



TIGERLINK

A Linkage of Concerned People and Organisations
Across the Globe to Save the Tiger

NEWS

Vol. 4 No. 2 September 1998

MARTYRS TO TIGER CONSERVATION

Forest staff are not trained to deal with the kind of organised crime that now threatens India's Protected Areas. As one Forest Officer said, they can handle individual poachers and local transgressors, but the kind of power and money behind the new breed of violators brings a level of threat for which they have not been equipped. Well-armed and organised tiger poachers, timber mafias, *kattha* collectors, bamboo merchants and Naxalites are the kind of opposition the forest staff are facing today.

In the last seven months at least 7 people have been killed—and many more injured—while protecting the forests and wildlife of India.

From Palamau to Simlipal, Tadoba-Andhari to Kalakad-Mundantharai, Mudumalai to Nagarhole, timber, bamboo and animal poachers have shown that they are prepared to murder to steal the country's wealth.

In a few cases the killings occurred when patrols attempted to apprehend a party of poachers but in most of the incidents the murders were enacted in cold blood. Perhaps the most chilling and hideous example of this is the distressing murder of a young tribal volunteer, one of 30 who had joined forces with the Forest Department to protect the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra. Vinod Lahanuji Sidam had been a member of the patrol who successfully caught a large gang trying to remove illegally cut bamboo from the Reserve. The following afternoon he disappeared. In spite of an intensive search, he was only found several days later—dead. His body was hanging from a tree and two of his toes had been hacked off.

Shri T. Chelliah Thevar had been working in the Kalakad-Mundantharai Tiger Reserve for the last seven years as a casual employee. One night, he and

another watcher were guarding a pile of timber that had been illegally cut by poachers but detected by the Reserve staff. It was to be moved to the Department depot. That night the poachers returned. They attacked with weapons and country made bombs. Shri Chelliah Thevar was brutally murdered.

In most of these cases reported to *TigerLink*, the persons concerned were from very poor backgrounds and were long-term but daily-wage employees. This means that financial assistance from the government is not automatically available. In the case of non-gazetted (casual/daily wage) staff in Tiger Reserves, Project Tiger can make a payment of Rs 50,000 (approx. US\$ 1,100) to the family of the person killed if the State applies for it. (Rs 1,00,000 for gazetted employees.) But such amounts cannot compensate for the loss of a family's main, or only, wage earner.

Thanks to an appeal widely disseminated by Mr. S.E.H. Kazmi, the concerned DFO in Palamau Tiger Reserve, Rs 2.5 lakh (approx. \$ 6,000) was raised over and above the Centre and State Government contribution of Rs 1.2 lakh, for the families of Shri Quraishi and Shri Parahiya who were killed in a land mine explosion in February. But for how many can such appeals work? The Karnataka Tiger Conservation Project are working out an insurance programme for their areas. Such insurance schemes need to be instituted in all the States.

Those wishing to send **donations** to support the families of these men whose lives have been given protecting the future of our natural wilderness areas, should write to the concerned Forest Officer.

(see 'News from the States' for addresses and further details)

Produced by Ranthambhore Foundation, 19, Kautilya Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi 110021

• Tel. 011-301 6261 • Fax 011-301 9457 • Email: tiger@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in

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Palamau T.R. employees honoured posthumously

The first 'Tiger Conservation Award' established by the Bombay Natural History Society under the aegis of the Sálím Ali Nature Conservation Fund has been given posthumously to Shri Aziz Quraishi and Shri Sukhdeo Parahiya, daily wage employees of Palamau Tiger Reserve, Bihar. They had been nominated by Mr. S.E.H. Kazmi, DFO in Palamau after they lost their lives in the cause of conservation and protection of the forest and wildlife. They were killed in a land mine explosion in February 1998. The awards, of Rs 10,000/- each, have been handed over to the families of the deceased employees.

The 'Tiger Conservation Award' will be given annually "to an individual active in the field of tiger conservation, an employee(s) of the Forest/Wildlife

Department not above the rank of Ranger or a community actively promoting conservation measures which impinge positively on the survival of the tiger. The employee of the Forest/Wildlife Department not above the rank of Ranger must be nominated by his/her superior with a detailed bio-data and area of work of the nominee. The nomination should highlight the impact that the individual's/communities' work has had or will have on conservation of the highly endangered species and its habitat."

Last date for receiving nominations is 31 March 1999.

Director, BNHS, Hornbill House, Dr. Sálím Ali Chowk, Shaheed Baghat Singh Road, Mumbai 400023

International recognition for three Karnataka wildlifers

Three Karnataka wildlifers, Mr. Thamoo Poovaiah of Madikeri, Mr. D.V. Girish of Chikmagalur and Praveen Bhargav of Bangalore, were recently recognised by the New York based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) for their outstanding contribution to conservation of wildlife and its habitats in India. The century-old WCS had, in 1991, similarly recognised the service of well-known wildlife ranger, Mr. K.N. Chinnappa of Nagarahole. Dr. Joshua Ginsberg, Director of the Asian Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society, who visited Karnataka recently, presented the certificates of recognition at a simple ceremony in Nagarahole on 8 May 1998. WCS conservation zoologist, Dr. Ullas Karanth and the President of *Wildlife First!*, Mr. K.N. Chinnappa were present on the occasion.

The dogged fight put up by Mr. Poovaiah and his associates against timber exploitation in Kodagu and their service in reducing human-wildlife conflict in Nagarahole through promotion of a humane and voluntary resettlement scheme for Adivasis residing in the park have been recognised.

Mr. D.V. Girish and his associates in Chikmagalur have been honoured for their determined fight to protect the Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary from the potential ravages of Irrigation Projects and for their role in stalling timber and bamboo extraction in the Sanctuary.

Mr. Praveen Bhargav has been recognised for his championing of the cause of wildlife all over the state through passionate lobbying and for his key role

in promoting the growth of the conservation group called *Wildlife First!*

WCS supports over 150 conservation projects in more than 50 countries of the world under the guidance of its Director of Science, Dr. George Schaller, who pioneered the scientific study of tigers in India in 1967.

WCS-India Program, 403 Seebo Apts, 26/2 Aga Abbas Ali Road, Bangalore 560042

WWF TCP award scheme

The Steering Group of WWF TCP, at its meeting held in New Delhi in May 1998, approved the annual award scheme in various fields of tiger conservation, for which government employees and others would be eligible (see 'T-L Meeting Supplement' with last T-L News):

(a) Outstanding management of tiger PA— one award of Rs 25,000/-.

(b) Contribution to the suppression of trade in tiger derivatives—two awards, Rs 10,000/- each.

(c) Special acts of bravery by field staff— up to five awards, Rs 10,000/- or more, commensurate with the nature of the act.

(d) Notable work in the involvement of people in tiger conservation—one award, Rs 20,000/-.

(e) Exemplary or innovative contribution to tiger conservation—one award, Rs 20,000/-.

WWF TCP, WWF-India, 172B Lodi Road, New Delhi 110003; Tel: 4698072, 4616532, 4693744

Andhra Pradesh

• *Stop Press: Damming tigers*

It is reported that the proposal to construct a tail dam for **Nagarjunasagar Hydel Project** which will cover 66 ha of the Tiger Reserve has been recommended to the Government of India by the Field Director of Srisailam and the Chief Wildlife Warden of Andhra Pradesh. The file moves through MoEF.

Is anybody following the Wildlife Protection Act?

Tigers and the nuclear age

A report in the *Deccan Chronicle* apparently reports that a 7 km² section of the **Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve** is to be handed over for **uranium exploration**. The site is at Chitrial in the Guntur district and the paper reports that its allotment to the Atomic Mineral Division (AMD) "would give a tremendous boost to their uranium exploration works". Preliminary studies are said to indicate a potential of 30 million tonnes of uranium ore deposit of a quality superior even to those found in Bihar.

Apparently officials are reporting "no wildlife activity in the Sanctuary at all" and the AMD Director, Mr. K.K. Dwivedi, is said to have told the newspaper that "leave alone tigers, we did not see even jackals".

The Tiger Reserve used to hold over 90 tigers although in the 1995 census the number was reported to have fallen to 34. Is uranium mining to be the final blow to this beleaguered Reserve?

• *CAG raps forest department*

The tiger population in Andhra Pradesh has declined drastically due to the failure of the state government to implement Project Tiger despite availability of central funds, the **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)**

has said. The CAG review undertaken in February 1997 was tabled in the A.P. Assembly in April 1998. The review showed that Rs 23.39 lakh of central assistance was lost due to shortfall in the utilisation of funds released during the past six years.

The report also castigated the Forest Department for its failure to monitor the Project Tiger scheme and for making no effort to determine why there had been a steady decline in tiger population. They also cited as a failure, the lack of action on relocating human settlements in Project Tiger Reserve areas and their failure to establish an adequate wireless network within the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Reserve.

Source: *Assam Tribune* 4 May 1998 & *The Asian Age* 2 May 1998

Assam

• *Kaziranga resource crunch aggravates flood damage*

According to Forest Department sources the State Government has still not released funds for **Kaziranga National Park** and it is "virtually running on credit". The **financial crunch** began in 1992/93 when the State Government was given the responsibility of funding the rhino conservation scheme by the Centre. While the State Government still has to release funds, the park survives on its dedicated field staff and the help of donations from national and international environmental groups and NGOs.

This year the floods which began in early June are reported to have so far claimed the lives of 3 rhinos, 2 elephants, 3 buffaloes, 20 hog deer, 3 swamp deer, one porcupine and a hog badger. In addition to this, a number of animals have been killed by speeding

vehicles as they crossed the highway en route to higher ground. The toll on the road was one elephant, 14 deer, 2 wild boar, a python, 2 cobra and a hog badger. The district administration had clamped a 40 km per hour speed limit on the highway in the vicinity of the Park in June, but its violation continues.

"An all-party delegation of the Assam Assembly recently called on Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and urged him to adopt a holistic approach to protect the Park from flood waters and maintain ecological balance with financial support from the Centre."

Source: *Assam Tribune*, Guwahati 21 July 1998

• *Assam tiger numbers*

In the 'Report on Tiger Estimation in Assam during 1997', the tiger census figure for the whole state has been given as 458, with a male : female ration of 1 : 1.14. This represents 89 in the core area of Manas Tiger Reserve, 36 in the Manas buffer zones, 80 for Kaziranga National Park, 85 for all the other PAs, 165 for Reserve Forest areas and 3 for Revenue areas.

However these figures have not been accepted by the Project Tiger office and clarifications have been requested from the State. Given the political turbulence, there is doubt that the estimation could have been achieved so comprehensively.

Source: Project Tiger, New Delhi; *Tiger Estimation Report in Assam* during 1997

• *Veterinary camps*

Early Birds continues to organise a number of human and veterinary camps with the intention of creating and maintaining an "immune belt" around protected areas. In early May, **Laokhawa Sanctuary** was targeted—a sanctuary repor-

Obituary

Shri Ganesh Das of Barpeta passed away recently in a Guwahati hospital. The cause of his death was leukaemia (blood cancer).

He had been associated with *TigerLink* from the very beginning and was a source of useful information from the North-East region. His untimely demise is not only extremely sad but also leaves a vacuum which will be extremely difficult to fill up. During the last period, he had been the principal of the Barpeta High School.

Ganesh Das was a constant source of support for the Field Directors of Manas and also for the conservation of the region. He mobilised public support through his fearless and matter-of-fact reporting on wildlife matters. He never hesitated to take up his bold pen against the administration or the government for their failure in tackling wildlife problems. At the same time he was appreciative of the attempts made by the authorities in protecting wildlife interests. He also wielded immense popularity amongst the student community and through his writing, elaborated the need of conservation of wildlife in connection with human survival. He was one of the major sources for awareness campaigns amongst local communities around Manas and had been successful in enlisting support for the project from the local youth. His demise has been widely mourned in Assam by all sections of people.

