSPL India Transco Ltd. (GITL) within 10 km of the boundary of the PA
Not mentioned	Diversion of 0.97 ha of forest land in Pasuvemula Reserve Forest of the WLM Nagarjuna Sagar Division for Anupu and Koppunuru Lift Irrigation Scheme on the foreshore Nagarjunasagar dam in Macherla
Sri Penisula Narasimha WLS	Diversion of 11.40 ha of land from the sanctuary for laying of a water pipeline to draw water from the Kandaleru reservoir through an intake well and intake channel
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	
Itanagar WLS	Permission for survey and investigation work and forest diversion in the PA for the improvement/upgradation of the Papu-Yupia-Hoj-Potin Road from 0.00 km to 7.00 km under the Prime Minister's package
ASSAM	
Barail WLS	Diversion of 24.1268 ha of forest land from the PA for upgradation of the Harangajao-Udarband-Silchar road section from 244 km to 275 km of NH 54 (E) under the East-West Corridor project of the National Highway Authority of India
Amchang WLS and Pobitora WLS	Refurbishment of 2x30 MW Chandrapur thermal power plant using coal based boilers replacing existing oil fired boilers located within 10 km of the boundaries of the two PAs
Bherjan-Borajan-Podumani WLS & Dibru Saikhowa NP	Use of 304.14 ha of non-forest land within 10 km of the two PAs by Oil India Ltd. for expansion of gas field development in Tengakhat-Naharkotia-Jorajan area, Tinsukia-Dhola area and Doomdooma-Pengeri area
Dihing-Patkai WLS	Use of 2.3 ha of Dirok Tea Estate land falling within 10 km of the boundary of the PA for drilling of appraisal well by M/s Hindustan Oil Corporation Ltd.
Kaziranga NP	Strengthening of existing embankment from Moriahalla to Diffalupathar to avoid any breach resulting from flash flooding in the eastern range of the national park
BIHAR	
Bhimbandh WLS	Setting up of a 2x660 MW coal fired thermal power plant in Lakshisarai district at about 3 km distance from the sanctuary
Bhimbandh WLS	Widening and strengthening of the Malayapur-Barhat-Lalmatia-Khadigram road from 9.750 km to 10.60 km (total 0.85 km) passing through the PA
Bhimbandh WLS	Widening and strengthening of NH 72, Jamui-Laxmipur-Kharagpur Road from 19.80 km to 23.00 km (passing through the PA)
Kaimur WLS	Alternation of the boundaries of the sanctuary for exclusion of part of the limestone bearing zone from the limits of the sanctuary

Pant WLS	Diversion of 1.23 ha of forest land from the PA for the construction of a new ropeway
CHATTISGARH	
Guru Ghasidas NP	Upgradation and black topping of existing road from Ramgarh to Kotadol passing through the PA
Guru Ghasidas NP	Upgradation and black topping of existing road from Odgi to Biharpur passing through the PA
Guru Ghasidas NP	Upgradation and black topping of existing road from Kotadol to Murkil passing through the PA
Guru Ghasidas NP	Upgradation and black topping of existing road from Biharpur to Rasouki-II passing through the PA
Guru Ghasidas NP	Upgradation and black topping of existing road from Mahuli to Baijanpat -II passing through the PA
DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	
Not mentioned	Proposed enhancement in the capacity of the existing products- Manufacturing of 'Synthetic Organic Chemicals (Organic Titanates)' at Survey No. 358/1P village Dadra by M/x Polygel Industries Pvt. Ltd.
GUJARAT	
Balaram-Ambaji WLS	Rationalization of the boundaries of the PA
Barda WLS	Limestone mining project of Saurashtra Chemicals Ltd. for captive consumption in soda ash plant. The mining lease is 7.27 km from the sanctuary boundary
Barda WLS	18.21 ha of land located 6.55 km from boundary of the PA for Dharampur-Khajawadri limestone mine of Saurashtra Chemicals Ltd.
Barda WLS	9.31 ha of land located 6.55 km from boundary of the PA for Dharampur-Khajawadri limestone mine of Saurashtra Chemicals Ltd
Barda WLS	14.61 ha of land located 5.18 km from boundary of the PA for Dharampur-Khajawadri limestone mine of Saurashtra Chemicals Ltd
Barda WLS	40.46 ha of land located 6.55 km from boundary of the PA for Dharampur-Khajawadri limestone mine of Saurashtra Chemicals Ltd
Jambu-godha WLS	Removal by the Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation of old manganese dumps located 1 km from the sanctuary boundary
Kachchh Desert WLS and Wild Ass WLS	Diversion of 79.474 ha of land within the sanctuaries for construction of the Gaduli-Hajipur-Odma-Khavda-Kunariya-Dholavira-Maovana-Gadakbet-Santalpur Road
Kachchh Desert WLS	Permission for diverting 134.0364 ha of forest land from the PA for construction of the Kutch Branch Canal.
GUJARAT	

