

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

Vol. XVII No. 2

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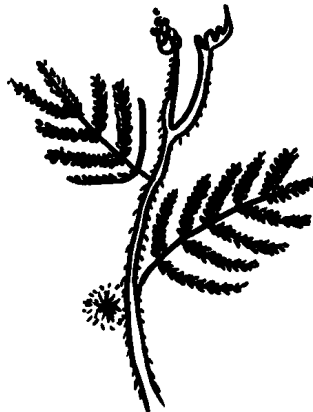
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Protected Area Update

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www.wildlifewatch.in

EDITORIAL

The law of un-intended consequences

There are at least a few stories in this issue of the PA Update that fit in with the 'law of un-intended consequences' (LUIC) and at least one amongst them has a tinge of black humour and a sting in the tail. If those accused of rhino poaching in January, earlier this year, in the Orang National Park in Assam are indeed caught, they will have a very unlikely and unexpected element to blame - they were trapped (pun unintended) by cameras put up by wildlife researchers to trap tigers. Imagine setting out in the dark wilderness of rhino country believing no one knows where you are, only to be photographed by a camera which has not even been set up for you. Might this finally be the solution to the huge poaching problem our wildlife faces? Let's massively spread the information (or mis-information) that researchers have over run our PAs, putting up cameras everywhere to take wildlife pictures. At least some of this information might get across and the poachers will get the message for sure.

The un-intended consequence in Orang may have been positive, but LUIC, like all laws operates symmetrically – the negative is as likely as the positive for an outcome. We see this again in other PAs in Assam. In Pobitora WLS, a road constructed without consideration for the natural drainage pattern is threatening the grasslands by submerging them for extended periods and in Kaziranga a plant grown by adjoining tea estates to enhance soil fertility (a positive outcome) is invading the park as a weed and posing a huge treat (negative outcome) to it. It's running wild and destroying the grasses that are the primary food for the park's five main herbivores.

The same LUIC appears to have also worked in a completely different situation one that Minister Jairam Ramesh might agree to as well. The Ministry of Environment and Forests recently set aside the old guidelines for the declaration of Critical Wildlife Habitats under the provisions of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and issued new ones arguing that these would be better implementable. The reaction and opposition was fierce. NGOs,

tribal activists and wildlife researchers were quick to point out that this would simply not work and asked for their recall. The Ministry's intention had back-fired. The old guidelines had been withdrawn, now the new guidelines had to be withdrawn and still newer guidelines are going to be issued soon. The Ministry might have sought to increase efficiency – it ended up only creating more work for itself.

The message is simple. Human and natural systems are both intricate and complex and we need to be extremely careful when we seek to make interventions of any kind. The more cautious and humble we are, the less is the likelihood that we would want to run away or disown the consequences of our own actions.

NEWS FROM INDIAN STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

Rs. 20 crore earmarked for forests and wildlife for 2011-12

A little more than Rs. 20 crores have been earmarked for forests and wildlife in Andhra Pradesh for the year 2011-12. The figures were tabled in February in the state assembly as part of the Annual Plan for 2011-12. Rs. 7.75 crore have been provided to deal with forest fires under the Integrated Forest Protection Scheme. This entails the creation and maintenance of fire lines, survey and demarcation of boundaries, engaging fire watchers, procurement of fire fighting equipment and purchase of vehicles.

A sum of Rs. 2.50 crore has been provided in the budget for Project Elephant for habitat improvement and protection measures. Return of elephants into Andhra Pradesh from the adjoining Tamil Nadu and Karnataka has resulted in a stable population in the state of 30 elephants after a long gap. Another amount of Rs. 10 crore has also been earmarked for development of protected areas.

Source: 'Rs. 7.75 earmarked for preventing forest fires', www.hindu.com, 25/02/11

Contact: CWLW, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Aranya Bhavan, Saifabad, Hyderabad - 500004, Andhra Pradesh. Tel: 040-23230561 / 23232668. Fax: 337889.

ASSAM

Threat from *Mimosa diplotricha* to Kaziranga National Park

A GIS-aided mapping project of *Mimosa diplotricha* at Kaziranga National Park has suggested that anywhere between one and four percent of the park has been covered by this weed. *Mimosa diplotricha* is related to the common touch-me-not plant *Mimosa pudica* and is believed to have spread in the park from nearby tea gardens where it is used for the nitrogen fixation capability of its roots to enhance soil fertility.

The mapping project is being carried out by the Rain Forest Research Institute at Lahdoigarh by using images provided by the National Remote Sensing Centre, Hyderabad. The project has been going on since 2008-09 and has been completed for the Bagori range of the park.

Forest officials say that spread of the weed is only 2nd to poaching as a threat posed to the park. The three-year project under the state forest department envisages complete eradication of this plant which affects the growth of the tall elephant grass, food of the five herbivores of Kaziranga — elephant, rhino, deer, wild buffalo and sambhar.

As the project envisages complete eradication, scientists will take up laboratory examination of the plant after the mapping is completed. The scientists have said they cannot use chemical or biological methods to deal with the plant and are trying to identify other means that would kill the weed but not affect the other flora and fauna of the park. (Also see *PA Updates* [40](#), [34](#) & [30](#))

Source: 'Experts ring alarm bells on mimosa', *The Telegraph*, 03/03/11

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

71 rhino deaths in Kaziranga NP in 2010

Figures given by officials of the Assam Forest Department (FD) indicate that there were 71 rhino deaths in Kaziranga National Park in the calendar year 2010. 45 rhinos are said to have died of old-age ailments, one was killed by another rhino and 20 were killed by tigers. Five rhinos were also killed by poachers in the Agrotoli and Kohora ranges of the park. The same period also saw the death of 11 elephants and five tigers.

The FD staff killed nine poachers, arrested 11 and also recovered a large number of arms and ammunitions from the poachers. A total of 17 attempts of poaching were foiled by the forest personnel.

Source: 'KNP saw 68 rhino deaths in 2010' www.assamtribune.com, 27/02/11



Four more rhinos for Manas NP

Four rhinos were released in the Bansbari range of the Manas National Park (NP) in the month of January. The rhinos were transported overnight with security cover and under the expert supervision of five veterinarians. They are fitted with radio collars and will be monitored continuously for the next year by the staff of Manas NP with support from WWF-India members.

This was part of the second round of the second phase of rhino translocations under the Indian Rhino Vision 2010 programme (*PA Updates* [Vol XIV, No. 6](#); [Vol XIV, No. 5](#); [Vol XIII, Nos. 5 & 2](#)) which aims to reintroduce a total of 20 rhinos in Manas by the year 2011 (*PA Update* [Vol XIV, No. 5](#)). Eight of these have already been translocated from Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.

Source: '4 rhinos released in Manas', *The Assam Tribune*, 19/01/11

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

Rescued elephants calves released inside Manas National Park

Five elephant calves from the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) were released inside the Manas National Park (MNP) in February as the first step towards their re-integration with wild herds.

The calves, one female and four males between the age of three and five years, were rescued under various circumstances from different parts of Assam. All of these calves were separated from their natal herds – two were victims of conflicts with people, one was displaced during floods while the remaining two were found in tea gardens. They were admitted to the CWRC situated near the Kaziranga National Park for rehabilitation as they could not be reunited with their herds immediately.

After a 12-hour journey, monitored by CWRC veterinarians and animal keepers the calves were released in the wild at the Daimari beat for the initiation of their in-situ acclimatisation. At Manas, the calves will undergo a prolonged habituation process under close supervision of the Forest Department (FD) officials. Their behaviour as individuals and their interactions with each other as well as other wild elephants would be observed and recorded as they grow independent of their keepers. Once the calves are completely detach from their keeper and return to the wild, they would be monitored through radio collars.

The move is considered to be a crucial step in the rehabilitation of these calves in the wild and is being implemented by the Assam FD and the International Fund for Animal Welfare – Wildlife Trust of India (IFAW-WTI) with the support of the Bodoland Territorial Council.

Source: 'Elephant calves moved to Manas', [The Assam Tribune](#), 05/02/11

Rebels kidnap WWF volunteers in Manas TR; released subsequently

About 20 suspected militants of the anti-talks faction of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) abducted six World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) –India volunteers at gunpoint from the Labanyapur area of Ultapani reserve

forest which falls under the Manas Tiger Reserve. The incident took place in the first week of February at a place that straddles Kokrajhar and Chirang districts in the western part of Assam. It is near the India-Bhutan international border.