Submitted by S. Deb Roy.

tedly in deplorable condition with tree-felling and encroachment under political patronage being two of its severest problems. Veterinary camps were held at **Nameri National Park** and **Dipar Beel Wildlife Sanctuary** in coordination with the Wildlife Division of the Forest Department. A combined human and veterinary camp was held around **Kaziranga National Park**. The Guwahati Refinery Hospital sponsored the wildlife department staff medical camp.

Refinery Employees Trekker's Guild organised a free veterinary care camp at **Orang Wildlife Sanctuary**.

Source: Moloy Baruah, General Secretary, *Refinery Employees Trekker's Guild* and President, *Early Birds*, 26 'Surujmukhi', P.O. Silpukhuri, Guwahati 781003.

Bihar

- **Palamau deteriorates further**

In spite of glowing advertisements in the newspapers on the anniversary of Bihar's first year under Chief Minister, Smt Rabri Devi,

proclaiming how much they have done for the forests, the truth seems rather different! It is reported that within the administration, wildlife and forests continue to occupy the lowest possible rung.

The situation in **Palamau Tiger Reserve**, already in dire straits, has, if it is possible, become worse. Except for salaries, **still no funds** have been made available for work there; **the Naxalite threat has increased**—they are now threatening the forest staff directly, trying to prevent any cases from being lodged in relation to the illegal *kattha* collection which feeds the pan industry. It seems 95% certain that the land mine which killed Shri Aziz Quraishi and Shri Sukdeo Parahiya (see *T-L News* April 1998) was aimed at the DFO of Daltonganj South, Shri S.E.H. Kazmi. (See also Open Forum.)

Source: NCS, Daltonganj; Project Tiger

- **Palamau corridor destroyed**

An auxiliary double loop **railway line** is being built for Central Coalfields Limited (North Karan-

pura Coalfield Project), a subsidiary of **Coal India Limited**, to run from the Piperwar Project washery to the company's new rail siding at McCluskiegunj. At least half of the 35 km line is through *Sal* forest that represents the last surviving strip of **wildlife corridor** used by tigers, elephants and other wildlife, connecting to forests leading to Hazaribagh on the north bank of the Damodar river. The line passes through protected forest as well as the villages and agricultural fields of tribals whose lands are being forcibly taken without compensation, it is reported.

The forests are being slashed at an enormous width and depth. To the south the string of coal mines long ago destroyed the wildlife corridor. (See *T-L News* vol.3 no 2 Dec. 1997.) The line is being cut 75 feet deep and the 'overburden' from this, deposited over the area abutting the Satpahar hill to the north, covers several hundred square metres and is 50 feet high. Beneath this lie precious archaeological remains. Above ground are examples of Mesolithic rock art gravely threatened by the dynamite blasting only a few hundred yards away.

Alerting national and international authorities to this "*horrendous devastation*", **Bulu Imam**, convenor of INTACH in Hazaribagh, continues a vigorous **campaign against** the effect of Coal India's **495 opencast mines** which threaten to lay waste 170,000 km² of forest that was once prime tiger habitat.

The World Bank has been apprised of the situation and responded by writing to Bulu Imam that they "*recognise that biodiversity issues and the protection of wildlife and cultural*

heritage sites...are to be paid close attention" but that the EIA indicated that "no major species, including endangered species would be affected". However they were consulting John Seidensticker, Chairman of Save the Tiger Fund Council, for advice and were drawing up terms of reference for obtaining "a rapid assessment". If this assessment indicates that "the situation demands special attention", then a more in-depth analysis will be undertaken. If the 'in-depth' analysis then determines that "additional efforts are required to protect the tiger in the project affected area", the WB will then "seek to develop appropriate measures" in consultation with NGOs and Coal India.

This reads more like an attempted pacifier to conservationists than any true recognition of the threats involved or the actions needed to safeguard against them. Also, Bulu Imam points out that the WB refers to only two of the mines and is concerned that they may try to show that these particular mines do not specifically affect the existing corridors, overlooking "the fact that during the past few years Parej East mines have already destroyed living, working corridors used by both tigers and elephants".

The struggle continues but meanwhile, yet more precious wilderness areas succumb to the demands of resource exploitation and global finance.

Source: Bulu Imam, Convenor, INTACH, "Sanskriti", Sacred Grove, P.O. Hazaribagh 825301, Bihar; letter from Asger Christensen, Task Team Leader of the Social Development Unit (South Asia Region) of the World Bank to Bulu Imam dated 23 March 1998

• **Hurilong mine rejected**

The **Hurilong** Underground Coal Mine Project of Central Coal-

fields Ltd. was reviewed at the last MoEF Expert Committee on Mining in June 1998 and was **rejected**. The Project required 165.93 ha of forest land next to **Palamau Tiger Reserve**. The mouth of the **proposed** mine was to be situated only 1.5 km from the Reserve boundary and the **underground mining** would take place **inside**. Earlier a sub-committee had visited the site and concluded that a study on the impact of underground mining on wildlife should be carried out. This was entrusted to ICFRE, Pondicherry but "the report was not made available to the MoEF". "The Committee, after elaborate discussion on various issues and considering the overarching significance of the Palamau Tiger Reserve...rejected the project."

Source: Minutes of the meeting of the MoEF Expert Committee (Mining)

• **Deer meat for sale**

In April 1998 it was reported that a pregnant deer had strayed into a village in the **district of Garhwa**. The villagers handed the deer over to the police for safe keeping. The next day it was reported in a local daily that the meat of that very deer was being openly sold in the market. The DFO has taken strong exception to the matter but no sound action has been reported yet. The killing of deer in the district of Palamau and Garhwa is not uncommon.

Source: Kaushik Mallik, General Secretary, Society for Environment & Social Awareness.

Karnataka

• **KTCP-update**

The **Karnataka Tiger Conservation Project (KTCP)** was launched in January 1998 to strengthen the conservation status of four important tiger habitats in Karnataka—**Nagarahole, Ban-**

dipur, Kudremukh and Bhadra—through field-oriented protection and community involvement activities (see *T-L News* vol. 4 no. 1 & supplement). It is supported by the *Wildlife Conservation Society* in collaboration with Karnataka Forest Department, *Wildlife First!* and other NGOs. Since its inception, it has implemented several identified activities.

The nine **jeeps**, that were handed over at the launching ceremony, have been deployed in important Ranges of the four PAs and have been used for patrolling, protection and fire control duties with a total of around 80,000 km logged in six months. 29 timber smuggling cases and 4 cases of poaching, including one encounter have been booked / detected in the project areas.

In the area of **staff training and welfare**, 375 **field kits** for Foresters, Guards and Watchers have been distributed at 3 project areas—Nagarahole, Kudremukh and Bhadra. Each kit includes khaki uniform, belt, cap, sweater, one pair of shoes, two pairs of socks, a torch and an umbrella.

Training camps to improve field craft, anti-poaching and protection skills of field staff were conducted by *Wildlife First!* at Kudremukh and Bhadra. 105 Foresters, Guards and Watchers were trained in various aspects like tracking, fire protection, anti-poaching & ambush techniques, handling & maintenance of fire arms including safety procedures, use and maintenance of wireless equipment and basic legal procedures to improve quality of *mahzars* / FIRs.

An innovative scheme for providing **insurance cover** to field staff in the event of death, disablement or injuries caused during discharge of protection duties, is

• *Poaching in Pench*

A tiger was electrocuted by poachers at Kumbababa beat near the Karmajiri F.R.H. in **Pench Tiger Reserve**, M.P. The body of the tiger was located on 6 April by a beat officer. On 7 April the body was burnt after post mortem. An FIR was lodged in the Kurai Police Station on 8 April and on the night of 16 April, in a combined operation by the Forest Department, led by Range Officer, Mr. Akhilesh Agarwal, and the Police, two of three suspected culprits were arrested. After appearing in the District Court in Seoni, they are being held in custody. The third is believed to be absconding in Nagpur.

Tiger may not have been the intended target of the poachers in this case. Several incidents of poaching by electrocution have taken place in the vicinity as an overhead power line runs at low height for about three kilometres intersecting several animal tracks. Proposals have been mooted to lay an underground cable for this stretch financed by the electricity board and Project Tiger/wildlife department but so far the required funds have not been made available in spite of the number of deaths. In late 1995 a tiger was electrocuted, in 1996 a gaur, in January 1998 a suspected poacher was electrocuted and in March 1998 a sloth bear. Two people have been arrested and held in connection with the sloth bear death and the third accused in the tiger case is also wanted in this case.

More recently, two gaur were found dead after a small water hole was poisoned.

Meanwhile a major changeover in staff is happening. Although the Field Director and Deputy Direc-

tor have been in their posts less than a year, they are already being moved on. The A.C.F. and Deputy Ranger are also new to Pench.

Source: Raja Chatterjee, *The Jungles*, 78 Brahma Samaj Road, Behala, Calcutta 700034; J. Van Gruisen

• *Decapitating borers*

Monsoon is the season for the *sal borer* beetles to emerge and lay their eggs. A massive operation has been launched in the areas of Madhya Pradesh most affected by this pest. Following the Supreme Court order, the Forest Department report that no trees are being cut and the beetles are being lured by cut branches and with the light from petromaxes. The large beetles are then decapitated and the Forest Department pays Rs 0.75 per head collected. Meanwhile nature may also be playing her hand—for 12 days no rain fell, so conditions were not ideal for the beetles' propagation.

Source: M.P. State Forest Department

• *Death for tiger poachers?*

At a meeting in Bhopal organised by the MoEF (West), the **Forest Secretary** of Madhya Pradesh, **Mr. C. S. Chadda**, spoke strongly on the tiger's behalf. Referring to the tiger as the true conservator of the forest, he is reported to have said that the time has come when **tiger poachers** should be given the **death penalty**. It is also important that people involved in illegal felling should be imprisoned, he contended. In arguing that it is essential for humankind to protect the forest and tigers, he said that it is the forest and tiger that will ensure a protected and healthy environment and this in turn will ensure the survival of man.

Such public support for tiger conservation from a senior IAS officer is most welcome.

Source: Abdul Khaliq, *Nava Bharat*, Bhopal

• *Appeal against the WB*

The movement of Madhya Pradesh NGOs against the **World Bank sponsored M.P. Forestry Project** continues. Several organisations have signed a joint appeal against this Rs 900 crore project that began two years ago. They contend that it has been predicated on the belief that villagers are the main destroyers of the forests and that this has led to increased oppression towards villagers. They are concerned that both villagers and tribals are being alienated from the forest and that those in the National Parks and Sanctuaries will be rendered homeless by the project. The project is seen as a threat not only to the tribal populations in Madhya Pradesh but also to the environment and wildlife of the state.

The group appeals to all those individuals, groups and organisations who are sensitive to issues on environment or human rights, not to support the World Bank and to criticize those who do. This latter point is apparently with reference to a Delhi-based NGO, the *Society for Participatory Research in Asia* (PRIA) taking up a study, commissioned by the World Bank, to assess the claims that local communities are being involved in the management of forests. It is reported that the Udanti and Sitanadi Sanctuaries in the Raipur district have been chosen for this study.

Source: Appeal by *Kisan Adivasi Sanghatan*, *Narmada Bachao Andolan*, the *Ekta Parishad* and *Bargi Bandh Vistapit av Prabhavit Sanghatan*, Jabalpur, *Shramik Adivasi Sanghatan*, Shahpur, Betul District and *Bhimgarh Bandh Vistapit av Prabhavit Sangh*; *JPAM Update* no.16, April 1998

• **Tribals and conservation**

Mr. Mahendra Singh Chauhan reports on **Mandla** and **Balaghat** districts which have Kanha National Park in their heart and are an important spot when looking at the long-term survival of tigers in the wild. While pointing out the problems faced by this area, he highlights **forest fires** and **migratory grazing** as being in particular need of immediate action. Another major conservation-related aspect that needs attention is the **plight of the tribals** who have failed to benefit from the various development schemes due to bad planning, mismanagement, corruption and undue exploitation. This area is home to the *Gonds* and the *Baiga* tribes who have old traditional methods of cultivation and very meagre sources of livelihood. They have to depend on forest operations and collection of minor forest products for income. Thus, some are lured by wildlife traders into killing tigers and other wildlife, bringing them in conflict with the wildlife department.