HARYANA	
Abubshehar WLS	Denotification of the PA
HIMACHAL PRADESH	
Not mentioned	Construction of the 45 MW Rupin Hydro Electric Project in Tehsil Dodra-Kwar, Shimla District by M/s Bajrang Power & Ispat Ltd.
Not mentioned	Proposal for M/s Jaypee Himachal for augmentation of clinker capacity of existing cement plant at Bagga and enhancing the production capacity within its existing mine leasehold area of 332 ha
Not mentioned	Extension of the Kashlog Limestone Mining project (3.3 MTPA to 5.5 MTPA) at villages Kashlog, Mangu, Patti, Chola, Gyana, Rauri and Sangoi in District Solan
Not mentioned	Expansion of clinkerisation unit (1.8 MTPA to 2.6 MTPA) at village Rauri and Limestone mining (5.5 MTPA to 7.6 MTPA) at village Kashlog, Mangu and Pate in District Solan
Darlaghat WLS	Expansion of the existing cement plant of M/s Ambuja Cement Ltd (2.0 MTPA to 2.6 MTPA clinker) at Village Suli, PO Darlaghat, Solan district
Lippa-Asrang WLS	Integrated Kashang Hydro Electric Project, (IKHEP 243 MS, Stage I, II, III, & IV) being implemented by the HP Power Corp. Ltd at a distance of 1.5 km from the PA boundary
Majathal WLS	Seeking permission by the Executive Engineer, I&PH Division Arki in Solan district for the diversion of 0.3514 ha of land inside the PA for drawing water from the Pazeena Khad
Majathal WLS/ Darlaghat WLS	Proposal for 1.8 MTPA clinkerisation plant of M/s Ambuja Cements Ltd. at Village Rauri, district Solan – located 3.95 km from the Majathal WLS and 7.0 km from Darlaghat
Renuka WLS	Proposals of M/s VK Walia (M/s Sangrah Limestone Mine Lease area 8.0555ha) and M/s Bhootmarhi Limestone (lease area 32.57 ha) located 8.5 and 8.75 km respectively from the boundary of the PA
Simbalbara WLS	Proposal for mining project of 10.25 ha with a production capacity of 54,400 TPA (Khasra No. 283/3/1) on River Yamuna by M/s Mahender Singh & Co. at 8.5 km from the boundary of the PA
JAMMU & KASHMIR	
Ajas CR*	Denotification of the reserve
Chakore Reserve	Proposal for the construction of a 400 KV DC Kisherpur – New Wanpoh transmission line through the reserve
Dachigam NP	Proposal by Rural Water Supply, Sub Division Srinagar for laying of 2 numbers 4 inch dia. GI pipeline in the PA
Hokersar Wetland Reserve	Construction of drainage channel across the reserve along the old alignment under the flood management program
Kishtwar NP	De-notification/diversion of a part of the national park for Pakul Hydro project / redefining of the core areas of the park
Sudh-mahdev CR	Construction of 4.81 km road from Katwala to Gali Mandola by the PMGSY division, Udampur –I in Block Chenani, Udampur district. The road is located 200 m to 4 km from the boundary of the reserve