The abducted volunteers were working in the area for about a month and were expected to finish their work in a couple of days when the incident occurred. Four forest staff who accompanied the volunteers were, however, left free by the abductors.

The needle of suspicion pointed towards the proscribed anti-talks faction of NDFB, which had recently sent feelers to the state government on its intention to hold peace talks. It has a strong presence in Ultapani and its adjoining areas along the international border. Ultapani, a 34-km drive from National Highway 31, is known for the presence of a wide diversity of life, including the golden langur

Security forces said the abduction could be a retaliation against the anti-insurgency combing operation in the area, which is about 60 km from Kokrajhar, the headquarters of the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). The abductors also reportedly refused to talk till the combing operations were withdrawn. BTC deputy chief Kampa Borgoyari and BTC executive member James Basumatary also visited Ultapani in a bid to secure the release. BTC deputy chief Kampa Borgoyari contacted the abductors and appealed for the safe release of the abducted volunteers.

Several conservation NGOs in the northeast had demanded the safe and early release of the abducted volunteers. In a joint statement, WWF-India, Wildlife Trust of India, Aaranyak, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Dolphin Foundation and EcoSystems-India, said the volunteers were students from the region who were engaged in tiger population estimation work in Manas Tiger Reserve as a part of an all-India exercise.

In July last year, four SSB personnel including an assistant commander were ambushed and gunned down by the anti-talks NDFB faction in a forested area near the Bhutan border in Chirang district. The anti-

talks faction was also involved in the abduction and subsequent release of Maharashtra forest official VS Bardekar. He was abducted from a village in Arunachal Pradesh and later released at Dhekiajuli in Sonitpur district of Assam.

The six volunteers were eventually released unharmed. The three women volunteers were released on February 9, while their male colleagues were released about a week later.

Source: 'Rebels kidnap WWF volunteers in Manas', [Times New Network](#), 08/02/11
'Militants release WWF volunteers in Assam', www.assamtribune.com, 17/02/11

Elevation of road along western boundary of Pobitora WLS threatens grasslands, rhinos

The construction of a road along the western boundary of the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) is believed to have changed the drainage pattern in the area and is in turn threatening the grasslands and rhinos here.

The Chamota-Pobitora road along the western boundary of the sanctuary (the Mayong-Pomapur portion) was raised recently by the Public Works Department (PWD) without leaving sufficient outlet for floodwater to pass. While waters from the Brahmaputra inundates the sanctuary every year, replenishing the grassland as well as the waterbodies of the sanctuary, last year's floodwater stayed stagnant inside the sanctuary from June to September. Earlier, the water used to recede within a week which is essential for Pobitora's ecosystem to survive.

Forest officials said that they had repeatedly taken up the matter with the PWD authorities, but the suggestions and advice to create water outlets/culverts was not heeded to.

Source: Sivasish Thakur, 'Road elevation causes waterlogging in Pobitora', [The Assam Tribune](#), 28/01/11

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

Cameras for tiger study capture poachers at Orang

Camera traps that were set up as part of a tiger study in the Orang (Rajiv Gandhi) National Park ([PA Update Vol XIV, No. 4](#)), captured for the first time, poachers as moved around in the park. Forest officials said that the camera traps hung on trees had taken pictures of a group of poachers who had killed a rhino on January 9. The poachers were carrying .303 rifles.

70 cameras have been put up at strategic locations in the park as part of the camera trapping exercise being carried out by the wildlife NGO, Aaranyak.

The animal was said to have been killed at about 1.30 am in the morning and a guard on duty was suspended for allegedly conniving with the poachers. It was noted that the poachers were from outside the area and the pictures taken by the camera traps were sent to nearby police stations to help in investigations and arresting the guilty.

Source: 'Cameras for tiger study capture poachers at Orang', [The Telegraph](#), 14/01/11

Contact: **Firoz Ahmed**, Aaranyak, Samanwoy Path (Survey), PO Beltola, Guwahati – 781028, Assam. Tel: 0361-636768 / 266087. Fax: 266087. Email: firoz@aaranyak.org
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Rajiv Gandhi (Orang) NP being considered for introduction of the pygmy hog



The Rajiv Gandhi (Orang) National Park could be the next site for the introduction of the pygmy hog.

The Assam Forest Department (FD) is preparing a feasibility report for the examination of site in Orang for the same. The northern area of the park is being considered

suitable for the release of 10-12 of the critically endangered animals.

The Orang proposal comes after the successful reintroduction program at the Gulgeli grasslands of Sonai-Rupai wildlife sanctuary ([PA Update Vol. XIV, No. 4](#)). A total of 35 hogs were released from in the three year period for 2008 to 2010. Ground surveys and camera trapping has confirmed that nearly 70% of these animals have survived well. New borns have been recorded and so has been their dispersion to newer areas.

The conservation programme is a collaborative project between Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, IUCN/SSC Pigs Peccaries and Hippos Specialist Group, the Assam FD and the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Source: Roopak Goswami. 'Report suggest Orang home for pygmy hog', [The Telegraph](#), 24/02/11

Contact: **Dr. Goutam Narayan**, Pygmy Hog Conservation Program, Nr O/o DFO Social Forestry, Indira Nagar, Basistha, Guwahati – 781029, Assam. Email: goutam.narayan@gmail.com
Chief Wildlife Warden – Assam, Rehabari, Guwahati – 781008, Assam. Tel: 0361-2566064. Fax: 2547386.

GOA

Walls and trenches coming up around Cotigao and Bhagwan Mahaveer WLSs

The Forest Department (FD) is constructing a five-km long rubble wall and cattle-proof trenches in Cotigao and Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuaries (WLSs) in different patches. The move is aimed at stopping humans and domestic animals from entering the forests as also preventing wildlife from moving out.

The one-and-half-metre high wall will cost Rs. Nine lakh per km. The work is funded by the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) resources. After completion of this work, the FD plans to take up similar projects in other WLSs in the state as well.

Source: 'Forest Dept begins fencing of 2 wildlife sanctuaries', [Herald](#), 20/01/11

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Wildlife Wing, Junta House, Panaji 403001, Goa. Tel: 0832 – 224747 / 278891. Fax: 224747

KERALA

BNHS launches awareness drive to conserve vultures in Wayanad WLS

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) in association with Ferns Naturalists Society, in the Kalpetta district, has launched an awareness drive for vulture conservation in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS).

The Wayanad WLS and adjacent forests such as those in Mudumalai, Sathyamangalam, Bandipur and Nagarhole in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (BR) have been providing a healthy habitat for the vulture species. The Malabar Ornithological Survey organised by the Forest Department recently sighted 12 active nestlings of *Gyps bengalensis* in the Wayanad WLS and a few White Rumped vultures as well.

The sudden decline in the population of vulture species was noticed after 1995 in India. The vulture population especially that of the Indian White-backed, Long-billed and Slender-billed, has declined by more than 99.9 per cent. It was established in 2004 that Diclofenac, a drug used widely as painkiller in livestock in the Indian subcontinent was fatal for the vultures.

Though the Central government banned the use and production of veterinary Diclofenac in May 2006 ([PA Update Vol XII, No. 4](#)), a recent survey by the BNHS, in association with local conservation groups in the Nilgiri BR, found Diclofenac available in drug stores. The study found that most of the stakeholders, including villagers, cattle owners, veterinary experts and drug store owners, were unaware of the ban on the drug or its effect on vultures.

Source: E.M. Manoj, 'Vulture conservation drive launched', [The Hindu](#), 16/02/11

Aralam WLS to be expanded; proposals for creation of Kottiyur and Thirunelli WLSs

The Kerala State Wildlife Board has approved a proposal for the expansion of the Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS). People's representatives also approved the expansion plan during a meeting held in the first week of January at Valayamchal in the sanctuary.

Areas to be included in the sanctuary include the vested forest areas such as Chathiroormala and Neerkunnumala in the north and the rest of the Kottiyur reserve forest in the south under the territorial jurisdiction of the Kannur forest division. The expansion proposal had noted that this area of about 55 sq. kms is used by elephants to move towards the Brahmagiri forests on the Kerala-Karnataka border, and should therefore be added to the Aralam sanctuary.