Mr. Chauhan believes an answer lies in undertaking a joint NGO in-depth project in this tribal tract to improve the situation both for tribals and for the rich wildlife of these forest belts.

Source: Mr. Mahendra Singh Chauhan, Honorary Wildlife Warden, Village Chaprala, P.O. Chandampalli, Gadchiroli District, Maharashtra

Maharashtra

• **New protection force for TATR**

Under the centrally sponsored ecodevelopment programme, a **Village Protection Force** was established for the **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve** (TATR). Five youths from six tribal villages situated in and on the periphery of the Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary

Poachers kill member of Village Protection Force in Tadoba-Andhari TR

On 13 May 1998 a party of five, including two volunteers from the Village Protection Force, caught thirteen gang members with illegally cut bamboo. Offences were booked against them. The next afternoon one member of the Force, **Vinod Lahanuji Sidam** was reported missing from the Rantalodhi protection hut. The matter was taken to the police by the Range Forest Officer and a massive search operation was immediately undertaken by the park authorities but in vain. On the evening of 19 May, the dead body of Shri V.L. Sidam was found near the village boundary in the forest area. Two of his toes had been chopped off and he was found hanging from a tree. The police authorities were immediately informed by the Range Forest Officer and a case was registered. This **brutal murder** has sent shock waves among the staff and villagers of **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve** and is seen as a challenge to the protection of wildlife and its habitat. Late Shri V.L. Sidam was a 22-year-old tribal youth belonging to a poor family from Rantalodhi village inside the Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary. He was the only son and is survived by his old parents and unmarried sister.

Those wishing to send donations may write to Shree Bhagwan, C.F. (WL) Office of CF, Vali Manzil, Gaddi Godam Chowk Mohan Nagar P.O., Kamptee Rd, Nagpur 440001
Source: G.K. Washistha, R.F.O. Tadoba Tiger Reserve

were given training and their services utilised for the protection of wildlife and its habitat in the TATR. Ten protection huts were constructed in different parts of the reserve and patrolling parties were stationed at these huts in order to curb illegal activities. Forest staff and these young volunteers are carrying out patrolling in the area. (See also Open Forum)
Source: G.K. Washistha, Range Forest Officer, Tadoba Tiger Reserve

• **Poachers nabbed in TATR**

On 22 April 1998 a Village Protection Force patrolling in **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve** noticed a gang of nomads moving inside the project area near Bamangao. The squad kept watch on them throughout the night and in the morning were able to catch them and seize 8 tiger traps, a number of bird traps, small animal traps, spears and knives from them. The accused, who were residents of Sugma village in Jabalpur district (M.P.), were **arrested** and produced before the J.M.F.C., Chimur.

Congratulations to RFO, N.D. Bawne, Forester, P.N. Kodape, Forest Guards, K.K. Shrirame and Patil, Vankamgar, Madhukar Bhoyar, tribal volunteers Gajanan Keram, Mansaram Sedam, Ramesh Madavi, Gajanan Sedam and Devanand Shende and NGO co-ordinator Shirish Kathikar who participated in the seizure!

In another incident on 25 April 1998, Mr Uday Patel (who is also working as a coordinator for the patrolling squad) and two other members of the **Rhino Nature Club** came across 3 poachers by the Ambezari lake. As soon as the poachers noticed the patrol party they fled, leaving behind their weapons—bow and arrows and axes. The Ambezari lake road in

the Navargaon chowki area, is used by tiger and leopard, and the NGO members came across pug-marks of a tigress and cub.

The Rhino Nature Club, Green Pigeon Club and Teak Nature Club of Chandrapur made a joint request to the Dy. Conservator of Forests of Chandrapur to take concrete action to stop the "on-going slaughter of wildlife" in the Erai dam area. They also informed him that "poaching of birds is a very common practice carried out by fishermen who violate forest laws and regulations by staying overnight in temporary huts".

Source: Shree Bhagwan, Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Nagpur; Rhino Nature Club, Urjanagar

• **Tiger dies**

In May, forest officers found a wounded tiger being chased by dogs near the Erai dam area of **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve**. It was tranquillised by the Forest Department and found to have infected wounds on its chest and neck. In spite of veterinary care, the tiger died on the 17 May. The post mortem report revealed that a number of **porcupine quills** had become embedded and created punctures leading to respiratory trouble.

Source: Mahendra Singh Chauhan, Hon. Wildlife Warden, Gadchiroli District; Atul Dhamankar, Chandrapur

• **Anti-poaching training camp**

Mr. Kishor Rithe of the **Nature Conservation Society**, Amravati, organised a lively **anti-poaching camp** from 8–10 April 1998 at the **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve**. Inaugurated by Mr. Mohan Karnats, Divisional Conservator of Forests, TATR and chaired by Prof. Umakant Bhojar, President, NCS, and Mr. Mahendra Singh Chauhan, Hon. Wildlife Warden of Gadchiroli District, the two-day

workshop provided an opportunity to the various players in anti-poaching efforts to exchange information and ideas. Police officers, forest officials and representatives of local and national NGOs shared their experience and expertise through talks, films, slide shows and discussions. Participants appreciated the event as an occasion which galvanized them into redoubling efforts and pursuing new directions. Thirty three individuals from different government and non-government organisations participated in the workshop.

Source: 'The Report of the Anti-Poaching Training Camp' at Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TR) from April 8–10, 1998'

• **Fire in Melghat**

Reports from **Melghat Tiger Reserve** indicate that a very **damaging fire** has taken a severe toll of a large part of the **core area**. **One gaur death** has been reported so far. Though fires have always presented a risk in high summer in the Sanctuary area as there are 22 villages inside the Sanctuary and 39 adjoining it, it is uncommon in the National Park which is without human inhabitants and no one can enter without the permission of the Field Director.

Source: Kishor Rithe, "Pratishtha", Bharat Nagar, Akoli Road, Amravati 444605; E-mail: ncsa@bom3.vsnl.net.in; Bittu Sahgal: bittu@giasbm01.vsnl.net.in

• **Trucks increase in Melghat**

The Public Works Department is widening and building some big **bridges** on the **Paratwada-Dharani road** which passes through the heart of Melghat Tiger Reserve. The **Nature Conservation Society** study conducted recently on the road network in Melghat reveals that, "only 2500 trucks were passing in a month till

1992. This traffic increased to 5000 trucks per month during 1992 to 1995. But road improvement works have shown their results immediately in the last two years. You will be surprised to see the heavy traffic through this road today. It is around 8000 trucks per month." A lot of wild animals are getting killed or injured in **accidents** on this road, especially at night, also because animals need to cross this road to reach the limited perennial water holes.

Hon. Wildlife Warden, Kishor Rithe, calls for a **ban on the entry of vehicles** in the Tiger Reserve between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. and recommends that a number of **checkposts** be established. At present there is no check on the traffic during the night so it is very difficult to monitor illegal activities. In a letter to the Field Director he points out that "it is essential to have a **check on the entry and exit of the vehicles at night**".

Rithe has also written to the Minister of the Public Works Department (PWD) requesting that the work be stopped in the interest of conservation.

The Conservator, Amravati has written to the PCCF Maharashtra to confirm that the road works undertaken in the MTR have violated the Forest Conservation Act and that action should be taken. The work has now been stopped and an FIR is being prepared against the Contractor.

Source: Kishor Rithe, "Pratishtha", Bharat Nagar, Akoli Road, Amravati 444605

• **Hydro-electric project threat**

The threat of the **Chikhaldara Pump Storage Project**, on the outskirts of **Melghat Tiger Reserve**, has resurfaced with greater strength as Cat Specialist Group member, Mr. M.G. Gogate,

now the Chief Wildlife Warden of Maharashtra has reiterated his support on the basis that "there are no reports of tiger in this area in the recent past". He gives the closest distance to the Tiger Reserve as 8–10 km whereas others have placed it at 4 km from the Reserve boundary (6–7 km from the National Park boundary) This Project was considered by the MoEF's Expert Committee in January 1996 (see *T-L News* Vol. 2 no. 1) when a number of clarifications were requested and the proposers were referred to the Steering Committee, Project Tiger for a 'no objection certificate'. The Steering Committee had serious objections to the project. Mr Gogate comments, "possibly the Hon'ble member of the Steering Committee was not conversant with the project location site and may also have been misinformed". The member has made a visit to the site and reports that tiger, panther, sambar, chital, sloth bear and wild boar all use the area. Indeed a cattle kill was reported on 25 June 1998 at Bela village and a tiger was reported to have killed a domestic buffalo in another village very close to the site, on 6 July 1998.

The **Bombay Environmental Action Group** (BEAG) also recommend that **the project should be rejected**. They state that the proposed project is located only 4 km from the boundary and point out that "as per *IBWL/Project Tiger stipulations, no project is allowed within a 10 km radius of the boundary of a Project Tiger Reserve*". The proposed project requires 144 hectares of forest land, part of which will be submerged by a reservoir and even the EIA apparently lists a number of threatened and endangered species including tiger.

BEAG contend that the forest proposed to be destroyed is "excellent". They also point out that there is no indication as to where the compensatory forest is to be located and that the EIA makes no mention of the Gawaligarh Fort which is an important ASI/State archaeological monument situated only 1 km from the project site.

The project came up for consideration at the meeting of the MoEF Expert Committee on 5 August 1998 and was **not cleared**. A site visit was recommended.

Source: BEAG, 4 Kurla Industrial Estate, LBS Marg, Mumbai 400086. Tel/fax: 91 22 5701459; e-mail: admin@debi.ilbom.ernet.in; Bittu Sahgal, member Expert Committee (Hydro-electric)

• **Fishing in Pench**

The **Supreme Court ruling** on fishing in Pench continues to be **flouted** in spite of regular patrolling by the Forest Department and Police on the Totladoh reservoir. Such is the might and violence of the 'fish mafia', the department needs to keep police protection at the anti-poaching camp as it has come under attack and attempts have been made to blow up the patrol boats.

However, the Maharashtra Forest Department deserve congratulations for the dedicated and active manner in which they pursue their duties of protecting the area in Pench in spite of such opposition. 15 April 1998 is a good illustration of this. On this day an early morning patrol, travelling in the boat donated by *Care for the Wild*, surprised an illegal fishing party collecting their nets. However, before the patrol boat could reach them, the three fishermen sank their boat at the edge of the reservoir and escaped into the forest. On their way back to Tot-

ladoh town, the poachers set fire to the area they passed through, thus further damaging the National Park and demanding the attention of 20–30 park staff to extinguish it.

On the same day, Park authorities caught 8 women from Totladoh carrying headloads of fish through the forest. These women had been caught on earlier occasions carrying out fish for the contractors. They were thus refused bail by the Magistrate when they were produced in Court later in the day.

Source: Editor, *TigerLink News*

• **Tiger poaching in Melghat**

Once again poachers operating in Melghat have become very active. **Two tigers** were lost in the months of June and July to poachers in Melghat. On 5 June a tiger was found dead near Dhargad in south Melghat. The tiger had apparently killed a cow which was then poisoned by the poachers. Its bones, claws and skin were collected. It seems the local villagers blamed the cat for the death of over 30 cows.

A second tiger was killed in the first week of July. It was **shot dead** near Bela village 15 km from Chikhaldara after being baited with a cow. The poachers removed the bones, flesh, claws, skin and other parts immediately and are believed to have transported them to Madhya Pradesh on a motorcycle to be smuggled to Delhi via Betul—the same route that was used in the first incident.

Furthermore, poisoning of waterholes is reported in Melghat and in May five goats were found dead due to this. Another growing menace is the presence of a number of stray domestic dogs. In May

a chital was killed by them in the Mangia area.

Source: Kishor Rithe, "Pratishtha", Bharat Nagar, Akoli Road, Amravati 444605

• *Guns being seized*

Hon. Wildlife Warden, Kishor Rithe has written to the Collector, Amravati District, regarding the misuse of guns, licensed in the 1960s for crop protection purposes in **Melghat**. He argues that these are being misused and wild boar, chital and sambar are being illegally shot. It is reported that the Collector has begun the process of seizing these guns.