Wangat CR	Adjustment of the boundaries of the reserve
KERALA	
Peechi-Vazhani WLS	Laying a LPG pipeline from Kochi Refinery to Coimbatore at a distance of 5.3 km from the PA boundary
Periyar TR	Permission for environmental impact assessment (EIA) study for construction of a new Mullaperiyar dam. The EIA study will be carried out in a 10 km radius around the project site
Periyar TR	Proposal for diversion of 0.655 ha from the reserve for increasing the height of the Kunnar Dam for water supply for Sabarimala
MADHYA PRADESH	
Not Mentioned	Construction and Upgradation of 2.5 km road from Khatola to Kisli
Not mentioned	Construction and upgradation of 2.6 km road from 14 km off T-2 to Mukki
Not mentioned	Construction and upgradation of 5.13 km road from Rajomal to Manoharpur
Not mentioned	Construction of stop dam cum causeway on Rehti-Tendukheda road at km 82/2
Not mentioned	Construction and upgradation of 6 km Tendukheda-Taradehi-Sarra to Kudpura approach road
Not mentioned	Approach road from Somkheda to Hinouti-Ramgarh
Not mentioned	Construction and upgradation of 4.20 km of Bamhori to Kotkheda road
Not mentioned	Construction of MDR to Mokla road
Not mentioned	Construction of 14.20 km road for NH-12 to Malkuhi Jhilpani Dhana
Not mentioned	Construction of 4.73 km Somkheda-Suhela approach road
Not mentioned	Upgradation of 8.55 km road from Bineka to Borpani
Not Mentioned	Widening of SH-59 from Indore to Gujarat border
Not Mentioned	Upgradation of Bhiapur to Amchhekala Dam Road
Kanha TR	Extension of underground mining by Hindustan Copper Ltd., Malanjkhanda located within 10 km of the boundary of the reserve
Ken Ghariyal WLS	Proposal for maintenance and strengthening of old existing Akona distributing canal of Ranganwa canal project in the sanctuary
Kharmor (Sailana) WLS	Construction of the 400 KV D/C Rajgarh-Karamsad transmission line passing through the PA
Madhav NP	Widening existing 2-lane NH-3 passing through the park
Madhav NP	Diversion of 9.0 ha of land for upgradation and widening of Satanwara to

	Narvar Road within a 10 km periphery of the national park
National Chambal WLS	Construction of a high level bridge across the Kuwari river at Lakhana-Hanumantpura-Phoop link road to Umari Bhind in MP within the boundary of the PA
National Chambal WLS	Construction of a high level bridge across the Chambal river at Hanumantpura-Bhind (MP) via Babarpur Garha Kasda Mahua Sada and Bansari (Etawah) within the boundary of the PA
National Chambal WLS	Diversion of 2.340 ha of forest land from the PA for construction of a high level bridge across the Chambal river on the Ambah-Pinahat Road
Nauradehi WLS	Diversion of 22.995 ha of forest land for construction of the Balakot reservoir within 10 km of the PA boundary
Pench Mowgli WLS	Diversion of 4.493 ha of forest land from the PA for rehabilitation/upgradation from the existing 2 lane to 4 lanes of NH7
Ratapani WLS	Construction of a 132 KV Mungalia Chhap (220KV) – Bhopal (MACT line) 4.5 km from the sanctuary boundary
Sanjay TR/Son Ghariyal WLS	Use of 14.11 ha of private land for soap stone and marble mining at village Karmai (Sidhi district) at a site located within 10km of the two PAs
Sanjay Dubri WLS	Proposal for the construction of the Kanchanpur railway station and laying of two additional lines at the station in Katni-Singroli section at Km 1218.170 passing through the PA
Singheri WLS	Diversion of 1.78 ha of land for upgradation and widening of the Rampura to Bajani road
Singheri WLS	Diversion of 1.80 ha of land for upgradation and widening of L-51 (Kartoli) to Kesali road
Son Ghariyal WLS	Diversion of 1.35 ha from the sanctuary and further from within a 10 km periphery of the sanctuary for laying of a gas pipeline from Shahdol to Phulpur by Reliance Gas Pipelines Ltd.
Son Chiriya (Karera) WLS	Diversion of 27.47 ha (20.77 ha forest land and 6.70 ha private land) from the sanctuary for the construction of a 765 KV electric transmission line between Gwalior and Jaipur
Son Chiriya WLS	Investigation and survey for construction of NH-3 bypass road through the PA
MAHARASHTRA	
Not mentioned	Diversion of 8.75 ha of reserve forest land for the Raperi (storage) minor irrigation project in Karanha tehsil, District Washim
Bor and New Bor WLSs	Proposal for laying of natural gas pipeline from Mallavarm in Andhra Pradesh to Bhilwara in Rajasthan at distance of 1.8 km from the two PAs
Gautala Autramghat WLS	Diversion of 0.372 ha of forest land from the PA for laying of a optical fibre cable along the Aurangabad-Kannad Challisgaon Highway No. 211
Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary	Seeking permission to use private agricultural land for non-agricultural/education activity in village Kashti in the PA