Two other proposals for the creation of the Kottiyur and Thirunelli Wildlife Sanctuaries are also said to have been approved by the wildlife board. While a portion of the Kottiyur reserve forest is already part of the Aralam WLS, it is proposed to bring the contiguous area under the protected area network. The new Kottiyur WLS will cover an area of a little more than 30 sq. kms. While the creation of this sanctuary was also approved at the meeting held between the FD and the people's representatives in January, there was opposition to the proposal for the Thirunelli sanctuary. Representatives from the area, led by the Manathavady panchayat president staged a walkout raising objections against the formation of the sanctuary.

Forest officials had earlier proposed that forest areas in the northeast portion of the Aralam sanctuary, namely part of the Thirunelli reserve forest of the North Wayanad forest division stretching up to the Tholpetty wildlife range be included in the Aralam WLS. Now it has been suggested that a new Thirunelli sanctuary of about 41 sq. kms be created that will include the Thirunelli reserve forest and the Hilldale reserve forest .

Source: Mohamed Nazeer. 'Aralam sanctuary set for expansion', www.hindu.com, 09/01/11
Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Aralam Wildlife Division, P.O. Iritti, Dist. Kannur -670 703, Kerala. Tel: 0490-493160

Fewer vehicles to be allowed inside Periyar

Fewer vehicles will ply through the core of the Periyar Tiger Reserve as the Forest Department (FD) is planning to regulate vehicular movement here. Restrictions will be in place on the roads to Gavi in Pathanamthitta, via the check-post at Angamuzhi or that at Vallakadavu, following reports of pressure on the forests from the increased flow of vehicles. The two roads pass through the core area of the reserve, while Gavi is in the buffer zone.

More than a 100 vehicles, mostly carrying tourists pass daily though the Kerala Forest Development Corporation had fixed a quota of a 100 a day. The number of vehicles goes up considerably in the tourist and festive season, causing stress on the wildlife and the ecosystem. Dumping of waste all along the route is another area of concern. Senior forest officials have said that there were safety concerns too as people often stopped their vehicles to watch wildlife from close quarters. There are also fears that the increased vehicular traffic could lead to accidents involving wild animals.

The permissible number of passengers and vehicles will now be fixed based on the carrying capacity of the region. Plans are afoot to put at least one trained guide from an eco-development committee on every vehicle that passes through the region.

Source: KS Sudhi. 'Tiger reserve to see fewer vehicles', www.hindu.com, 21/02/11
Contact: **Field Director**, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Aranya Bhavan, Forest Complex, S.H. Mount P.O. Kottayam - 686006. Kerala. Tel: 0481-2562940(O) / 2560297(R). Fax: 2569217 / 2565740

MADHYA PRADESH

Wildlife sanctuary proposal in Alirajpur dropped after Gram Sabha rejection

The plan for the declaration of a wildlife sanctuary in the Katthivara Reserve Forest in Alirajpur district was dropped recently following the rejection of the proposal by Gram Sabhas in the area. The Gram Sabha

meetings were held under the provisions of the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA) in September 2010. The provisions make it mandatory for the government to hold such meetings in the villages and take the sanction of the members regarding any development project that is to be initiated in the villages in areas notified as Scheduled Tribal Areas under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution.

The idea of the sanctuary proposal is linked to the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam on the river Narmada in Gujarat. One of the conditions for the environmental clearance given to the project in 1987 was that alternative wildlife habitats in the form of wildlife sanctuaries should be notified. The Narmada Valley Development Authority in Madhya Pradesh put up the proposal for setting up two such sanctuaries in the Mathwad Reserved Forest and the Katthivada Reserved Forest in Alirajpur district. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) which was asked to prepare a feasibility report for the setting up of the two sanctuaries had rejected the Mathwad idea on grounds that there was a very high concentration of tribal population and a sparse forest area. It recommended the sanctuary for Katthivara which was then publicized by the Madhya Forest Department (FD) in 2007.

The Khedut Mazdoor Chetna Sangath (KMCS), a local NGO, then became active and visited the villages in the area. All local villagers had heard of the proposal and were against it. They also noted that they had not been officially contacted by any government officials.

The villagers were also taken on a tour of the Bori Wildlife Sanctuary in Hoshangabad district where the local villagers had been displaced and resettled in colonies outside the forest area. Their 'sorry' situation as also the generally bad experience of the oustees of the Narmada project convinced the villagers that they did not want their area to be declared a sanctuary.

The villagers along with members of the KMCS then organized a number of protests rallies in Alirajpur. They also made representations to the authorities laying out the legal constraint imposed by PESA that a Gram Sabha had to be conducted first before notifying the establishment of a wild life sanctuary in a Scheduled Area. It was in these Gram Sabha meetings that were held subsequently that the proposal was formally rejected.

Source: Rahul Banerjee. Email dated 14/02/11
Contact: **Rahul Banerjee**, 74

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Indore – 425001, Madhya Pradesh. Tel:
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MAHARASHTRA

ZSI survey records 347 faunal species in Radhanagari WLS and Chandoli NP

A three year faunal diversity survey by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Pune, has recorded 347 faunal species in the Chandoli National Park in Sangli district and the Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary in Kolhapur district. The species recorded include 35 species of zooplankton, 40 species of dragon flies, 10 species of molluscs (invertebrates), 10 species of grasshoppers, 88 species of butterflies, 40 species of freshwater fish, 82 species of birds and 69 species of mammals.

The survey started in 2007 and was conducted in three phases - pre-monsoon, monsoon and post-monsoon. Presently, the samples collected are being classified and documented by experts. It will take another year to come up with the final report.

The survey also found that of the 16 endemic birds seen in Western Ghats, eight are found in Chandoli and Radhanagari. These include the Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, Blue-Winged parakeet, Malabar Grey hornbill, White-bellied Blue flycatcher, Rufous babbler and the Grey-Headed bulbul.

Source: Dipannita Das. 'ZSI survey records 374 faunal species in W Ghats',
timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 15/02/11

Contact: **DCF (WL)**, Chandoli/ Radhanagari WLS, Forest Department, Kolhapur 416002, Maharashtra

Dedicated freight corridor to impact Sanjay Gandhi NP, Tungareashwar WLS

The high profile dedicated freight corridor (DFC) will negatively impact the Sanjay Gandhi National Park and the Tungareashwar Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS). Parts of the Tungareashwar WLS are to be acquired for the

corridor which will also impact the movement of animals between these forest areas.

It has been noted that it is not just the 30-mt-wide stretch-on which the rail tracks will come up-that will be affected; land use will change and this will impact the forest areas as well.

Railway officials have said that there was no possibility of an alternate line and the proposed route would cause the minimum damage to forest areas. Double the number of trees would be planted in compensation for those that will be cut for the project.



Source: Simit Bhagat. 'Project on track to wreck wildlife habitat: activists', articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 21/02/11

Contact: **Dy. Conservator of Forests**, SGNP, Borivili (East), Mumbai – 400066, Maharashtra. Tel: 022-28860362, 28860389(O), 8862780(R) Email: sgnpmumbai@gmail.com
CWLW, Maharashtra Dr. Ambedkar Bhawan, 4 & 5th Floor, M.E.C.L. Building Seminary Hills & Campus, Nagpur – 440001. Tel: 0712-2526758 / 2530126. Fax –2510671. Email: cfwl@nagpur.dot.net.in

NAGALAND

Review of status of hunting, conservation efforts in Nagaland

The Nagaland Empowerment of People through Economic Development (NEPED) has recently released a review and report on the status of wildlife conservation in Nagaland. The report is an outcome of the programme 'Strengthening Community Conservation Efforts in Nagaland,' that is being funded by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) and being executed in collaboration with the Coimbatore based Sálím Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON).

The survey found that more than three lakh animals and birds were killed in Nagaland in year 2008. This included nearly 10,000 large animals; close to 50,000 small animals, 34758 large birds and over two lakh individuals of small bird species. The results are based on a survey conducted in 66 villages involving 14,578 households. It was found out that of the 928 households that were involved in hunting and only 6% were, in fact, habitual hunters. Hunting was mainly reported from two distinct three month periods in the year January – March and then October – December.

The survey concluded that hunting did provide evidence of presence of wild fauna in the forests and also noted that significant reduction in hunting of wildlife could be achieved as only a small percentage of the population was actively engaged in it. It also noted that despite resolutions passed by village authorities, enforcing the resolutions require strengthening and support, including from the administration.

In the first phase of the overall program, technical support on biodiversity conservation and livelihood options has been imparted to communities in the districts of Phek, Tuensang, Longleng, Kiphire and Mon. It has also identified several specific programs, appropriate to the specific village community that would lead to economic benefits, and sustainable development.