Source: Kishor Rithe

• *INDAL in court*

In December 1997, the Indian Aluminium Company Ltd. (INDAL) had commenced clearance and mining operations in the Iderganj area of the **Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary** (see last *T-L News* vol. 4 no. 1). Activities included levelling and widening of a *kutch* road passing through the sanctuary, felling and lopping of several dozens of trees and bulldozing bushes. The Deputy Conservator of Forests, Kolhapur took action and seized equipment belonging to INDAL and the *Bombay Environmental Action Group* (BEAG) has filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court.

In April the Court restrained INDAL from carrying out any mining activities in the area. No date has been fixed for the final hearing (see legal pages for details).

(Canadian participants may be interested to note that INDAL's parent company is Alcan of Canada who—according to the *Economic Times*—recently raised their 35% stake in the concern.)

Source: BEAG Press Release May 1998

• *Chaprala Sanctuary*

Hon. Wildlife Warden, Gadchiroli District, Mr. Mahendra Singh

Chauhan, reports that the **Chaprala Sanctuary** in Gadchiroli District is facing organisational and management problems. The most important task in its **reorganisation** would be the demarcation of its Core and Buffer areas. Also, the **tigers** from the area **have moved into adjoining Forest Ranges** of Markanda and Ahui in Allapalli and may be subjected to threats from the settlements there, thus it is important to keep an eye on the movements of the tigers. A daily-wage labourer was employed by the Forest Department to monitor the activities and the movements of the tigers but was discontinued two months later in February 1998 as the Department had no money to pay his salary. The Sanctuary has **no good staff** which could tackle the present situation well.

Source: Hon. Wildlife Warden, Gadchiroli District, Mr. Mahendra Singh Chauhan

Stop Press: Has the Maharashtra Wildlife Department been forced to allocate Rs 2 crore towards a 20 ha chain-fenced and specially landscaped enclosure for tigers so that a Tiger Safari can be started in Borivili, Mumbai from October 1998? It is well that the tiger is the symbol of the Shiv Sena but please let us have our meagre financial resources spent on wild tigers and to resolve the ongoing problems of both Melghat and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserves. A meeting to discuss the above was held in Mumbai on 20 August 1998.

Orissa

• *'Akhand Shikar'*

One of the more intractable issues of the **Simlipal Tiger Reserve** is that of **Akhand Shikar**, traditionally an annual hunting ritual which used to take place in April but now

Wildlife staff under attack

Simlipal Tiger Reserve staff continue to be **under attack**. (see *T-L News* vol. 4 no. 1). STR officials report that the 'timber mafias' have "*unleashed a reign of terror*" in the reserve. Reportedly in one division alone—Baripada, in the buffer zone to the south—there have been 21 assaults on forest staff over the last two years.

Forester, **Srikant Sethi**, of the Jenabil beat in the core area, was **murdered** inside the forest on 27 March 1998. He was found in a pit with his throat cut open with an axe.

In early April the "*timber mafia backed by about 100 villagers armed with lethal weapons stormed into the Bangiriposi Forest Range office... and assaulted the Range Officer and Forester present in the office.*" Both had to be admitted to hospital.

On 16 May 1998, **Shri Janmejaya Sahu**, a Forest Guard of Kadadihi forest beat, was **severely attacked** while patrolling in the buffer zone of the Reserve. Miscreants attacked Sahu **with an axe**, smashing the front and back of his head, only fifty feet from his guard post. He sustained multiple skull fractures and was left for dead by the roadside. Initially admitted to the local hospital, Sahu was later rushed to SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack where he was operated on for a cranium bone fracture and depressed skull. After successfully fighting for his life, he has recently resumed duties.

This was the eighth time that Sahu has been assaulted during his career as a forest guard.

Source: *The Hitavada*, 7 April 1998; WPSI, New Delhi.

appears to go on from November to June.

To counter this threat, the Field Director of Simlipal T.R. had requested **Rs 4.5 lakh** (approx. US\$ 11,000) from the Centre. **Project Tiger** released the full amount to the State for this purpose.

Meanwhile **WWF-Tiger Conservation Programme (TCP)** has also started an **initiative** aimed at curbing this menace to the Reserve. They aim to provide alternatives to the tribals and to spread awareness among them. The TCP is working in partnership with two tribal based NGOs—the *Society for Research Development of Tribal Culture (SRTDC)* and the *Mahtab Gana Shakti (MGS)*. This year the SRTDC initiated and got many village headmen of three tribes—*Santhal, Munda* and *Ho*—to take an oath against *Akhand Shikar* and burning of forests. "Alternatives like dancing and archery competitions were also organised by both the partner NGOs in many areas around the Reserve during peak days."

WWF TCP are also supporting the Tiger Reserve's management for creating additional anti-poaching camps in the buffer forests through the *Nature and Wildlife Conservation Society of Orissa*. "The management has employed senior tribals, many of whom are headmen of villages, for these camps. These men command respect among the tribals. They dissuade the tribals from hunting and also gather information on the preparations for *Akhand Shikar*. Once the information is available...in advance, the hunting parties are intercepted. In April-May this year, over six hunting parties were successfully intercepted and dispersed."

WWF TCP report, "according to *Amrendra Bose, Simlipal's Honorary Wildlife Warden, the*

frequency of animal killing has come down drastically this year. S.K. Patnaik, Chief Wildlife Warden of Orissa and S.S. Srivastava, Field Director of STR, corroborate this fact. The awareness programmes by local NGOs are sending a subtle but strong message against Akhand Shikar. But it will take some time before an end can be brought to this blood letting."

Source: WWF TCP, WWF-India, 172-B Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003; Project Tiger Office

• **New sanctuary mooted**

Wild Orissa urges that immediate steps be taken to safeguard remaining species in the Koraput district and that the idea of a wildlife sanctuary at Kondakamberu along the Orissa-Andhra border should be revived. They speculate that the unusual delay in acting upon this proposal has perhaps quickened the demise of the wild buffalo in that area and unless action is taken urgently other species will also face local extinction.

Biotic interference has increased, resulting in severe fragmentation of what were, until not so long ago, rich and undisturbed wilderness areas. Large-scale bamboo extraction for the Sewa paper mill at Jeypore, massive *podu* (shifting cultivation) cultivation, ganja cultivation and large-scale timber smuggling are devastating the area and this is likely to intensify due to the construction of roads by the paper mill and the PWD. *Wild Orissa* would like to see a thorough survey conducted which should then be included in the proposal for the sanctuary. The earlier proposal for the **Kondakamberu Wildlife Sanctuary** encompassed a 430 km² area of Rajulkonda, Poblignuda block, Sileru West block, Ran-

giniguda block and Kondakamberu RF. "The forests of this area are already facing the last struggle for survival," so speedy action is required.

Source: *Dambaru* Vol. 1-98, Newsletter of *Wild Orissa*, 5R-1, OUAT Colony, Gopabandhu Chowk, Bhubaneswar

Rajasthan

• **Extra protection**

This is the season when **Ranthambhore National Park** comes under particular pressure from illegal grazers and their herds. The department is therefore recruiting a large number of temporary staff to increase protection for the Park at this time.

Source: *Tiger Watch*, Ranthambhore

• **Study for Ranthambhore**

A two-year study, '*Integrated Analysis for Protected Area Management in Ranthambhore National Park*', is being undertaken by the *Indian Institute of Remote Sensing*. The objectives of the project are to characterise the habitat and biotic interference in the park and the critical issues involved and to develop an integrated management plan for the national park and its surroundings to relieve pressure on the protected area.

Source: K.K. Das, Scientist, IIRS, Department of Space, Govt. of India, Dehradun

• **Sariska by-pass**

Project Tiger has released **Rs 1.5 crore**, the first instalment of the Rs 3.5 crore sanctioned for diversion of a state highway from the **Sariska Tiger Reserve** (see *T-L News* April 1998). This is the largest amount sanctioned by Project Tiger for any project to date.

Allocation for such Project Tiger schemes has increased from Rs 8 crore to Rs 17 crore for 1998/1999.

Source: Project Tiger Office, New Delhi

Tamil Nadu

Poachers kill wildlife staff

The 'Veerappan factor' continues to affect the protected areas of south India. **Bandipur Tiger Reserve** in neighbouring Karnataka has been closed to general visitors since October 1997 and now the **Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary** in Tamil Nadu has been closed since mid-April 1998. Some poaching cases are reported in the area including **five elephants killed** during April/May.

In an encounter with poachers in May, one forest department watcher, **Shri Maniapan was killed**. Following a tip-off that poachers were operating in the densely forested Doddakatti area of Mudumalai, ten park staff led by the Wildlife Warden, Shri A. Udhayan, surprised a poaching gang in their hideout. Police sources said that the poachers opened fire and in the ensuing shoot-out, Maniapan was killed. One poacher also died, but the other two managed to escape. Two pairs of elephant tusks were recovered from the area. Although a case has been registered no arrests have been made so far as the two poachers are believed to have escaped to Kerala.

Chief Wildlife Warden, P.S. Katwal and the Superintendent of Police (Nilgiris), Sunil Kumar Singh visited the spot. Rs 1 lakh has been released as assistance to the family of the killed watcher.

Source: Dr. R. Sukumar, Asian Elephant Conservation Society; *Indian Express*, Bangalore 15 May 1998; Wildlife Warden's Office, Mahalingam Bldg, Coonoor Rd, Ootacamund 643001

Watcher murdered in Tiger Reserve

In the last week of April, "*unscrupulous elements*" illegally cut a few timber trees along a road side in the Nambikoil beat of **Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve** and converted them to logs for transport. However, the Thirukurugudi Range staff detected this and while arrangements were being made to transport them to the Forest Depot for safe-keeping, watchers were engaged to protect the logs. On the night of 3 May 1998 **Shri T. Chelliah Thevar** and another Forest Watcher, **Shri Velu** were on duty guarding the logs when a group of unknown persons attacked them with "*country bombs and lethal weapons*". Chelliah Thevar was **seriously injured** in the attack **and died** on the spot. Shri Velu managed to escape and report the matter to the Police and Forest authorities.

Shri Chelliah Thevar was a daily-wage watcher who had worked in Kalakad for the last seven years. He was a very sincere worker who played a major role by helping departmental staff in detecting forest offences. He accompanied forest staff on special patrols in interior areas and was deployed in crucial operations as his services were so useful. He belonged to a very poor family and is survived by his wife, one son and two daughters. The son also has no permanent job and is "*pulling on by doing odd jobs*".

The **Field Director** and Conservator of Forests, Dr. V.K. Melkani, strongly **recommends** Shri **Chelliah Thevar** for an **award and for assistance**, both because he richly deserves them and also as an encouragement to others engaged in similar duties in remote forest areas taking similar risks. Shri Chelliah Thevar shouldered tough tasks and lost his life in the cause of conservation and the protection of natural resources.

Those wishing to contribute assistance may write to the Field Director, Dr. Melkani.

Source: Field Director, KMTR, N.G.O. "A" Colony, Tirunelveli 627007; Tel: (0462) 552663; Fax: 580115; E-mail: kmtr@nellai.tn.nic.in

Uttar Pradesh

• **Killer highway**

In April/May several **leopards**, a sambhar and a spotted deer are reported to have been killed and several other animals injured by vehicles on the newly-widened and metalled 20 km stretch of road running along the periphery of **Corbett National Park**. The PWD is in the process of reconstructing over 300 km of road from Moradabad to Tehri. Out of this, the stretch of road from Ramnagar to Mohan runs alongside the Corbett Tiger Reserve and animals often cross it

at night to drink from the river beyond. It is feared that not only will this road improvement increase the volume and speed of traffic, but that it will also facilitate poaching in the monsoon season when the park is closed to visitors.

The Forest Department have asked the PWD to lay a series of **speedbreakers** along the road, particularly at the main points where the animals cross to reach the Kosi river on the other side from the park.

As ever, roads take precedence over wildlife, and Forest Depart-

ments find themselves powerless against Public Works Departments.