Great Indian Bustard WLS	Widening of the existing 2-lane to 4/6-lane of the Solapur-Bijapur section of NH-13 in Maharashtra located within 10 km of the PA boundary
Great Indian Bustard WLS	Rehabilitation and upgradation of existing 2-lane to 4-lane of the Solapur to Yedshi section of NH-9 from km 249.00 to km 255.00 under the NHDP Phase IV B – within 10 km of the boundary of the PA
Karnala WLS	Widening of the existing 2 lane to 4 lane road divided carriage configuration for Panvel-Indapur (km 0.00 to km 84.00) section of NH-17. The proposed site is within 10 kms of the sanctuary
Karnala WLS	Laying of 12 inch dia. HPCL's Uran-Chakani Shikarpur LPG gas pipeline along with a 6 inch dia optical fibre cable through the PA
Koyna WLS	Survey and investigation for construction of the Humbarli Pumped Hydroelectric Project (2x200 MW)
Tansa WLS	Permission for survey and investigation for the Gargai project inside the PA
Yedshi-Ramlinghat WLS	Rehabilitation & upgradation of the existing 2-lane to 4-lane from Solapur to Yedshi section of NH-221 from km 0.00 to k, 100.00 of NH-9 under the NHDP Phase –IV – within 10 km of the boundary of the PA
MIZORAM	
Dampa TR	Seeking permission for control of fencing and patrol road along the Indo-Bangladesh border inside the tiger reserve
ODISHA	
Not mentioned	Establishment of a cement grinding unit (1.5 MTPA) and DG sets (2x6 MW) of M/s JK Lakshmi Cement Ltd at Vil. Ghantikal and Radhashyampur, Athagarh tehsil, Cuttack District
Not mentioned	Phase – II expansion of Dhamra port in Village Dosing, Chandbali Tehsil, Dist. Bhadrak by the Dhamra Port Company Ltd.
Not mentioned	Proposal for Bangur underground Chromite Mines in Keonjhar district by M/s OMC Ltd.
Kapilash WLS	Establishment of a 1050 MW Thermal Power Plant by M/s KVK Nilachal Power Pvt. Ltd. in Kandrei Village, Athagarh, Cuttack dist, about 3.5 km from the boundary of the sanctuary
PUNJAB	
Abohar WLS	Rehabilitation and upgradation of NH-15 from Amritsar to Sri Ganganagar (103 km to 399 km) falling with 10 kms from the boundary of the PA
Bir Aishwan WLS	4-laning of the Sangrur-Punjab/Haryana border section of NH-71 from km 181.805 (Sangrur) to km 238.695 (Punjab/Haryana border). The road passes 1.208 km from the boundary of the PA
Bir Bunerheri WLS	Mining of minor minerals in village Kapoori over an area of 6.63 ha located 2.7 km from the boundary of the PA
Harike WLS	Rehabilitation and upgradation of NH-15 from Amritsar to Sri Ganganagar (100 km to 398.772 km) falling with 10 kms from the boundary of the PA
Jhajjar Bachauli WLS	Mining of minor minerals in village Bela Ramgarh, over an area of 105.22 ha located 9.3 km from the boundary of the PA
Jhajjar	Proposal for mining of minor minerals in village Baihara, over an area of