The survey also notes that the number of community conserved areas (CCA) increased from 109 villages before the project to 285 villages in 2009. In many cases villagers, under the leadership of the elders in the communities, have come together to ensure the creation of forest and wildlife conservation areas. Prominent joint conservation committees formed during the project period include the Saramati Awung Conservation and Management Society (SACAMS), Hongmong Conservation Committee (Mon), Yai Zone Wildlife Control Managing Committee (Shamator), Phoyisha Range Conservation (Phek District) and Helipong Khong Joint Biodiversity Conservation Area (Tuensang District). Residents in several other areas in Tuensang and Phek district have also expressed their

desire to form joint forest conservation committees

A simultaneous effort at documenting traditional knowledge and the formation of Peoples' Biodiversity Registers is also going on.

The Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) has also recently directed its constituents not to involve wildlife in any church-related activity. This is a significant step as most local hunters are members of the church and the direction sends out a message that exploitation of wildlife is ethically wrong.

In its 74th Annual Session held in early February at the Rotomi Baptist Church under Zunheboto district, the NBCC reaffirmed its resolution to join hands with the community leaders and government departments for the protection of the environment. It was decided that the Baptist Churches will initiate climate change and eco-biological friendly actions, sensitise the public to matters of the conservation of forest and preservation of wildlife and work closely with the community leaders and concerned departments in addressing the environmental issues. It further resolved that the churches will abstain from using meat of wildlife during any gathering of NBCC and the churches and also discourage them from offering wild animals during thanksgiving services.

Source: 'Over 3, 00, 000 animals killed in Nagaland in 2008',

<http://www.morungexpress.com/local/61349.html>

'Nagaland Church vouches for environmental protection', *The Sentinel*, 11/02/11

ORISSA

156 Irrawady dolphins counted in Chilika lake



According to figures from the latest census of 2011, there are 156 Irrawady Dolphins in the Chilika lake. This includes 131 adults, 21 sub-adults and four calves. The census was carried out

on February 15 and 16. The 2010 count was slightly higher at 158 animals.

The 2011 count was conducted by 66 participants from different organisations such as the Director, Environment; officials from the State Watershed Mission; OSDMA; Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai; Regional Museum of Natural History, Bhubaneswar; Centre for Environment Education Bhubaneswar; Wildlife Society of Orissa and local researchers and academicians. There were an additional 40 volunteers and 18 boats were also deployed for the purpose.

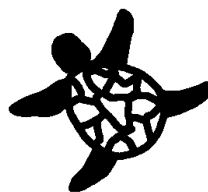
The outer channel of lake reported the highest number of 79 dolphins and it was followed by southern sector with 54. The northern sector of Chilika recorded the number of seven dolphins.

(Also see [PA Update Vol. XV, No. 3](#))

Source: 'Dolphin population drops marginally in Chilika Lake', www.hindu.com, 20/02/11

Contact: **DFO (WL)**, Chilka Wildlife Division, At/PO Balugaon, Dist. Khordha – 752030, Orissa. Tel: 06756 – 211012

Opposition to marine turtle sanctuaries at Rushikulya and Devi river mouths



Traditional fisherfolk, fish workers and wildlife activists have opposed a government proposal to set up two more marine sanctuaries at Rushikulya and Devi river mouth areas of Ganjam and Puri districts respectively. The proposal for the creation of these two sanctuaries was discussed in a recent meeting of the State Wildlife Board as a large number of Olive ridley turtles are known to nest here very year.

Opposing the proposal, members of the Orissa Traditional Fish Workers' Union (OTFWU), claimed it would affect the livelihood of thousands of local fishermen who depend on the sea. More details are presently not known.

Source: 'Local fishermen oppose more Olive Ridley sanctuaries',
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>,
18/01/11

Proposals for conservation outside protected areas – at Rushikulya and Bhetonai-Balipadar

Two projects, 'Rushikulya River Mouth for Olive Ridley Sea Turtle Conservation' and 'Bhetonai-Balipadar area for Black Buck Conservation', have been launched under the Natural Resources Conservation Outside Protected Areas (NRCOPA).

The Central government, under the NRCOPA, plans to promote the conservation of biodiversity through community participation by technical and financial support. The project will extend support to conservation efforts outside protected areas. It aims at supporting and strengthening the capacity of communities to monitor and manage the resources in sustainable manner to derive equitable benefits from such resources.

Source: 'Olive Ridley, Black Buck conservation projects launched',
<http://www.pragativadi.com/130211/local4.htm>

PUNJAB

Punjab Tourism Department signs MoU for 'eco-tourism' training and promotion

The Punjab Tourism Department (TD) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Karnataka's Jungle Lodges and Resorts (JLR) for promotion of 'eco-tourism' in the state. As part of the agreement, JLR will train nearly 25 people as nature guides, who will then guide visitors coming to different wetlands and bird sanctuaries in the state.

The chief naturalist of JLR recently visited the various wetlands and sanctuaries in Punjab to help formulate the proposed training programme.

Source: 'Tourism dept inks pact with Jungle Lodges and Resort', www.indianexpress.com,
28/02/11

Contact: **Chief Wildlife Warden**, Punjab, SC
No. 2463-64, Sector 22-C, Chandigarh -
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2675661(R). Fax: 2705828

Black buck population in Abohar WLS goes up to 4300



A two day census carried out in March has recorded the population of the black buck in the Abohar Wildlife Sanctuary at 4300. This is substantially higher than the

number of 3000 bucks from the last census in 1998.

The 2011 census counted 1,812 males, 2,120 females and 368 offsprings in the sanctuary area spread over Raipur, Dutara Wali, Sardarpur, Khairpur, Sukhchain, Seeto Guno, Mehrana, Bazidpur, Himmatpura, Bishanpura, Rampur, Narainpura and Rajan Wali villages of Abohar subdivision.

5,557 blue bulls and 121 peacocks were also recorded during the census.

428 black bucks, 454 blue bulls and seven peacocks were also found in Gumjal, Panniwala Haripura and Diwan Khera villages of the subdivision, where the Punjab Government had planned to set up two community reserves for black bucks.

Source: Chander Parkash. 'Population of black bucks up at Abohar sanctuary: Census', [The Tribune](http://www.thetribune.com), 04/03/11

Contact: **Wildlife Inspector**, Abohar, Dist.
Firozpur, Punjab. Tel: 01637-261345

RAJASTHAN

Ramgarh Vishdhari WLS to be a part of Ranthambore TR

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has agreed in principle to include the Ramgarh Vishdhari Wild Life Sanctuary (WLS) in Bundi in Project Tiger. However, a final nod from the authority will follow after a detailed plan is submitted to it by the

Rajasthan state government. The sanctuary serves as a corridor between the Ranthambore NP and the Darrah Wildlife Sanctuary.

The decision came after a two day visit by the director NTCA, Dr. Rajesh Gopal, to the Ranthambore National Park (NP). The visit came on the heels of a plethora of problems surrounding Ranthambore. Cases of man-animal conflict have been on the rise with the tigers attacking villagers and forest guards. Villagers have also been protesting and in some cases have also attacked forest staff.

Source: Anindo Dey, 'Bundi sanctuary to be included in Project Tiger', [The Times of India](#), 23/02/11

Rajasthan to deploy special police to protect forests, wildlife

The Rajasthan government has proposed the deployment of battalions of the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary (RAC) for the protection of forests and wildlife. Acting on a proposal sent by the forest department to the state's chief secretary, the home department has asked the director general of police (DGP) to make necessary arrangements in this regard.

Tiger reserves, both existing ones and those proposed, will be given priority in this deployment. The RAC battalions will also be deployed at other forest areas in Alwar, Sawaimadhopur, Bharatpur, Dholpur, Karauli, Nagaur, Kota, Jaipur, Udaipur, Rajsamand, and Jalore.

The key issues that this deployment seeks to challenge includes illegal grazing in the protected forest areas, illegal mining, poaching of wild life animals and attacks on foresters in situations of human-wildlife conflict.

Source: 'Rajasthan to deploy special police to protect forests', www.mangalorean.com, 04/03/11

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

A Decade Ago

From the Archives

[Protected Area Update 30 & 31](#)

June 2001

Rajasthan Police, FD collaboration for wildlife protection

The Police and Forest Departments in Rajasthan have initiated a number of steps to work together towards wildlife protection in the state. In April 2000, the State Police Department (PD) created a Wildlife Crime Cell (WCC) under the supervision of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) – Crime Branch to monitor offences relating to wildlife and forest produce. Similarly, a WCC was also created in the Forest Department (FD) under the charge of the Working Plan Officer (Wildlife), Jaipur (see [PA Update 27](#)).