Source: *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 11 May 1998; *Hindustan Times* 15 May 1998

• **Compensation around Corbett**
Cattle lifting by tigers and other large carnivores has always remained a disturbing source of discontent amongst the local poor people around protected areas. The antipathy thus created amongst the people has always been a **major problem** for a wildlife manager in enforcing proper protection as cattle lifters become vulnerable to poaching. This fact was considered even during the inception of the **Project Tiger** and a system of compensation payments for cattle killed within a short distance from the protected area boundary was instituted. Unfortunately bureaucratic procedure of handling such cases created delays far beyond normal reasonable limits. Lately, lack of funds also proved to be a near-insurmountable obstacle in carrying out this essential activity by the Field Directors.

Meanwhile, with the passage of time poaching of tigers specially for their bones took menacing proportions. Organised gangs of tiger-bone smugglers gladly seized the opportunity of people's discontent against the authorities because of the loss due to cattle lifting and eagerly cashed in. It became extremely difficult to obtain any information of elimination of tigers, especially outside the PAs.

In this situation, in 1994, **Corbett Foundation** took up on-the-spot payments of some **compensation** after proper verification at the site, while departmental payment took its own time. The Foundation has now entered into an **understanding** with the **WWF Tiger Conservation Programme**

and is paying **compensation on the spot** at a higher rate. Any case of cattle lifting is immediately verified by the **Corbett Foundation** staff and the victim of such loss is paid the difference between the market value and the amount to be paid later by the authorities as per their own rates. This process was started in March 1998. The department has also geared up its procedure and is now making necessary payment without much delay.

The WWF TCP is providing the funds that are required for payment, while all the logistical support (inspecting staff, vehicles etc.) are provided by the **Corbett Foundation**. Under the same programme, **treatment** of animals which have been injured by the carnivores is being paid for. Extensive areas all around the Park have been covered by this programme and it appears to have been very warmly accepted by the villagers who are particularly happy about the instant payment of the compensation. The number of cattle kills reported this year has dramatically increased, which suggests that earlier many kills remained unreported, some of which might have been used by the poachers.

Corbett Foundation simultaneously runs a popular **free medical service** to the villagers, together with an awareness campaign, attended by the villagers in large number.

The preliminary **indications** are extremely **promising**, but it will be better to closely watch the situation over the next 3 to 5 years before coming to any conclusion. However, it may be interesting to note that there appear to be about 18 tigers, including 3 mothers with cubs, operating partially outside the Park during the present mon-

soon. This could be ascertained from the pug mark impressions observed near cattle kills. This is extremely encouraging.

S. Deb Roy, **Corbett Foundation**, A-3 Geetanjali Enclave, New Delhi 110017. Fax: (011) 6861219

• **Parenting tigers**

A survey by the Forest Department of the sugarcane fields around **Dudhwa National Park** after the tiger poisoning incident in December, apparently revealed **9 tigresses and 17 cubs!** These cane farms extend 70 km long and 5 km wide around the national park. In a unique experiment, the Forest Department entrusted **9 farm owners** with the task of "parenting" a tigress each. This exercise of looking after them was to be carried out without harming their natural wild behaviour. The tigers had to be left undisturbed after dark and farmers were asked to immediately inform the National Park Deputy Director if the tiger made a kill, leaving it untouched. Three such cases have been reported since the farmers were given the peculiar guardianship and in each case the "market rate" of Rs 3,000 per animal was paid to the owner by the department.

Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), Mr. R.L. Singh, who initiated the entire scheme said that "the arrangement worked wonderfully well".

Source: Sutapa Mukerjee, *Pioneer*, 11 April 1998

• **Appeal to save Dudhwa**

Save Tiger Youth Association (SATYA) has started a **signature campaign** to save **Dudhwa National Park**. They appeal to the Prime Minister to save the wildlife and especially tigers, stating that unless effective measures are taken, the Tiger Reserve would exist only in name, as the wildlife

of the area would disappear in 7–8 years. In their view, the present state of wildlife and forest in this area is a result of 20 to 25 years of mismanagement by the Forest Department and Project Tiger.

The appeal highlights a number of serious aspects from which the area is suffering and suggests remedies for improvement.

They request the **Prime Minister** to **take effective action** to protect the wildlife. A well-planned practical **action plan** for Dudhwa Tiger Reserve is required, SATYA contends, which cannot be left to the park authorities.

SATYA requests you to add your signatures and support them in this endeavour. Copies of the appeal (written in Hindi) may be obtained from them.

Source: (Translated) appeal by SATYA, c/o Kabir Ahmad, S.D.O. Forest, Pilibhit.

• **Tiger survey around Dudhwa**

The **Wildlife Protection Society of India** (WPSI) is starting a project after the monsoons. The objectives are to **study** existing tiger habitats **around** the 490 km **Dudhwa National Park** as well as the human–animal conflict issues around the park where tiger presence has been recorded during the 1993 and 1997 all-India tiger census.

Wildlife Protection Society of India, Thapar House, 124 Janpath, New Delhi 110001; Tel:6213864;

E-mail: wpsi.wildlife@gems.vsnl.net.in

• **Along Corbett's trails**

Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh of the Wildlife Institute of India and Shri A.S. Negi, Conservator of Forests, U.P. continue their explorations around **Corbett Tiger Reserve**, comparing the present conservation situation with the wildlife abundance prevailing at the time of Jim Corbett and recorded in his books (see *T-L News* vol.3 no.2 Dec.'97).

They report that heavy **poaching** continues in the Kathkinau area, in the oak forests between Talla Kote and Champawat and in the Tanakpur forests (between Haldwani and Sharda), and suggest that a 'Corbett Tiger Reserve Protection Committee' is formed, consisting of conservation-minded persons who live around the Reserve. Johnsingh and Negi conclude that *"wild ungulates and predators (leopard and tiger) have already suffered a lot due to uncontrolled poaching that has been occurring for several decades in the areas we visited. On our walk from Selargarh to Talla Kote, a distance of about 32 km, where Corbett shot a total of five man-eating tigers, we did not see a single tiger sign...."*

Other conservation issues raised are the decimation of **mahseer** by **dynamiting** in the Ramganga, Kosi, Ladhya and Sharda, the need to secure the forest between Mohan and Kumaria village as it forms an excellent **corridor** between the forests east and west of the Kosi river, the lack of wildlife guards in parts of the south Pithoragarh division, **translocation** of villages and the development of **grasslands** and the need to change the monocultures on the southern boundary to **polycultures** while controlling the collection of **firewood** for sale in the nearby townships which both disturbs the forest unduly and leads to scarcity of firewood for the people who live on the periphery of the southern boundary forests.

Source: letter to Dr. R.L. Singh, CWW, U.P. from Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh, W.I.I., Dehra Dun 6 July 1998

West Bengal

• **Sankosh Project**

A special committee, including the Director, Project Tiger, **Mr. P.K.**

Sen, was set up to assess the **Sankosh Canal Project** (see *T-L News* vol. 4 no. 1). In March, they made a field visit to assess the **impact** on the protected areas of **Buxa Tiger Reserve, Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary** and **Gorumara National Park**. Mr Sen is of the firm opinion that the proposed alignment for constructing the **canal cannot be recommended**. The proposed canal would *"bifurcate North Bengal (including a large number of its most vital ecological and wildlife areas) permanently"*.

He points out that *"the three protected areas (are) home of a large number of Schedule-I animals like tiger, leopard, elephant, rhino, clouded leopard etc."* apart from large numbers of smaller vertebrates and invertebrates which are facing extinction. *"The damage to the fauna of the area would be permanent and irreversible."* His report cites some of the major problems the canal would cause, including the fragmentation of the elephant population and the disruption to their movement.

Mr. Sen raises two further important points in his report: *"It is vital to note that the construction is in violation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980. This matter has also been taken up in a writ petition to the Supreme Court of India."*

"Project proponents may try to push development projects by producing elaborate cost-benefit analysis, but the intrinsic value of a single species or an entire ecosystem cannot be measured in economic terms."

Source: *Sankosh Multipurpose Project* report by Mr. P.K. Sen, Director, Project Tiger, Annexe No.5, Bikaner House, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi 110011

FIELD SUPPORT

WWF-Tiger Conservation Programme has provided two jeeps, 8 motorcycles and 1 truck to Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. They have also provided health care and clothing/field gear for forest labour there.

WWF-TCP have donated 1 jeep, 1 boat, 4 motorcycles and 1 truck to Valmiki Tiger Reserve and are donating static (3), mobile (2) and handheld (15) radio sets.

WWF-TCP has given solar panels and uniforms for daily-wage workers to Palamau Tiger Reserve.

WWF-TCP have donated money for cattle compensation schemes for Corbett, Dudhwa and Palamau Tiger Reserves.

Fund for the Tiger, USA, through the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), has provided a boat to the Corbett Tiger Reserve.

WWF-TCP has provided two jeeps for the Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem and Eturnagaram-Pakhal wildlife sanctuaries in Andhra Pradesh.

WWF-TCP is donating 5 motorcycles and 1 jeep to Mahananda WLS in West Bengal, 3 motorcycles to Nameri National Park, Assam and 10 cycles, 3 static radiosets, 2 mobile radio sets and 6 handheld radio sets to Katerniaghat WLS in U.P.

Care for the Wild have donated an Eicher 'troop carrier' truck to Tiger Watch at Ranthambhore and in turn this has been handed to Project Tiger, Sawai Madhopur for patrolling.

Care for the Wild, Germany, donated 17 pairs of binoculars; 12 to Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve, 3 to Sariska Tiger Reserve and 2 to the NGO, Tiger Watch.

• Project Tiger field vehicles

According to the Project Tiger Office, Dudhwa Tiger Reserve has 21 vehicles registered in its name. Project Tiger has funds to replace old vehicles but has received no request from Dudhwa for vehicles. Meanwhile, 5 new vehicles have been accepted by the Reserve from the NGO sector. WWF TCP has given 3 jeeps and 2 tractors.

A number of other Tiger Reserves have also benefited from the donation of vehicles and boats

from the NGO sector. Some states do not allow purchase of new vehicles even when money is available from the central funds of Project Tiger and in these cases the NGO support is particularly welcome. But where government funds are available, it is strange that the states do not avail of them and turn to the NGOs instead. If they are not able to operate existing vehicles, how will they run new ones? In fact, Project Tiger has to bear the burden of the driver, oil, maintenance and general running costs so it needs to be taken into confidence by the states and NGOs when requirements are identified in order for a rational and coherent programme to be followed. Better coordination between Director, Project Tiger, Field Directors and donating NGOs is required.

• Compensatory afforestation unsatisfactory

"The basic objective of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 is to strike a balance between development and forest conservation. Whenever diversion of forest land is unavoidable for developmental purposes, approval is accorded to concerned state governments subject to suitable safeguards for mitigating the adverse impact of diversion."

"Compensatory afforestation is one of the most important conditions stipulated by the Central Government while approving proposals for de-reservation or diversion of forest land for non-forest uses...."

However, *"the performance of the state governments in raising compensatory afforestation has not been very satisfactory. Till 1997, an area of about 2,74,796 ha has been taken up for compensatory afforestation against a stipulation of 5,95,702 ha."* [This represents only 54% of the requirement—a shortfall of 3,20,906 ha (3,209.06 km²).]

Madhya Pradesh has seen the greatest amount of forest area diverted (2,173.33 km²) and has one of the lowest afforestation percentages (only 38% of that stipulated). Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh have all diverted more than 200 km² of forest land but, apart from Kerala (39%), the percentage compensatory afforestation done is stated to range from 80% (U.P.) to 103% (Karnataka). Bihar has done least afforestation—only 4% of the stipulated 17.88 km². Jammu & Kashmir and Assam have only done 20% and 28% of the stipulated afforestation respectively.

Are these violations taken into consideration when new projects are cleared?