Bachauli WLS	126.01 ha located 7.2 km from the boundary of the PA
Jhajjar Bachauli WLS	Mining of minor minerals in village Lodhipur over an area of 10.17 ha located 5.2 km from the boundary of the PA
Jhajjar Bachauli WLS	Mining of minor minerals in village Raipur Saini, over an area of 18.71 ha located 5.5 km from the boundary of the PA
Jhajjar Bachauli WLS	Mining of minor minerals in village Mindwan, over an area of 6.22 ha located 3.7 km from the boundary of the PA
Jhajjar Bachauli WLS	Mining of minor minerals in village Harsabela, over an area of 79.29 ha located 7.7 km from the boundary of the PA
Jhajjar Bachauli WLS	Mining of minor minerals in village Chandpur, over an area of 61.44 ha located 7.3 km from the boundary of the PA
Kathalur Kaushlian WLS	Mining of minor minerals in Karkhara village over an area of 93.20 ha located 0.59 and 8.1 km from the boundary of the PA
Kathalur Kaushlian WLS	Mining of minor minerals from village Chak Hari Rau over an area of 47.20 ha located 6 km and 11.1 km from the boundary of the PA
Kathalur Kaushlian WLS	Mining of minor minerals from village Jhumber over an area of 53.20 ha located 2.3 km and 9.3 km from the boundary of the PA
Kathalur Kaushlian WLS	Mining of minor minerals from village Maira over an area of 103.60 ha located 10.02 km and 3.04 km from the boundary of the PA
Kathalur Kaushlian WLS	Mining of minor minerals from village Siunti over an area of 49.60 ha located 1.4 km and 9.01 km from the boundary of the PA
Kathalur Kaushlian WLS	Mining of minor minerals from village Chak Ram Sahai, over an area of 19.20 ha located 9.5 km and 3.6 km from the boundary of the PA
Kathalur Kaushlian WLS	Mining of minor minerals from village Dulpat, over an area of 11.60 ha located 1.8 km and 9.3 km from the boundary of the PA
RAJASTHAN	
Not mentioned	Rehabilitation and upgradation of Uncha Nagla-khanua Rupbas-Dholpur (NH-123) to 2 lanes with paved shoulder
Not mentioned	Lakheri-Chamovali mining lease of M/s ACC Ltd, Lakheri Cement Works at Lakheri, Dist. Bundi for limestone mining
Not mentioned	Building stone mine by Kotra Sandstone near Kotra village, Dist. Jhalawar over an area of 19.68 ha – Mining lease 37 (New: 26/2006)
Not mentioned	Construction of a high level bridge by the PWD over the Chambal rive at Sone Ka Gurja in the Dholpur forest division
Not	Construction of a high level bridge on Chambal rive on the Sabalgarh-