In July 2000, a State Level Co-ordination Committee was created to look at issues relating to illegal trade in wildlife. The committee is chaired by the State Forest Secretary and has as members, Secretary, Mines Department; IG Police, Crime Branch (CID); IG, Border Security Force, Jodhpur; Commissioner, Customs & Central Excise, Jaipur, Divisional Railway Manager, Jaipur; Commissioner, State Excise Department, Jaipur, and Security Officer, Sanganer Airport, Jaipur. The Chief Wildlife Warden, Rajasthan, is the member secretary of the committee.

The Forestry Training Institute (FTI), Jaipur too has organised a series of training programs on 'Law Enforcement and Legal Procedure in Wildlife Conservation'. The first joint training program of police and forest officers on this issue was organised from Feb 5 – 9, 2001 at the Rajasthan Police Academy in Jaipur. There were 44 participants, 20 of whom were forest officers and the rest from the police department. The program consisted of 16 sessions including two sessions on case studies and group discussion.

Source: PR Siyag. Letter to Kalpavriksh, 13/03/2001.

New diesel vehicles complying with Euro norms allowed in Ranthambore NP

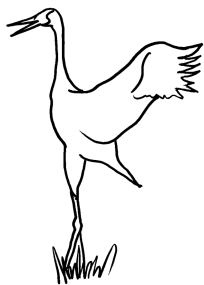
The Rajasthan High Court has given temporary though conditional clearance to ply diesel canter for the safari in the Ranthambore National Park (RNP). The vehicles should not be more than five years old and should comply with Euro emission norms.

The interim order was issued by the court in response to two separate writ petitions filed by owners of diesel vehicles. The petitioners said that the state authorities are not allowing them to ply their canter saying that there is a general ban on the plying of diesel canter for the safari as per an order of the high court. The petitioners also alleged that old petrol-run canter, the emissions of which are more hazardous, are being allowed to carry out safaris.

Source: Abhinav Sharma, '5-yr-old diesel vehicles can ply in R'bore', [The Times of India](#), 02/02/11

Contact: **Director**, Ranthambore TR,
Sawai Madhopur – 322001, Rajasthan. Tel:
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Captive breeding programme for Siberian cranes in Keoladeo NP



The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests has proposed a captive breeding programme for the Siberian cranes in the Keoladeo National Park (NP). The last pair of Siberian cranes was spotted here in 2002 and it is believed that the flock, which visited South Asia from

distant Siberia every winter, is now extinct. There are a few birds, however, in two other flocks that migrate to Iran and China.

The information about the captive breeding program was provided during a workshop on wetland conservation held in Bharatpur in connection with the World Wetland Day celebrations in February. Speaking during the event, the Union Environment and Forests Minister, Mr Jairam Ramesh, said that the project was at a very preliminary stage. The birds are proposed to be initially brought from a breeding

centre in Belgium. Experts from the International Crane Foundation and the Worldwide Fund for Nature would be involved in the programme. The programme aims at getting the new flock reared at Keoladeo to follow the flyway of the wild Siberian cranes, which used to visit Keoladeo in abundance in the past.

The minister also noted that with the funds allocated by the Centre — Rs. 52 crore — he hoped that the inflow of 400 million cubic feet water would be ensured for the Keoladeo NP from the proposed Govardhan Drain Project from the Chambal River in another four-five months time ([PA Update Vol XV, No. 2](#)).

Source: Sunny Sebastian, 'New breeding centre soon for Siberian cranes at Keoladeo Park', [The Hindu](#), 03/02/11.

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

Uttarakhand FD delegation visits Kanha NP; recommends relocation of villages from Corbett and Rajaji NPs

A three member delegation of the Uttarakhand Forest Department (FD) has recommended the relocation of villages from the Corbett and Rajaji National Parks to prevent human-wildlife conflict. The delegation comprising the Chief Conservator of Forest (Garhwal) and Directors, Corbett and Rajaji NPs, made the suggestion after a visit to the Kanha NP in Madhya Pradesh in January.

Here they studied the case in which residents of three villages were relocated outside the NP and the outcome was seen in the increase in the population of swamp deer from around 30 to more than 300. The villagers had, reportedly, benefited substantially from the relocation as well.

Source: Paritosh Kimothi, 'Kanha model may end Corbett crisis', [The Pioneer](#), 06/02/11

Contact: **Director**, Rajaji NP, 5/1 Ansari Marg,
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An overview of human-wildlife conflict in Uttarakhand in the last decade

Official figures from the Uttarakhand government reveal that 315 humans were killed and 824 injured in confrontations with wild animals between 2000 and 2011. Of these, 204 persons were killed and 363 injured in attacks by leopards. Another 82 persons were killed and 63 injured in confrontations with elephants. 15 died and 19 were injured in confrontations with tigers, while 15 died and 374 were injured in bear attacks. Another two people were killed and five were injured in confrontations with wild boars.

A total of 94 big cats were declared ‘man-eaters’ during this time period with a majority of them having been destroyed. Of these 90 were leopards and four were tigers. At least 20 tigers, 230 leopards and 18 elephants died from different causes during the same time period.

It was noted that the Badiyargarh area in Maniknath forest range of Narendranagar division in Tehri district and Gairsen area in the Lohwa range of Kedarnath division in Chamoli district were ‘very highly sensitive’ with most man-animal encounters involving confrontations between humans and leopards or bears.

The Chaubatiyakhal area in Pauri and Dharkot area in Badarinath division have been marked ‘highly sensitive’ whereas the Pokhir area in Nainital, Khaudiyal in Lansdowne, Kailakhur in Pauri and Bachansyun in Rudraprayag are considered ‘sensitive’ from the viewpoint of human-animal conflict.

Source: Paritosh Kimothi. ‘Losers on both side as man-animal war rages’, [The Pioneer](#), 06/02/2011.

Contact: **CWLW**, Uttaranchal, 85, Rajpur Road, Dehradun, Uttaranchal. Tel: 0135-744225 / 679817. Fax: 675138/747669

UTTAR PRADESH

Handicraft training for Tharu community of Dudhwa TR

The Centre for Environment Education (CEE) - North as part of its sustainable livelihood interventions organized a three- month basic level training programme on making of carpets, wall hangings and other handicraft items for the Tharu community that lives in and around the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve.

The training that was conducted from October 2010 to January 2011 is part of CEE – North’s work in a selected cluster of villages focusing on natural resource management and sustainable livelihood interventions that aims at minimizing the dependency of the tribe from the forest resource and to enhance their skills for income generation.

The training program was supported by the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED); Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India; the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) - Terai Arc and the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department. Around 50 members were involved in the program where 20 Tharu women participants went through this intensive training.

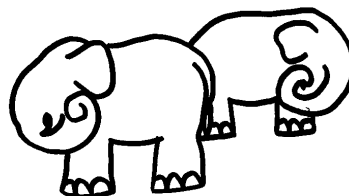
Source: ‘Handicraft training for tribal group of Dudhwa, UP’, [Ceenario 44](#).

Contact: Email: ceedo@ceeindia.org

Web: www.ceeindia.org

WEST BENGAL

Elephant population in West Bengal goes up to 529



Preliminary results of the census conducted in November last year indicate that the elephant population in West Bengal has tripled from 186 in 1993 to 529 today. 1992 was the year that Project Elephant was launched.

In the forest areas of Jangal Mahal in the state's south-western districts of Paschimi Medinipur, Bankura and Purulia the numbers have increased from 14 in 1993 to about 30 permanent residents in 2010. This region also witnesses the migration of elephant herds from the Dalma forests in Jharkhand that have increased from 96 in 2005 to over 120 last year. The Buxa Tiger Reserve is the region with the highest elephant density. The reserve, spread over 760 sq. kms. recorded over 200 elephants.

Senior forest officials have attributed the increase in elephant population to efforts at habitat improvement such as planting indigenous species of plants and bamboo which are preferred food for the animals.

Forest fragmentation, frequent deaths in railway accidents and human-elephant conflict were also identified at the key challenges for elephant conservation in the state.