Source: *Enviro News*, MoEF March 1998 vol.1 no.3

• *Rs 70 crore for tigers*

The **Planning Commission** has indicated an outlay of **Rs 525 crore** (approximately US\$ 128 million) for the wildlife sector, of which **Rs 75 crore** (approx. US\$ 18 million) has been earmarked for **tiger conservation** and Rs 110 crore for development of the Protected Area network. Although this is an increase on the last five year plan allocation (Rs 200 crore), it falls far short of the recommendation by the Planning Commission's working group on wildlife management who had projected a need of over Rs 2,400 crore for wildlife, including Rs 90 crore for Project Tiger. (See June 1996 *T-L News* vol.2 no.1.) Furthermore, Rs 205 crore goes for GEF and national eco-development programmes so, taking into account inflation also, the increase is very much less than it seems. Wildlife will have to manage with less than a quarter of the projected requirement for ongoing, revived and new schemes and the government has again demonstrated the low priority given to the natural heritage of the country.

Source: MoEF; Report of the Working Group on Wildlife for the IX Plan (1997-2002) MoEF May 1996

• *New Government*

A new government has been installed since the last newsletter, under Prime Minister Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee. Rather than taking pride in having around 60% of the world's tigers and bestirring the country to protect them, it seems that the government prefers to put national feelings of well-being in such items as nuclear tests.

However, **Mr. Suresh Prabhu** who was appointed **Minister for Environment and Forests**, appears to be making a serious effort to acquaint himself with the issues and problems concerning his Ministry. He has met separately with the Forest Secretaries and Forest Ministers, MPs elected from tribal areas and prominent conservationists, among others. Mr. Prabhu held a **meeting** in Delhi in July at which **Ms Maneka Gandhi**, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, was present. The two Ministers discussed issues and problems **concerning the tiger** with members of the Project Tiger Steering committee, IBWL members and others.

He has also held region-wise meetings specifically to take up issues relating to reduction in forest cover and expressed his Government's **firm resolve to check the reduction in forest cover** as revealed by the Forest Survey of India's latest report. (See *T-L News* vol.4 no.1.) One of Mr. Prabhu's first announcements was the setting up of the National Environment Fund

(see below) and he has announced that more efforts were on to get additional funds for forest and wildlife protection. Only time will reveal whether the intentions can be translated into reality.

It is now just **over one year since** a meeting of the **Indian Board for Wildlife (IBWL)** was held under the chair of the then Prime Minister, I.K. Gujral. It is nearly **two years since** a meeting of the **Tiger Crisis Cell** was called and the last **meeting** of the **Steering Committee** of Project Tiger was held in September **1997**, in spite of a decision having been taken then to hold at least 3-4 meetings per year in view of the prevailing crisis.

Source: ed.; *The Hindu* 26 June 1998

• *Project Tiger on-line*

A new '**Tiger Control Room**' (TCR) is being created in the Ministry of Environment and Forests to collate and disseminate information on all wildlife-related matters but "*keeping tiger as a key stone species*". The Director Project Tiger, Mr. P.K. Sen says, "*the aim is to be open to the world*".

The TCR has arisen from the "*vital need*" to have clarity and **transparency** in the follow-up of important decisions and recommendations of experts, scientists, conservationists, National and International NGOs and Committee members on wildlife-related matters. The aims are to make the TCR **accessible** for discussions, suggestions and monitoring important decisions taken by the MoEF, to liaise with different Ministries of the GOI and to interact with State Governments on an emergency basis.

The Control Room, co-ordinated by the Director, Project Tiger, will **deal with all emergencies** be they poaching, fire or any other crises that confront tigers and their habitats. It is intended to be a nodal centre for a '**follow-up register**' and all important pending or un-implemented recommendations will be pursued from here. The TCR will provide access for members of the Steering Committee and Tiger Crisis Cell and it will provide and receive **information** on tiger from the general public.

Project Tiger is going on line and also hopes to be in e-mail contact with all its Field Directors soon. Information will be available to all through MoEF's web site—<http://www.nic.in/enfor/welcome.html>.

Initially, the Tiger Control Room is having to operate from the Project Tiger Office but the plan is for it to have its own independent space near the Minister in the MoEF. The Minister is inaugurating the project on 20 August 1998.

Source: P.T. Office

- **Environment fund to be created**

In early April the new Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr Suresh Prabhu announced that a '**National Environment Fund**' (NEF) would be created "to help increase the forest cover of the country". The fund is meant for environmental development programmes, especially afforestation, to achieve, initially, a 5% increase in forest cover with the ultimate aim being one-third of the country. The fund is in the process of being set up and modalities are being worked out. It is understood that part of the funds will come from those projects that require forest land diversion. The idea has been mooted of charging the project proposers when releasing land under the Forest Conservation Act for non-forest purposes. Part of this would go to the state concerned and part to the NEF.

- **Tigers census**

In view of "controversy about the estimated numbers" of tigers and the lack of concurrent and expeditious information provided to the Central Government in 1997, the Secretary MoEF, Mr. Vishwanath Anand, requested Chief Secretaries of the tiger states to ensure that the **census operation** was **repeated in 1998**, between April and the onset of the monsoons. The Secretary also expressed the Central Government's desire for scientists and knowledgeable persons to be involved in the compilation and collation of information.

The census results are expected to be available in September.

Source: MoEF; Project Tiger

Fact or fiction?

According to Valmik Thapar, unofficial census reports suggest that—in spite of all the problems—the population of tigers in Project Tiger Reserves has crossed 1,600 and the total census operation done by all State Governments will reveal that the number of tigers has crossed the magic figure of 4,000. If it does, a huge conflict will brew within MoEF as to the reality of this operation—whether fact or fiction.

If the figure has crossed 4,000 tigers, do we have a tiger crisis?

- **Manual on tiger enumeration**

WWF-TCP reports that based on the inputs from Dr. L.A.K. Singh, a reputed wildlife scientist, and modified by the Wildlife Institute of India, (it) is coming out with a well-documented **guide on**

enumeration of tigers by studying their **pug marks**. The manual is an attempt to standardise, rationalise and fine tune the methodology which could be uniformly followed and training could also be imparted to the field workers.

WWF-TCP's view is that the pug-mark method has the widest application; it is "the only one which is both universal and inexpensive and with which the actual field worker deployed in the work has any familiarity."

WWF-TCP, WWF-India, 172B Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003
Tel: 4697224/4698072; fax: 91-11-4698072;
e-mail: mkr@wwfind.ernet.in

A view from Karnataka

Forests being on the concurrent list, the Central Government should also actively contribute and be responsible for saving them. Central government agencies like the Forest Survey of India should be entrusted with the task of **surveying** and re-fixing the **boundaries of all Reserve Forests** and demarcating the boundaries with trenches/concrete cairns/rubble walls/live fences as found suitable for the area. This should be taken up as a special **Centre-State project** with funding and other agency support from the Centre. Survey reports pertaining to National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries should be ratified by the IBWL. There is also an urgent need to provide central funds directly to Forest Departments specifically for survey, boundary demarcation and protection. Some drastic steps like these alone will ensure that the Interim orders of the Hon. Supreme Court will change the rapidly deteriorating situation on-ground and help save reserve forests from piecemeal encroachments.

Praveen Bhargav, *Wildlife First!*

- **Social empowerment in PAs**

The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** (MSJE), Government of India, under the leadership of noted animal welfare activist **Ms Maneka Gandhi**, is embarking on an innovative **scheme** to reduce human wildlife conflicts and to address the critical livelihood needs of people living deep inside protected areas. The Ministry is drawing up a scheme to **financially support** the involvement of concerned non-governmental organisations in implementing a **voluntary resettlement** and rehabilitation scheme for people who are being denied developmental opportunities on account of protected area conservation laws.

A draft prepared by the Ministry with inputs from Mr. Raj Panjwani, Dr. Ullas Karanth, Mr. Bittu Sahgal, Mr. Shekar Singh and Mr. Ashish Kothari was discussed at a meeting convened by Ms Maneka Gandhi on 13 July 1998. It was decided to draft the scheme giving primacy to the involvement of the NGO sector and taking into account the voluntary nature of the resettlement program. The MSJE is currently working out details of scheme.

Dr. Ullas Karanth <Karanth@blr.vsnl.net.in>

• *Support to PAs*

WWF Tiger Conservation Programme (TCP), launched in January 1997, seeks to complement the government's efforts to save the tiger. It provides vehicles, inoculation of livestock to prevent contagion, equipment like radio sets and uniforms for the field staff, funds for rewards as well as information to counteract poaching and illegal trade. It also is assisting in cattle compensation and providing alternatives to traditional tribal hunts.

Corbett, Dudhwa, Manas, Bandhavgarh, Periyar and Palamau Tiger Reserves and Kaziranga National Park have been given this kind of assistance in the first phase.

In the second phase, new tiger areas were visited in 1997 and their needs were assessed. Support has already been given to Katerniaghat, Tadoba-Andhari and Valmiki; Mahananda is in the pipeline. Altogether **nine new tiger areas** of the country are **proposed** to be covered in the second phase. These are Nameri National Park (Assam), Pakhui Sanctuary (Arunachal Pradesh), Mahananda (West Bengal), Valmiki (Bihar), Katerniaghat (U.P.), Tadoba-Andhari (Maharashtra), Satkosia (Orissa), Biligiri Rangayyan Temple Sanctuary (Karnataka) and Achanakmar Sanctuary (M.P.).

WWF-TCP, WWF-India, 172B Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003
Tel: 4697224/4698072; fax: 91 11 4698072;
e-mail: mkr@wwfind.ernet.in

• *Reducing man-animal conflict*

"**WWF TCP** is paying special attention to **reducing conflicts** between people living in and around tiger reserves and the tiger. A plan for providing immediate compensation for cattle killed by the tiger is being implemented in three States where the maximum number of poisoning cases have been reported—Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. The **compensation programme** seeks to counter the added threat to the Indian tiger—poisoning of tigers that are killing livestock.

"In **Andhra Pradesh**, park managers are empowered to draw whatever money is required as compensation and there is no shortage of funds, but they lack transport to reach far-flung areas immediately to pay the money and take possession of the kill. The TCP has therefore, provided **two jeeps** for the **Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam** and **Eturnagaram-Pakhal** wildlife sanctuaries.

In **U.P.**, where the government compensation is much less than the actual value of the cattle, the TCP, with the approval of the State government, has placed funds with partner NGOs in Corbett and Dudhwa. The Park representative pays the amount permissible under the rule and the TCP's NGO partner pays the balance of the amount to bring the total to assessed market value. (See News from the States, UP, this issue.)

Compensation for 249 cattle killed/injured by tigers and leopards amounting to **Rs 2,25,270** has been paid by WWF TCP since October 1997 in the **Corbett, Dudhwa and Katerniaghat** areas of U.P.

"In **Palamau**, Bihar, the TCP is paying ex-gratia 50 per cent of the official compensation to the villagers. The government compensation, as and when paid, will also go to the cattle owner. Three vehicles have been provided to Palamau for patrolling and payment of ex-gratia compensation. The scheme in Palamau was started in June 1998 and payment for **seven cattle** killed was made in the first month.

In all three States, **incentive money** is being paid to villagers to **report a tiger kill** at the earliest. Rs 300 is given if the information is relayed immediately, Rs 200 if it is later than 24 hours and Rs 100 if it takes more than 48 hours. If there is doubt that poisoning may still occur after payment of compensation, the kill is destroyed. A person could also be hired to safeguard a kill prior to the tiger's return for a feed.

WWF-TCP, WWF-India, 172B Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003
Tel: 4697224/4698072; fax: 91-11-4698072;
e-mail: mkr@wwfind.ernet.in

• *Wildlife and livelihood rights*

The '**Second Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights**' called by the *Tarun Bharat Sangh, Kalpavriksh*, Indian Institute of Public Administration and *Ekta Parishad* took place on 17-19 April 1998 in Bhikampur-Kishori village near the Sariska Tiger Reserve. A number of issues were discussed and the interaction continues through communications.

Additional 'principles and strategies' have been listed including: the need for site-specific flexibility in wildlife and forest-related laws, in the tackling of man-animal conflict and with regard to the development and livelihood requirements of villages inside protected areas. Other points relate to the increase in commercial pressure on protected areas, the need to isolate NGOs and individuals who, when urged, do not give up World Bank consultancies, the consideration of legal restitution of traditional hunting practices by those tribals who are primarily dependent on wildlife, the need to redefine "rights" in relation to the Wildlife Protection Act and settlement procedures and also provide a clear definition of "voluntary relocation". It is suggested that "induced eviction through curtailment of survival resources should be considered forcible eviction".