mentioned	Mangarole-Atar-Mandrayal Karauli Road (SH-22)
Bandh Baretha WLS	Development of the road from Bari to Kherli 0/0 to 122/0 (Bari-Baseri-Weir-Bhusawar-Chonkarwara-Nagar-Pahari) through the PA
Bassi WLS	Diversion of 0.6 ha of forest land from the PA for strengthening and widening (from 3 m to 7 m of the Nimbahera-Kanera-Bijaypur-Bass-Amba existing road MDR-20 between 60/500 to &4 /0 (Bijapur to Bassi Chaouraha) km 67/950 to 68/450
Bassi WLS	Diversion of 0.975 ha of land from the sanctuary for construction of a 33KV line maintenance near Parsoli
Bhainsrodgarh WLS/ Jawaharsagar/Darra WLS/ Mukundra TR	Establishment of Nuclear Fuel Complex and Township near Kota. The proposed site is 800 to 1000 meters from Bhainsrodgarh WLS, 4.6 km from Jawaharsagar, 7 km from Darra WLS and 4 km from the buffer area of the Mukundra TR
Darra WLS	Mining lease No. 36/91 and New lease No. 25/2006 of Biloniya Sand Stone in Village Bilonia located 2.5 km from the sanctuary
Darra WLS/ Mukundra Hills NP	Periodical renewal work from km 291/0 to 298/0 on NH-12 (existing road length 7.00 km and width 7.00 m) passing through the Darra WLS and on the boundary of the Mukundra Hills NP
Darra WLS/ Mukundra Hills NP	Mining lease No. 21/93, about 6.00 km from the common boundary of the two PAs
Desert NP	Rationalisation of the boundaries of the PA
Desert NP	Renewal of approach road from Berisiyala from 0/0 to 9/200 (V.R. – 74) passing through the national park
Keladeo NP	Diversion of 0.144 ha of land from the national park for construction of a semi-captive Siberian crane exhibit
Kesharbagh WLS	Diversion of 0.726 ha from the sanctuary for laying of an underground drinking water pipeline from PHED Dholpur to Rashtriya Military School, Dholpur along the NH-11B
Kesharbagh WLS/ Van Vihar WLS/ Ram Sagar WLS	Upgradation of the Karauli to Dholpur section of NH-11B (km 83.500 to km 186.750) to 2-lane paved shoulder configuration. The proposed road is located 850 m from Kesharbagh WLS, 1.0 km from the Van Vihar WLS and 3.5 km from the Ram Sagar WLS
Kumbalgarh WLS	Upgradation of BT Road from Bijapur to Korwa Fanta km 0/0 to 5/0 and 8/0 to 15/0
Kumbalgarh WLS	Renewal and upgradation of Sewari to Peepla Road km 0/0 to 1/0 and 3/0 to 9/0 through the sanctuary
Kumbalgarh WLS	Renewal and upgradation of the existing Pali-Nadol-Gomti Ka Chauraha state highway (SH-16) of section 280/0 to 290/0 and approach road to Charbhuj temple through the sanctuary
Mukundra NP/Darra WLS	Permission for limestone mine (ML No. 24/93) of M/s Shiva Stones in Kotri Chechat village, Kota, located 6 km from the boundary of the Darra WLS
National	Diversion of 1.843 ha (1.393 bridge, 0.45 road) of forest land from the PA

Chambal WLS	for upgradation of the Sabalgarh-Karoli Road (SH2) and construction of a high level bridge across the Chambal River on the Sabalgarh-Karoli road
Ramgarh WLS	Exclusion of 281.97 ha from the sanctuary as part of the process of rationalization of PA boundaries
Sariska TR	Diversion of 1.0125 ha from the reserve for laying of 24F optical fibre cable between Alwar, Kushalgarh Tiraha and Thanagazi
Todgarh Raoli WLS	Proposal for mining quartz and feldspar at a site 7 km from the boundary of the PA
Todgarh Raoli WLS	Permission for laying of a 36 inch natural gas pipeline from Mehasana, Gujarat to Ajmer, Rajasthan and Bhatinda, Punjab. The pipeline is within 10 km of the PA boundary
SIKKIM	
Not mentioned	Proposal for the 520 MW Hydroelectric Power project, Teesta Stage IV on the River Teesta in North Sikkim by NHPC Ltd.
Kitam WLS	Diversion of 2.606 ha of land from the sanctuary for improvement and upgradation of the Melli-Nayabazar State highway (SK-10) from km 17.00 to Nayabazar
Pangolakha WLS	Diversion of 7.60 ha of forest land from the PA for the upgradation/widening of the road from Kupup to Trijunction in East Sikkim
TAMIL NADU	
Pulicat Bird Sanctuary	Diversion of 1.11 ha of land from the PA for construction of a high level bridge at Km 0/4 – Chennai Pulicat Road to Pasiyavaram Road
Pulicat Bird Sanctuary	Diversion of 0.65 ha of land from the sanctuary for the construction of a fish landing centre at Periyamongagodu in Thiruvallur district
TRIPURA	
Trishna WLS	Diversion of 9.94 ha of land in the PA for construction of a new broad gauge railway line between Agartala and Sabroom
UTTAR PRADESH	
Dudhwa NP	Diversion of 0.81 ha of forest land from the national park for laying of an optical fiber cable along the Palia-Dudhwa road from Dudhwa to Chandan Chowki
Dudhwa NP	Construction of the unit office and residential mixed used project ‘OCR’ complex of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt of India within the buffer zone of the national park
Dudhwa TR	Construction of staff quarters, chowki and office of the Customs department, Unit Gauriphant, Tehsil Palia, within the buffer zone of the tiger reserve
Dudhwa TR	Diversion of 18.68 ha of reserved forest from the TR and 44.61 from with the eco-sensitive zone for construction of the road from Gaurifanta to Chandanchauki of the Indo-Nepal Border road
Elephant Reserve, Sahranpur	Proposal by the Powergrid Corporation of India Ltd for the construction of a 400 KV D/C (Quad) Dehradun-Bagpat electric transmission Line through the Shivalik forest division of the elephant reserve
Kaimur WLS	Construction by Power Transmission Corporation Ltd. of 765 KV S/C Anpara ‘D’ Unnao transmission line through the Kaimur WLS