Source: Ananya Dutta. 'Number of elephants on the rise', www.hindu.com, 26/02/11

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

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

NATIONAL NEWS FROM INDIA

New guidelines to create ESZs

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), on February 9, issued new guidelines for the creation of eco-sensitive zones (ESZ) around protected areas (PAs). The guidelines would ensure that these areas act as 'shock absorbers' to the PAs by regulating and managing the activities around. The guidelines have been updated on the MoEF website.

It is a prerequisite that an inventory of different land-use patterns and the different types of activities, types and number of industries operating around each of the PAs be made. For

this purpose, the MoEF has asked all states to constitute a committee comprising the wildlife warden, an ecologist and a revenue department official of the area concerned to suggest the requirement of an ESZ and its extent. The panel could also suggest the best methods to manage such zones and broad-based thematic activities to be included in the master plan for the areas, which have been classified as prohibited, restricted with safeguards and permissible.

The guidelines state that activities such as commercial mining, setting of saw mills and industries causing pollution, commercial use of firewood and major hydropower projects, are prohibited in such areas. It also prohibits tourism activities like flying over PAs in an aircraft or a hot air balloon, and discharge of effluents and solid waste in natural water bodies or terrestrial areas. Felling of trees, drastic change in agriculture systems and commercial use of natural water resources, including groundwater harvesting and setting up of hotels and resorts, are the activities to be regulated in these areas.

Activities that will be permitted include ongoing agriculture and horticulture practices by local communities, rainwater harvesting, organic farming, adoption of green technology and use of renewable energy sources.

The width of the ESZ and type of regulation may vary from PA to PA. As a general principle, the width of the ESZ could go up to 10 km around the PA.

Source: 'Ministry releases new guidelines for eco-zones around national parks', [Business Standard](http://BusinessStandard.com), 16/02/11

Five species of frogs rediscovered

Scientists from the University of Delhi (UoD), in a collaborative programme involving researchers from other leading institutions in the country, have rediscovered five species of frogs believed extinct.

The findings have come as a result of the 'Lost Amphibians of India' (LAI) initiative launched by the UoD in November 2010 to survey and find out the fate of nearly 50

species that had eluded sighting for periods ranging from 18 to 170 years. The Zoological Survey of India, the Indian Institute of Science, and the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment are among the institutions collaborating in this programme.

Chalazodes Bubble-nest Frog
Raorchestes chalazodes was last reported in 1874 from the Kalakkad-Mundanthurai region in the Western Ghats in south India. The rediscovery of this fluorescent green frog with ash-blue thighs and black pupils after 137 years was reported in Kodayar, Tamil Nadu.

The other four species rediscovered are - Anamalai Dot-frog *Ramanella anamalaiensis*, last reported 74 years ago; the Dehradun Stream frog *Amolops chakrataensis*, last seen 26 years ago; the Silent Valley tropical frog *Micrixalus thampii*, last seen 31 years ago; and Elegant tropical frog (*Micrixalus elegans*), last seen 74 years ago.

The Anamalai Dot-frog, named after the Anamalai hills in the southern Western Ghats from where it was reported first, was last seen in 1937. The original specimen was lost and there was no confirmed information on this species until scientists rediscovered it from the Parambikulam Wild Life Sanctuary under the LAI initiative. During their survey, the scientists came across a specimen of the Silent Valley tropical frog by luck in a bin at a field station in the Silent Valley National Park. They later found several specimens of the species under leaf litter close to a stream in the park.

The Dehradun Stream frog is known only from the description based on the finding of a single specimen in 1985. This frog appears to be extremely rare and its habitat, Tiger Falls in Uttarakhand, is in need of protection to ensure its survival. The Elegant tropical frog too is known only from a description based on specimens collected in 1937. It was rediscovered from Kempholey in Karnataka.

Source: 'Five frog species rediscovered', [The Hindu](#), 17/02/11.

15 tiger deaths in less than two months in 2011

15 tigers deaths have been reported in less than two months in 2011. Though most of the deaths have been termed as natural, the number of deaths is much higher as compared to the previous year.

The biggest number was reported from Uttarakhand with four tiger deaths between January 5 and February 19, 2011. Three deaths took place in Corbett Tiger Reserve and one in the West Terai Forest Division. Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have reported two tiger deaths each, while one tiger died in Orissa, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Assam each. As per the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) data of tiger mortalities and seizures in 2011, seven deaths were reported each in January and February, a tiger skin was also seized from Chandrapur in Maharashtra in January.

As per the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), out of the 15 tiger deaths in 2011, there has been one case of seizure, two suspected cases of poisoning, four cases of natural deaths and one case of shooting down of a tiger by the FD.

In addition to this, four cases of infighting, one case of leopard-tiger clash in which both died, a case of a tiger being killed by an elephant and one case of tiger carcass being recovered (reason of death not known), were cited by the WPSI.

55 tiger deaths were reported from across the country in 2010.

Source: Neha Shukla, '15 tiger deaths in less than two months', [The Times of India](#), 23/02/11.

'Save the Vultures from Extinction' (SAVE) consortium launched

The 'Save the Vultures from Extinction' (SAVE) consortium was launched recently in Mumbai by Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr Jairam Ramesh.

The consortium has been launched as a group of multi-national vulture experts in order to coordinate the work of the second phase of vulture conservation and to meet the myriad challenges. SAVE will be instrumental in advocacy, campaigning and fund-raising for the cause.

Source: 'Ramesh launches consortium to save vultures', <http://www.wildlifewatch.in>, 17/02/11

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Budget cut for the NTCA

The Central government has imposed a substantial cut of about 25% to the money allocated to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for tiger conservation. Rs. 150 crores have been allocated for the next financial year as against the Rs. 196 crores that had been made available for the current year.

It is expected that this budgetary cut would impact the proposed plans for the relocation of villages from inside many of the 39 tiger reserves in the country. The NTCA has estimated that it needs an estimated Rs. 5000 crore to resettle almost 50000 families that presently live in tiger reserves.

Source: Nitin Sethi. 'Relocation may go on hold as budget bites the tiger',
www.economicstimes.indiatimes.com,
18/02/11

Contact: **Dr. Rajesh Gopal** NTCA, Annexe No. 5,
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PM approves Rs. 46,000 crore 'Green India Mission'

The Prime Minister is said to have approved the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) ambitious Rs 46,000-crore 10-year afforestation plan for the country. Called 'Green India Mission', the project involves adding 10 million hectares to the nation's 40-42 million hectares of good-quality forests, with the long-term target of increasing the 'good' forest cover from 12% to 33% of the total land area.

The programme will require the government to increase spending on forestry by 55% from the current Rs 8,500 crore a year. The MoEF has said that after the completion of the project, Indian forests will absorb around 50 to 60 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year by 2020.

Source: Sreejiraj Eluvangal. 'Jairam Ramesh's Rs 46,000 crore afforestation plan okayed', www.dnaindia.com, 24/02/11

MoEF approved 535 projects between August 2009 and July 2010; only six rejected

Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010, the Union Ministry for Environment and Forests (MoEF) approved 535 projects across sectors and rejected only six. The information was made available in response to an application filed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act by the Delhi based EIA (environment impact assessment) Response Centre (ERC).

The response shows that in hydroelectric projects, all eight applications were approved; in coal mining, out of 58 applications, 31 were approved and none were rejected. The balance of the applications roll forward to the next appraisal committee meetings where the committee analyses environment impact reports and recommend them for clearance or rejection to the ministry.

Among industrial projects, there were 209 approvals and no rejections; thermal power plants saw 49 approvals and one rejection and non-coal mining got 71 approvals and three rejections.

In the two year period 2006-2008, the MoEF had approved 1746 proposals while rejecting a total of 14.

Source: 'MoEF rejection rate hasn't been reined in, RTI response shows', [Mint](http://www.mint.com),
22/01/11

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National Centre for Marine Biodiversity inaugurated in Jamnagar

The Union Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr. Jairam Ramesh, recently inaugurated the National Centre for Marine Bio-Diversity (NCMB), the first institution of its kind in India, in Jamnagar. It is also the first Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) project of its kind, with Reliance Industry

contributing a third of the Rs. 30 crore needed to set up the centre. The remaining Rs. 20 crores will be put in by the Ministry for Environment and Forests (MoEF).

The centre has been set up with the objective to promote different kinds of research activities of the country's coastal and marine ecosystem. It will form a part of an ambitious Integrated Coastal Zone Management Program (ICZMP), which was recently launched by the MoEF with World Bank assistance through the Society for Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

The minister also said during the inauguration that the partnership doesn't mean that the MoEF will go soft on Reliance where matters of environment laws were concerned.