Source: Ashish Kothari, Kalpavriksh, #5 Shree Dutta Krupa, 908 Deccan Gymkhana, Pune 411004. Tel./fax: 0212-354234; e-mail: ashish@nda.vsnl.net.in

• Ministry changes

Mr Kishore Rao has been appointed **Director, Project Elephant**. He took up this new post on 15 June 1998.

Shri S.K. Pandey who was **Additional Inspector-General Forests** in the Ministry of Environment and Forests has returned to Himachal Pradesh as the Principal Conservator of Forests. The process of appointing his successor is in progress. **Meanwhile Mr. S.C. Sharma**, Additional I-G (Wildlife), is holding dual charge.

Mr. H.C. Dhawan has replaced Mr. R. K. Goel as the **Chief Wildlife Warden of Delhi**.

He may be contacted at the Office of Conservator of Forests, Kamla Nehru Ridge, New Delhi 110007. Tel: 2524592 / 2923561

• 25 years of Project Tiger

To mark **twenty-five years of Project Tiger**, the Director is calling a **meeting** of Field Directors of the Tiger Reserves, Principal Chief Conservators of Forests, Chief Wildlife Wardens, Forest Secretaries, Forest Ministers of the tiger range states, Project Tiger Steering Committee members and those actively participating in Project Tiger efforts. The workshop is to be held in Delhi at the end of the year. The aim will be to assess the achievements and failures of the previous 25 years of tiger conservation and to discuss how to deal with the constraints in management of tiger areas. It is hope that at the end of the deliberations, the workshop will submit recommendations to the Ministry on the way forward.

Source: P.T. Office

Sanjiv Arora of Gaurav International is keen to do something practical to **save the tiger** and our wilderness areas. He would like to get together with other **business people** of like mind to develop ideas, pool resources and discuss ways in which they, as part of the business community, may further the cause of conservation.

His first steps are to look for an alternative to polythene for his packaging and to include an attractive 'Save the Tiger' appeal on it.

Please contact him at: Gaurav International, 12A/27 W.E.A. Karol Bagh, New Delhi 110005. Tel: 5732189 / 5733601 Fax: 5753040

• Wilderness Congress 1998

The **6th World Wilderness Congress (WWC)** will take place between **24–26 October 1998** in Bangalore. This is the first WWC to be convened in Asia and its theme is, "*the call for a sustainable future*". Working sessions include: '*the tiger dilemma—status, review and recommendations*' to be chaired by Dr. Ranjitsinh and '*The Asian and African elephants: flagships for conservation*' to be chaired by Dr. Raman Sukumar.

Further information available from: M.A. Partha Sarathy, Chairman, 6th WWC, #1, 12th Cross, Rajmahal, Bangalore 560080. Tel.: 080-3340400; fax: 080-3341674; e-mail: 6wwc@spar-rl.com; website: www.worldwilderness.org

• Geoinformatics '98

A national seminar on geoinformatics will be held on **26–27 October 1998** at the **Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (NRSA)**, Dehra Dun. The seminar is jointly organised by NRSA and the International Institute for Aerospace Survey and Earth Sciences, Enschede, Netherlands and its focus is towards **natural resource management**.

Further information from: Prof. M.D. Shedha, Organising Secretary, Geoinformatics '98 Seminar, Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehra Dun 248001. Tel: 0135-740172; fax: 0135-741987; e-mail: dean@del2.vsnl.net.in

• Ethology conference 1999

The **XXVI International Ethological Conference (IEC)** is to be held on **2–9 August 1999** in Bangalore. Topics to be covered include: 'Predator-prey relations', 'Echolocation', 'Ethology and conservation', 'Animal behaviour and veterinary public health' and 'Human ethology' amongst others.

Further information available from Dr. Shakunthala Sridhara, Secretary-General XXVI IEC, Professor & Head, AICRP on Rodent Control, University of Agricultural Sciences, College of Agriculture, GKVK Campus, Bangalore 560 065. Tel: 080-3330153; fax: 080-3330277; e-mail: sridhara@blr.vsnl.net.in

Wild Tiger Fund Australia

Wild Tiger Fund Australia is "a new non-profit organisation with a clear primary purpose: the protection of wild tigers from poachers and habitat destruction through direct action. Through fund-raising activities in Australia, we aim to make resources available to relevant projects in India."

"We would like to develop contact with involved individuals and organisations...which could benefit from our efforts to make a measurable, positive impact on tiger conservation." "We recognise the need to link with most appropriate organisations prepared to take direct action to save the tiger. This action could take the form of ranger training, supplying resources and equipment and working with local villagers. These are just examples."

Further information available from:

Pamela Sutton, WTFA, P.O. Box 2254, Prahran, Victoria 3181, Australia. Tel: 61 3 9529 5748; fax: 61 3 9529 5768; e-mail: yearofthetiger@hotmail.net.au

Bangladesh

• Tiger situation in the Bangladesh Sunderbans

The Forest Minister, Sajeda Chowdhury gave, in Parliament, the official Forest Department figure for tigers in **Bangladesh Sunderbans** as 460. However local conservationists believe this figure to be grossly exaggerated and guess that the figure is nearer 200, or even as low as 60 to 100. However, no scientific studies or censuses have been attempted in recent memory.

Occasional tiger skins are being traded but wildlifers have little information on **trade** in tiger bones. In 1993 three skins were seen in the FD headquarters in Mohakali (Dhaka). Although ostensibly from the Sunderbans, (allegedly taken from poachers by the BDR, the Border Security), one ex-hunter measured the skins and found them to be longer than expected of Sunderbans tigers. One was 10 feet and 4 inches. The longest Sunderbans tiger skin seen by him was 9 feet and 3 inches.

It is reported that some curio stores still sell tiger teeth and claws, but no more information was available on the status of the trade. It is also thought that tigers are occasionally poisoned since hunting was too time-consuming.

Source: Ian Lockwood wood@ais-dhaka.net

China

• Cattle kill compensation

The official newspaper *China Daily* reported that to prevent farmers from avenging the death of their cattle, authorities in northern China paid 1,000 Yuan (US\$ 120) a piece for cows killed by tiger. The payments were made to four farmers after three of them sued the government for compensation.

Efforts to save the endangered Siberian tiger have been hampered by poaching—sometimes by farmers who have lost livestock. Tigers are reported to have killed at least 12 cows since August 1997.

Source: *Indian Express*, 30 June 1998

• Siberian tigers in Jilin province

About **four to six Amur (Siberian) tigers** and four to seven leopards were found on **China's** side of the border with Russia, in Jilin province, according to the new wildlife survey jointly conducted by 12 Chinese, Russian and American biologists. The survey was conducted between 20 February and 18 March with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The major areas they surveyed were Hunchun County, Wangqing County, Antu County and Dunhua City.

They also discovered a "significant" wild Sika (spotted deer) herd, which had not been seen for years.

In November 1997 the governments of Russia and China signed an agreement to step up collaboration to protect the tiger. "Success in exposing the routes of the illegal trade depends greatly on co-ordinating the activities of the law enforcement agencies and customs service." "The Customs and Police forces must work closely together."

Source: *World Journal* no. 7365, 22 March 1998; Natalia Moraleva in *Russian Conservation News* No.14 1998 (sent by Wen Bo)

• South China tigers

Liao Xiansheng of **Huping Mountain Nature Reserve** management office reports that fifteen incidences of indirect evidence (scats, footprints, markings and roars) of the South China tiger in Huping Mountain of Hunan Province were filed in 1997. He believes that about **10 South China tigers** are living in the Sanctuary. In 1995 and 1996, eight reports were filed each year; in 1994, five; 1993 and 1992 two each year.

The South China tiger is also believed to be living in Mangshan Mountain of Hunan Province, Meihua

Mountain of Fujian Province and Chenbaling of Guangdong Province.

At present there are a total of 51 South China tigers in captivity in Chinese zoos.

A **South China tiger** was reportedly seen in the wild in Boakang County, **central Hubei province**. A truck driver of Shengong Forestry Products Company, Lan Shenynin, and his son were reported to have seen a tiger, assumed to be a South China subspecies due to the location, at 3 a.m. on 24 January, when they drove through Duantoutai, a pristine forest area in Wudaoxia nature reserve.

Source: *People's Daily* (Overseas Edition), February 1998; *Hubei Daily*, 28 March 1998 (sent by Wen Bo)

• *Birth by caesarean*

One of the world's remaining **South China tigers** has given birth to three cubs by caesarean section. One of the cubs subsequently died, the Xinhua News Agency reported on Sunday.

The mother is a 14-year-old tigress named Xianghuan. She was the first tiger in China to undergo such a medical procedure. The operation was carried out at a special 'reserve', the **Xionsen Bear and Tiger Village**, in Guangxi.

Source: *Hong Kong Standard*, 8 June 1998 (sent by Wen Bo)

Japan / China

• *Stir fried Bengal tiger Cantonese style*

Fuji Television, a leading **Japanese television** network **provoked outrage** for showing, on 9 July, three Japanese television **stars eating** and enjoying **tiger meat** at a restaurant in **Shanghai**, China, as part of a gourmet television series. The stars were given a blind tasting of some braised meat and they did not know what they were eating, but after they were shown a live tiger, one of them continued to eat saying, "*thank you very much, it's a great chance to take precious meat. I am very happy.*"

After the programme was aired, the network was bombarded with **viewers' complaints** and **protests**, media inquiries and conservation groups denouncing the programme.

Fuji network in the beginning did not see anything wrong with the programme, and in defending it they said that the tiger had not been killed specially for the programme, but that the animal had died a year before in a Chinese zoo and been preserved in the restaurant freezer. They also said that the tiger dish does not feature regularly on the restaurant menu!

The **Japan Wildlife Conservation Society** (JWCS), among other organisations, reacted very strongly against the programme, and aims to persuade the sponsors of the show to make a conservation TV programme "*to wipe out the dishonour*".

Kumi Lee, representative of the **Tiger Conservation Fund** of JWCS says, "*Now most Japanese have found out that the tiger is an endangered species. It is a great campaign though it is a terrible taste!*"

JWCS wrote a **protest letter** to Fuji TV which was copied to all Japanese newspapers and to other TV companies stating that such a programme would stimulate demand for tiger dishes and medicines leading to accelerated extinction of the species. It also encourages attitudes for consumption of wild species in general, they said.

JWCS also sent the TV company some relevant reference material on the status and threat to tigers and requested them to refer to that and to wildlife conservation NGOs, if making programmes related to wildlife consumption in future.

They pointed out that 1998 is the *Year of the Tiger* and that there is a campaign to stop the consumption of tiger derivatives. In China, domestic trade in tiger bone was banned in 1993. In the Japanese market, tiger bone wine is available in TCM pharmacies or in China Town. Tiger penis is also available in grocery stores. In fact Japan is one of the biggest consumer countries not only of tigers, but also of ivory, sea turtle, and other endangered species. Japan imported legally 28,000 cases of objects classified by CITES in 1993!

JWCS's protest letter finally asks for the TV company to take "*strict action*".

Elizabeth Kemf of WWF, reacting in shock to news of the programme, asserts "*it is in violation of the spirit of CITES*". Both Japan and China agreed to resolutions calling for voluntary bans on domestic consumption of tiger parts and "*Japan as a member of the G7 is the only nation not banning internal trade as they agreed to do under resolutions passed at CITES.*" "*China and Japan have blatantly flouted an international agreement and have promoted consumption of—rather than conservation of—an endangered species.*"

The head of the PR division of Fuji TV sent a **written apology** to the JWCS in reply to their protest and also apologised in a Fuji TV programme.