Kaimur WLS	Diversion of 180.79 ha of forest land for construction of the Bansagar Irrigation project (Adwa-Meja Jirgo link channels) canal of 25.60 km length of which 15 km falls in the PA
Lakh Bahosi Bird Sanctuary	Seeking permission or the black topping of existing four roads in the sanctuary
National Chambal WLS	Proposal for setting up of a Kisan Seva Kendra at Khasra No. 255/1, in Village Chandai, Charkarnagar Tehsil, Etawah district by the Indian Oil Corporation. The site is within the boundaries of the sanctuary
Suhelwa WLS	Construction of the Rapti Main Canal passing through the Kakardari Forest Range of the Shrawasti forest Division located 6 kms from the boundary of the PA
Sursarovar Bird Sanctuary	Proposal for laying of Indian Oil Corporation's Keetham Mathura Refinery water pipeline through the sanctuary
Sursarovar WLS	Proposal for setting up non-polluting leather industries under the leather park scheme 7.5 km from the boundary of the PA
Turtle WLS	Rehabilitation and upgradation of NH-233 from existing 2-lane to 4-lane from Ghaghara bridge abutment on basti side to Varanasi (from km 121+800 to 299+350). The side is 7.85 m from the sanctuary
UTTARAKHAND	
Not mentioned	Proposal for aerial passenger ropeway between Ghangaria and Hemkund Sahib in Chamoli district
Not mentioned	Construction, operation and maintenance of the 51 MW Jakhol Sankri Hydro-Electric project in Uttarakashi district
Gangotri NP	Proposal for installing a stone crusher by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police for construction of three roads, viz., Sonan, PDA-Sumla and PDA-Mendi roads in the PA
Gangotri NP	Diversion of 0.60 ha of land from the NP for construction of Tripani post of 12 th BN, Uttarakhand
Rajaji NP	Establishment of a solid waste management unit in the area of SIDCUL, Haridwar by Bharat Oil and Waste Management Ltd at a site located 3.5 km from the park boundary
WEST BENGAL	
Mahananda WLS	Diversion of 7.68 ha of land from the PA for widening of the NH-31A from Sevoke to Gangtok in favour of 764 BRTF

*CR – Conservation Reserve

Source: Agenda Notes, Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife, 31st meeting

Seeking your urgent support

The *Protected Area Update* urgently needs your financial support for the current year. We've raised about 60% of the resources we need. We're still looking for the rest. Write to the editor at psekhsharia@gmail.com for details of how you can help us sail through.

A Decade Ago

Protected Area Update 50 & 51, October 2004

GUJARAT

73 fires in Gir in two year period 2002-2004; 20 lion deaths in 2003-04

73 fires in a two-year period from 2002 to 2004 were reported to have affected the Gir forests. The total financial loss incurred due to this has been tabulated at a little over Rs. three lakhs. This information was recently provided in the Gujarat Assembly by State Tribal Welfare Minister, Mr. Mangu Patel who is also in charge of environment and forests. He was replying to a question by Amreli MLA, Mr. Pares Dhanani.