Source: 'Minister inaugurates India's 1st marine biodiversity centre', www.indianexpress.com, 03/03/11

OPPORTUNITIES

Interdisciplinary Ph D Program in Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies

The Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) has invited applications for admission to its Doctoral Research Programme, recognised by Manipal University, for the academic year starting July 2011. Applications are invited from students with a Master's degree in any branch of the social or natural sciences. Students will undergo intensive course work and will be expected to undertake independent research on any environmental topic under a multi-disciplinary dissertation committee. Students are expected to join the programme full-time. Fellowship will be provided for at least 2 years of the programme.

Eligibility: 1. The candidate must have a Masters degree in any social or natural science or engineering discipline; and 2. Must have qualified for one of the following entrance exams: UGC-CSIR (minimum NET), GATE, ICSSR, or equivalent qualifying exam OR have a M. Phil. degree OR have published at least one peer-reviewed paper as lead author or co-author OR

have some demonstrated research ability OR based on the evaluation of Statement of Research.

The completed application form and supporting documents should be submitted by e-mail, post or fax to the address below by April 25, 2011. Detailed information on the PhD programme and research interests of the faculty can be obtained at http://www.atree.org/phd_program.

Contact: **The Coordinator**, The Academy for Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies, ATREE), Royal Enclave, Srirampura, Jakkur Bangalore, 560 064, India. Email: phd@atree.org.

Ravi Sankaran Fellowships

The Ravi Sankaran Fellowships are a biodiversity conservation initiative of Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation. The fellowships provide an opportunity for young persons to make a difference to biodiversity conservation in India.

The program funds three major activities:

1. A Master's degree at a university abroad
2. An internship with an organisation abroad
3. A short conservation research or implementation project within India (in a Small Grants program)

Fellowship recipients will receive a stipend, travel funds and an amount covering course fees (where relevant). The Small Grants activity provides funding up to a maximum of Rs 200,000 per year.

Each activity is intended to have an explicit conservation focus, with an emphasis on clear on-ground conservation benefits. Successful applicants will ordinarily hold a Bachelor's degree (in any discipline) and be below the age of 30 on the date of the application deadline. Applicants must hold Indian nationality. The deadline to submit applications is 15 April 2011

Contact: Ravi Sankaran Fellowship Program, , C/o Inlaks India Foundation, 86/87 Atlanta, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021, Maharashtra. Email: inlaksindia@gmail.com Web: <http://www.ravisankaran.org/>

Ramsar Convention Small Grants Fund

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is accepting proposals for its Small Grants Program aimed at assisting developing countries and economies in transition to implement the Convention and to support the conservation and wise use of wetland resources, with a strong human and social dimension.

Funds may also be used to provide emergency management assistance for Ramsar Sites under threat and to provide 'preparatory assistance' to allow non-Contracting Parties to progress toward accession when such needs arise.

Projects may be proposed and implemented by any agency, NGO, or individual, but proposals must be endorsed and monitored by the Administrative Authority (the Ramsar implementing agency) in the Party's government.

The deadline for applications in their final form is 30 June 2011. For more details www.ramsar.org

UPCOMING

6th CMS Vatavaran Environment and Wildlife Film Festival

The 6th edition of the CMS Vatavaran Environment and Wildlife Film Festival will be held in New Delhi from December 06-10, 2011. The last date for submitting entries for the festival is May 31, 2011. The films should have been made on or after January 1, 2009.

The festival will award sixteen Indian awards in 10 categories and 11 international awards in 10 categories.

Contact: **Sundeep Srivastav**, CMS Vatavaran, Research House, Saket Community Centre, New Delhi 110 017. Tel: 011-26522244/ 09899979169. Fax: 2696 8282. Email: submission@cmsvatavaran.org. Web: <http://www.cmsvatavaran.org/>

IN THE SUPREME COURT

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

- Protection of wildlife and declaration of a wildlife sanctuary in the Narmada valley, Madhya Pradesh
- Application by the Power Grid Corporation of India for the diversion of about 46 hectares of land from the under Matheran Eco-Sensitive Area in Thane district and Alibagh forest division, Maharashtra
- Rationalisation of the boundaries of the Askot Wildlife Sanctuary, 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

The Forest Rights Act, Protected Areas and Wildlife Conservation

NATIONAL NEWS

New guidelines issued for CWH declaration; withdrawn subsequently

New guidelines issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) for the declaration of Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWH) in the month of February were withdrawn a month later following protests and opposition by NGOs and others working on the issue.

The guidelines had been issued by the Deputy Inspector General – Wildlife on February 7, 2011 vide letter F. No. 1-39/2007 WL-I (pt), the rationale being that there were demands for this revision from ‘various quarters’.

NGOs and others working on issues of the FRA including the Campaign for Survival and Dignity (CSD), Vasundhara and Kalpavriksh expressed concerns and opposition to the revised guidelines terming them to be violative of the provisions of the FRA and a threat to both, protected areas and forest dwellers.

A meeting was called by the Minister, Mr Jairam Ramesh in the first week of March to discuss relevant issues. It was attended by NGOs working for tribal rights, wildlife activists and experts and the Chief Wildlife Wardens of the states. The guidelines were subsequently withdrawn and the MoEF has said that a fresh draft of guidelines for the CWH would be prepared by the end of April. The ministry also asked the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to draft a fresh set of guidelines for declaring the Tiger Reserves in the country.

Source: Kumar Sambhav S. ‘Jairam Ramesh withdraws guidelines violating FRA’, [Down to Earth](#), 04/03/11

PAs being proposed as Critical Wildlife Habitats in different states

Following is the list of protected areas that state governments are proposing for declaration as Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWHs). The

information is based on responses received from different states to applications filed by Kalpavriksh under the Right To Information (RTI) Act.

Andhra Pradesh: Gundla Brahmeswaram WLS, Kasu Brahmananda Reddy NP, Mahavir Harina Vanasthali NP, Manjeera WLS, Mrugavani NP, Nelapattu WLS, Pocharam WLS, Pranahita WLS, Rolapadu WLS, Sivaram WLS, Sri Lankamalleswaram WLS, Sri Venkateswara NP & WLS.

Chattisgarh: Guru Ghasidas NP, Baikunthpur WLS. In principle approval has been granted for the Udanti CTH

Himachal Pradesh: Kibber WLS, Kugti WLS, Lippa Asrang WLS, Rakchham Chitkul WLS, Rupi Bhaba WLS, Sechu-Tuan Nala WLS, Chandertal.

Some areas rich in biodiversity but outside existing protected areas are also being considered.

Madhya Pradesh: Bagdara WLS, Bori WLS, Chambal WLS, Gandhisagar WLS, Ghatigaon WLS, Ken Gharial WLS, Kheoni WLS, Kuno-Palpur WLS, Madhav NP, Narsingharh WLS, Noradehi WLS, Orchha WLS, Phen WLS, Ralamandal WLS, Ratapani WLS, Sardarpur WLS Sailana WLS, Sanjay NP, Sanjay Dubri WLS, Singhori WLS, Van Vihar NP, Veerangana Durgawati WLS.

Maharashtra: Aner Dam WLS, Bhimashankar WLS, Bor WLS, Chandoli WLS, Chaprala WLS, Gyanganga WLS, Karnala WLS, Katepurna WLS, Koyna WLS, Nagzira WLS, Navegaon NP, Phansad WLS, Painganga WLS, Radhanagari WLS, Sagarshwar WLS, Tansa WLS, Tipeshwar WLS, Yawal WLS.

Orissa: Bhitarkanika NP, Chandaka WLS, Debrigarh WLS, Hadgarh WLS, Kuldiha WLS, Kotgarh WLS, Lakheri WLS. A expert level committee has also been constituted for declaration of the Karlapat WLS as a CWH.

Status of CWHs for specific PAs

- 1) Sitamata WLS, Rajasthan: MoEF guidelines for the CWH declaration have been distributed to the gram panchayats. Notice to gram sabhas has also been sent through the sarpanchs. Proposal for the CWH has been prepared and placed at the divisional level.
- 2) Guru Ghasidas NP, Chattisgarh: Proposal for the CWH notes that illegal collection of tendu leaves, firewood, honey, mahua and other NTFPs is going on. It mentions that 'co-existence' is not possible as grasslands have been converted to agricultural fields, grazing is ongoing and 78 villages depend on it. It recommends that other than existing rights no new or additional rights would be given and rights to fodder and NTFP collection would continue as long as no alternative arrangements are made.
The entire park is to be declared a CWH and the proposal has been sent to higher authorities by the park director. The recording of rights has been done by the collector in 29 villages are eight villages have reportedly agreed to shift from the park.
- 3) Gahirmatha WLS, Orissa: Proposal says that there are no issues of rights as there is no human habitation within the proposed CWH. The proposal has been sent to the MoEF.
- 4) Chilka WLS, Orissa: Proposal says that there are no issues of rights as there is no human habitation within the proposed CWH. The proposal has been sent to the MoEF.
- 5) Chandaka WLS, Orissa: 455 families are to be relocated for the declaration of the CWH.

Contact: **Sreetama Guptabhaya**, C/o Kalpavriksh,
Email: sreetama.gb@gmail.com

UTTAR PRADESH

Tharu community gets access to grass from Dudhwa NP under FRA

The Tharu community of villages in and around the Dudhwa National Park has gained access to grass from park under provisions of the FRA.

The village forest rights committee of 37 the village issued, in the month of January, a notice to the park administration warning of legal action under the FRA if they were denied entry to

the park for collecting forest produce. The district administration then called a meeting of the forest and tribal welfare department and committee members where the tribal community was allowed to take the produce till the process of disposing of the claims under the FRA was not completed.

The district magistrate of Lakhimpur Kheri had, in January 2009, issued an order to allow the Tharus to collect produce from the forests as allowed by the FRA. The Forest Department (FD) had however overlooked the order and burnt the grass.

The FD has also said that only two villages fall within the park and others cannot stake claim on the produce. These two villages are Surma and Golbhoji that had refused to be relocated when the Dudhwa NP was declared in 1977. In 2003 the Allahabad High Court had ordered their relocation but it could not be done as alternative land was not available. In 1977, 37 other villages had moved and were later converted to revenue villages in 1986.

The state government is also reported to have asked the Lakhimpur Kheri district administration to convert the Surma village into a revenue village, and give the resident Tharu tribe its rightful claims under the FRA. Forest officials have expressed concern at this development saying that this would lead to increased human-wildlife conflict. Tribal activists have welcomed the move and said that the community could actually become part of the conservation process and also help in reducing poaching here.

Source: Kumar Sambhav Srivastava. 'Grassroots victory', *Down to Earth*, 01/03/11
Sharmila Krishna, 'Tharu tribe in core tiger zone of Dudhwa to get rightful claims', *The Pioneer*, 26/02/11.

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

Fateh Singh Rathore - The Tiger Man of Ranthambore

It is hard to believe that our larger-than-life tiger man of Ranthambhore is no more. With his booming voice, impeccable dress sense, large groomed moustache, safari hat, and tiger print cravat, Fateh Singh Rathore always stood out. But it is his devotion to Ranthambhore and his incredible and intuitive knowledge of tigers, that will be missed most of all.

Astonishingly hospitable, Fateh collected friends like a magnet, from all walks of life. Many of us have shared memorable hours around a campfire, nurtured by 'Peter Scot' and Fateh singing ghazals. He was one of those rare people that knew how to enjoy life. A brilliant wildlife photographer, he had a profound knowledge and love of not only tigers, but music, architecture and old lithographs.

Fateh was born in a village in Jodhpur district in the late 1930's, one of 11 brothers and sisters. After he joined the forest service in the late 1950's, one of his earliest chores was to help organise a tiger hunt in Ranthambhore in 1961 for the Maharaja of Jaipur. The first tiger that Fateh ever saw was the one shot by the royal guest, the Duke of Edinburgh. After working in Sariska and Mount Abu, Fateh was posted to Ranthambhore in 1971. He set about moving out 13 villages, restoring the lakes, putting in a network of roads, and protecting this fragile semi-arid land. By 1976, the villages and cattle had gone, and the tigers returned. Fateh became the Field Director in 1978 and served in Ranthambhore for ten more years. During this time he put Ranthambhore and its once elusive tigers on the world map. Stunned visitors, of which I was one, could now watch every intimate moment of the lives of wild tigers. In 1986, Fateh proudly showed the late Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, around Ranthambhore, and in 2000 the US President, Bill Clinton. They saw two wild tigers.

No larger-than-life, headstrong character is without controversy. Fateh was also an outspoken critic of India's wildlife conservation policies, which made him a thorn in the side of local government officers, and a hero among conservationists and children. Indeed, over the years he inspired an entire generation of

conservationists. In the 1990's he and a group of friends started a NGO called 'Tiger Watch', and right to the end he fought for wild tigers and for transparency in the management of the park. In April 2011, when Fateh was too weak to take on any more battles, the Chief Minister finally reinstated him as the Honorary Wildlife Warden of Ranthambhore.

I was privileged to spend four days with Fateh shortly before he died. We talked about the old days and the tigers he loved so much. On 11 February 2011 we went to Jogi Mahal and drove into the park for what was to be his last visit. Sitting with his son and grandson, we watched two courting tigers beside Rajbagh lake. A flock of Treepies flew down to feed on a laddoo on Fateh's outstretched hand. For that brief magical moment all seemed to be right with the world. Three weeks later, on 1 March, Fateh's exhausted body finally gave up to his cancer, and he breathed his last.

That night a tiger roared persistently in the forest beyond his house. The first rays of the sun appeared over the hills to the alarm calls of cheetal and sambar. The sounds of the jungle mingled fittingly with a group of musicians who came to play soulfully on the patio for their departed friend. Fateh was cremated at his farm surrounded by a throng of admirers. Many of the forest staff were inconsolable. A large number of his conservationist friends were there, including Rajasthan Minister Bharat Singh, Chief Secretary Saluddin Ahmed, Valmik Thapar, Bittu Sahgal, John and Faith Singh, Ashutosh Mahadevia, Dharmendra and Divya Khandal, Balendu Singh, Geoffrey and Diana Ward, Jaisal Singh, Rishad Naoroji, Madhu Bhatnagar and myself.

Fateh Singh Rathore is survived by his son, Goverdhan, and his two daughters, Padmini and Jaya.

Belinda Wright,
Wildlife Protection Society of India
Email: belinda@wpsi-india.org

PERSPECTIVE

Dismantling the fortress:

Evolving local and community-based tiger conservation approaches

On the January 24, 2011, the Karnataka government declared the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Wildlife Sanctuary as a tiger reserve without acquiring final approval from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). The urgency to declare the tiger reserve was a reaction to the mounting opposition from adivasi groups, civil society organisations and conservationists to the reserve proposal. Several members of the NTCA had in the week before the declaration, written to the Minister of Environment and Forests and the NTCA strongly opposing the proposal. The rush to declare tiger reserves with such urgency and by undemocratic means appears to be a reaction to the increasing influence and implementation of the Forest Rights Act. The establishing of 'fortresses' for wildlife, and especially the tiger, is a response to a global plea for tiger conservation. The tiger summit in Russia in November 2010 and the increased international support by agencies like the World Bank is being conveniently explored by the Indian forest administration to control more forests and clear forest areas of people. This simplistic and centralized approach to conservation is sure to create immense conflict in landscapes across the country.

In the process we are missing out on the many opportunities and capacities for community based conservation. The Soligas of BRT have, for instance, been actively campaigning for a different approach to conservation - a community based tiger conservation model that has been supported by a number of other groups as well. For decades, Soligas have collaborated with institutions such as Vivekananda Girijana Kalyan

Kendra (VGKK), the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) and the forest department to monitor, manage and document biological diversity and their local knowledge related to cultural and ecological practice. Soliga understanding as well as ecological research is showing that the suppression of customary practices has resulted in the spread of invasive species, *Lantana camara* as well as the increase in tree parasites. While lantana has dramatically reduced the regeneration of trees, parasites have resulted in the death of adult trees. The effect of these processes is going to be too difficult for managers to control without the knowledge and assistance of Soligas.

The tiger population in BRT too has increased, demonstrating that it is possible for tigers to co-exist with indigeneous people. Conservation stories from across India are suggesting failures of the conventional conservation model, yet we pursue approaches that seek to alienate local people, their customary practice and ignore the long history of forest transformation that has produced these forests. It is in this context that collaborative engagements such as is being proposed in BRT deserve urgent recognition and support if we are to bring tiger populations back from the brink, and make local people partners, and not enemies of conservation.

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To