37 fires spread over 2202 hectares were reported in 2002-03 while 827 hectares were affected by 36 fires that occurred in 2003-04. A total of 15 forest ranges were affected by these fires, of which the Sarsia range experienced a maximum of 15 fires. The Dedkadi range witnessed seven fires in this period; the Dalkhania and Hadala ranges, six each; five each in Jamwada, Savarkundla, and Jasadhar ranges; four each in Tulsishyam, Chodwadi, Pania, and Visavadar, ranges, three in the Sasan range; two each in Babaria and Devlia ranges and one in the Talala range.

It was also reported a total of 20 lions including 10 cubs were found dead in the sanctuary during 2003-04. Of these three were said to have died due to accidents while the rest died of natural causes.

Source: '73 fires in Gujarat in just two years', *The Asian Age*, 10/06/04.
'20 asiatic lions die in Gujarat sanctuary', *The Statesman*, 05/06/04.
Vasundhara Raje Scindia, dated 07/09/04.

SIKKIM

Conservation Reserve proposed for the cold desert region of Sikkim

The Department of Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management, Government of Sikkim has proposed the creation of the Tso Lhamo Cold Desert Conservation Reserve (TLCDCR) in North Sikkim in an attempt to protect the habitat and wildlife here.

The proposal is based on extensive field studies of the cold desert and trans-Himalayan areas of North Sikkim carried out in the alpine grasslands in collaboration with the Bombay Natural History Society. The field studies that were facilitated by the Indian Army stationed in the area, under Commander 112 Mountain Brigade and CO 30 Assam Rifles have generated valuable information on a hitherto virtually ignored area of Sikkim.

A stakeholder's consultation has been planned in October 2004 at Tsunghang, North Sikkim to discuss various issues related to the area.

The army has reportedly expressed concern that the creation of the conservation reserve 'will impose severe restrictions on defence related activity, ultimately impinging on their operational preparedness and national security.....'. They have written to the Governor, Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary, Government of Sikkim and the FD suggesting that the workshop should not be held until clearance is received from the Ministry of Defence (MOD).

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PERSPECTIVE

Giving the otter its due

Three species of otters occur on the Indian subcontinent - the Eurasian otter *Lutra lutra*, the Smooth-coated otter *Lutrogale perspicillata* and the Oriental small-clawed otter *Aonyx cinerea*. The Smooth-coated otter is distributed throughout the country from the Himalayas southward, but the other two are restricted to the Himalayas, north of the Ganges and to southern India, with recent records of the Oriental small-clawed otter from streams in Eastern India. In north-west India, otters have been reported from the Kashmir valley, from the Trans Himalayan region of Ladakh and also from Himachal Pradesh.

The existing populations of otter species in India and their habitat have been sporadically surveyed and evidence seems to suggest that in the north Indian plains, in particular, they have either become extinct or are getting extremely rare outside the protected areas. The Nityata Foundation has been studying the occurrence, habitat and distribution of the Oriental small-clawed otter and the Smooth coated otter along the Cauvery river, with the objective of developing a long term conservation plan for the species in the river. We believe that the otters are ambassadors of river and stream ecosystems and any intervention to save the species will only have positive benefits for all.

In the last two years, the research team has learnt of a number of threats that otters, and indeed all river wildlife face: the mining of sand, dynamite fishing, a heavy pollution load on the river from towns alongside it, as well as chemical pesticide residues in the water and opportunistic poaching. Extensive interaction with the fisherfolk has shown that the dominant lens of viewing otters is one of hostility, or at best, neutrality.

This is something that needed immediate attention. The conservation plan that we are working on therefore involves both

engagement with the local fisherfolk and children in schools and of using theatre and interactive media to highlight the role of the otter as one of the apex predators in the riverine ecosystem. Subsequently, the conservation plan will include a campaign against dynamite fishing, and on addressing some of the issues of pollution along the river. The project is in close informal dialogue with the Fisheries Department, which is one of the key stakeholders in the river's health.

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For private circulation/ Printed matter

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