Source: Japan Wildlife Conservation Society <kumi-lee@interlink.or.jp>; AP; Reuters; WWF

Malaysia

• *Wildlife on the menu and in the fridge— DWNP's successful convictions*

After lengthy undercover operations, a team from the Law Enforcement Division of the **Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP)**, headed by **Mr. Norizam Ahmad** with the prosecution led by **Mr. Ismail Mahmud**, have successfully carried out **one of the biggest wildlife cases involving wild cats**. All possible evidence was obtained to ensure a conviction, and though the fine was not a very severe one, it is thought to be high enough to be a deterrent for others. The case concerns restaurants selling exotic animal dishes. Each restaurant owner was fined between RM 2,500 and RM 3,000 per offence (approx. Rs 23,750–28,500).

Earlier, in December 1997, a restaurateur, Wong Hoi Yin, was fined RM 9,000 after pleading guilty to keeping "several parts of protected wild animals in his house fridge". **The leg of a leopard, the leg of a bear, part of the head of a mountain goat, part of the head of a deer, nine leopard cats, eight clouded leopard, 39 foxes, 111 flying foxes, 1 wildboar, 1 lynx, 1 mouse deer, monkey bones and meat and part of a monitor lizard were "among parts of other animals" found in the kitchen fridge!** In "mitigation", Wong said he kept the parts "for medicinal purposes".

Science, Technology and Environment Minister, Datuk Law Hieng Ding said that something drastic had to be done to change the way people here think of wild animals. "When the Europeans see wild animals, they say how do we protect them, but when our people see such animals, they say how can we eat them." "...I have directed enforcement to be stepped up in such restaurants or shops selling protected animals. We also ask for public co-operation to inform us of such outlets."

"If there is a need, we will review our **Wildlife Protection Act 1972 to make jail sentence mandatory for those who are caught killing protected animals. We have already amended the Act in 1990 to make jail sentence mandatory for those who set up traps to catch wild animals; we can do the same for this.**" Presently under the law the maximum penalty for a person caught killing a protected animal is a fine of RM 15,000 or a five-year jail sentence.

Wildlife and National Parks Department Director-General, Musa Nordin said that every year the department receives about 4,500 reports of people killing protected animals. Most of them were res-

taurant owners and about 120 cases usually ended up in court. According to Musa, bear paws, rhinoceros meat and tiger meat were among the many exotic dishes served by restaurants.

Congratulations to all concerned for their successful operation!

Responding to *TigerLink* networking, the UK tiger charity, **Global Tiger Patrol** have offered a **£ 500 reward** to the staff involved. On behalf of the Director General, DWNP, Mr Sivananthan Elagupillay writes, "it has certainly been encouraging to know some actions are being taken to look into the welfare of the people involved directly in protecting and managing the wild cats in their habitats."

Source: Mr. Sivananthan Elagupillay, DWNP, KM 10 Jalan Cheras, 50664 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Fax: 03 9052873; *The Star*, Kuala Lumpur 19 December 1997 & (by Hazel Ong) 20 May 1998

Nepal

• *Nepal destroys confiscated wildlife parts*

On 23 March 1998 the **Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC)** in Nepal destroyed a huge heap of **confiscated wildlife parts**. The Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation, Shri Hridayesh Tripathy, set fire to the pile, reported to include: 144 kg tiger bones, two tiger skins, 187 pieces of leopard skins, 874 rhino hides, 1,363 rhino hooves, two python hides, two alligator hides, 3 crocodile skins, 55 hyaena hides, 5 kg of monkey skulls and 33 kg of *chiru* (Tibetan antelope) wool.

These contraband items have been under the strict security of the Department for seven years in the store room of Royal Chitwan National Park but in view of the expense of protective storage, the decision to destroy them was made, after consultation with CITES.

Unfortunately, it seems that some 'conservationists' and 'environmentalists' opposed the move, arguing that the banned items can provide a massive infusion of funds for conservation in Nepal or could be used to raise public awareness about poaching. However as Bittu Sahgal asks in a letter on the issue addressed to Secretary, MoEF, India, "Would anyone agree to sell confiscated heroin in the market, to fight the drug trade? All that the sale of such products does is to create a still more insatiable demand."

Source: Deepak Gajurel 'Nepal to destroy confiscated wildlife parts', ENS, 16 March 1998; *Kathmandu Post*

Russia

- **Emergency funds to fight fires in Russian Reserve**

In response to a dramatic plea for help from Anatoly Astafiev, Director of the Sikhote-Alin Biosphere Reserve, **21st Century Tiger** set up an **emergency fund** in Britain to raise funds for battling fires raging out of control in the Russian forest habitat of the Amur tiger. A second appeal was received from the Director of the Lazovsky Reserve, another of the four major Amur tiger reserves.

By 21 May, 2,000 hectares had been lost to the flames and this had increased to **4,000 hectares** by 25 May according to official estimates. The fire spread especially fast through these prime Korean pine forests whose large pine cones and seeds are the major food for the wild boar, one of the main prey species of the tiger.

Manpower was required, as well as fuel and equipment—parts for vehicles, fire-extinguishing equipment and special safety clothing. The goal was to clear a fire-prevention strip around the blaze, some parts of which are inaccessible without the use of aircraft. This is the first time in ten years that these strips have not been cleared. According to reports, the reserve staff are battling four fires per day.

Very little snow fall during the 1997–1998 winter and exceptionally warm and dry weather since February have contributed to the fires, some of which have been burning since March.

21st Century Tiger's emergency fund raised **£ 8,000** which was quickly wired to Russia. In July they received a communication from **Anatoly Astafiev** informing them that all the Sikhote-Alin fires had been extinguished and that it might not have happened, had it not been for their timely help. He **warmly thanked** everybody who had helped to resist this disaster.

[21st Century Tiger is a wild tiger partnership between Global Tiger Patrol, London Zoo and Tusk Force of which Esso UK is a founder supporter. (See *T-L News* vol.3 no.1.)]

On 11 June, **WWF** and **IUCN** announced that they have sent \$ **20,000** of the "*Tiger Emergency Fund*" to fight the fires raging in the tiger habitats of **Lazovsky and Sikhote-Alin Reserves**—two of the most significant protected areas for tiger in Eastern Russia. The grant is the first allocation of the *Tiger Emergency Fund* since it was established in January 1998 (see below).

Source: RFE Fires <75570.1424@compuserve.com>; Gail McGuffie, 21st Century Tiger <tusk-force@dial.pipex.com>; Dr. John E. Lewis <HORACEMORRIS@prodigy.net>

- **Russian tiger forests for axing**

A new and life-threatening **menace** has taken the poacher's place in the Russian Far Eastern forests. **Loggers** are indiscriminately destroying tiger habitat to feed the free market's craving for timber. Though they look for the Korean pine and the cedar that fetch the best prices, they are reported to cut down anything to open their way through the forests. The wholesale harvest of pine, ash and oak presents a potentially greater threat to the tiger than the poachers, because these trees' nuts are the main diet of the animals upon which the cats feed.

In the Vladivostok port, logs stacked three storeys high are ready to be shipped to Japan and Korea, where they will fetch well over five times the price that was paid in Russia.

Official figures show that **2,000,000 m³** of timber are **cut** from the forest **every year** (a single tree makes just 2 m³ of timber). It would be even more, but the roads needed to transport the timber do not yet exist, although foreign firms have promised to sort that out...

WWF has initiated the **Forests for Life campaign** whose aim is to stop the progress of the timber trade. The campaign recently received a boost when the Sakha Republic in Siberia pledged to protect 20 per cent of its land. **WWF Germany** has offered a grant to '*Operation Tiger*' to collect data on the activities of legal and illegal loggers.

Source: Matthew Benns, *The Guardian Weekend*, 18 April 1998

- **More axing for the Russian forests**

"In early December 1997, the Administration of **Khabarovsk region** in the Russian Far East granted a **305,000 ha timber concession** to Rimbunan Hijau International, a **Malaysian forest product company**, under a 48-year lease agreement. The annual allowable cut is 550,000 m³. The concession is located in the Sukpai watershed, in the northern part of the Sikhote-Alin mountain range. The concession is expected to be **controversial** because the forests provide habitat for the Amur (Siberian) tiger and are part of a territory for Traditional Natural Resource Use for local indigenous people."

Seven other logging concessions were also 'sold' at the same time.

Source: *Mountain Protected Areas Update*, 1 March, 1998

United Kingdom

- **Chief Executive WWF-UK resigns**

In June 1998, **Dr. Robin Pellew** relinquished his post of Chief Executive WWF-UK, to pursue other en-

vironmental interests. He has been leading WWF-UK for almost five years.

In a press release, WWF-UK recognises the major contributions by Dr. Robin Pellew. "Under his leadership WWF-UK has grown in both stature and impact: membership and income have increased substantially, the organisation has strengthened its influence in policy, public affairs, international programmes and education. His particular contribution has been to give WWF a role in reconciling the development needs of local people with the conservation of nature."

Source: WWF-UK press release 24 June 1998

Change of Address

Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) have moved.

Their new address is:

69 Old Street

London EC1V 9HX

Telephones and E-mail remain the same:

Tel: 171 490 7040 fax: 171 490 0436

e-mail: eiak@gm.apc.org

USA

• **Sale of endangered species medicines in North America**

"TRAFFIC North America investigated the display and sale of endangered species products in two Canadian and five U.S. cities beginning in late 1996 through fall of 1997. They focused on North American Chinatowns because of the concentration of shops that presumably sell those products and because these neighbourhoods are visited by Chinese and non-Chinese alike.

"TRAFFIC gathered information on offers to sell medicines that contained or claimed to contain legally protected species—rhino (*Rhinocerotidae* spp.), tiger (*Panthera tigris*) and leopard (*P. pardus*). They also collected information on medicines that contained or claimed to contain legally regulated species—musk deer (*Moschus* spp.) and bear (*Ursidae* spp.). Legally 'protected species' are those that cannot be commercially imported into Canada and the United States for commercial purposes under CITES provisions. Legally 'regulated species' are those that are governed by CITES and that generally may be imported with a permit from the country of origin or export.

Of the 110 shops surveyed, 50 percent offered for sale one or more protected species medicines or medicines or products that contained or claimed to contain the target protected species tiger, rhino, and leopard. The medicines most commonly found offered for sale were those that contained or claimed to contain tiger parts and products.

At least 31 different types of rhino or tiger-containing medicines, produced by between 29 and 34 different manufacturers, were found offered for sale during the survey.

The cities with the greatest proportion of shops that offered for sale medicines containing protected species which were presumably illegally imported are, in descending order, New York, Vancouver, Seattle, Toronto, Atlanta, San Francisco and Los Angeles."

TRAFFIC concluded that protected species medicines are readily available in North America, and are available because of legal inadequacies. They also note that North America appears to be a significant market for these medicines and that illegal stockpiles of these medicines may exist.

TRAFFIC recommends that "regional law enforcement must be increased, legislation to control internal trade needs to be strengthened, Stockpiles and manufacturers should be identified and inventoried, Collaborative North American public outreach efforts are required, U.S. governmental funding for tiger and rhino conservation and trade control efforts should be increased."

Extracts from: 'While Supplies Last', TRAFFIC North America 1998

• **House committee votes to outlaw tiger trade**

The Rhino and Tiger Product Labelling Act (see *T-L News* April 1998) was referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works who, after holding a public hearing on 7 July, passed it by voice vote on 22 July 1998. It will now be put to the House for approval.

Source: USIS, New Delhi

• **Alternatives to tiger parts for traditional Chinese medicine**

In June, tiger conservationists gathered in San Francisco, USA, for a "Tiger Awareness Day" and a symposium at the San Francisco Zoo. An aim of the meeting was to seek ways to promote alternatives to tiger parts for Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), with representatives of China's Health Ministry and the American College of TCM. The overall

Obituary

The distinguished cat scientist, **Prof. Dr Paul Leyhausen** died on 14 May 1998, aged 81. Dr Leyhausen was the Founder Chairman of the IUCN Cat Specialist Group, a position he held for ten years during which he promoted the first scientific study of the Asiatic lion carried out by Paul Joslin in the Gir Forest and also research into the man-eating behaviour of the tiger in Sunderbans by Hubert Hendrichs (terminated by the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war). He also chaired a three-man group which carried out a mid-term assessment of Project Tiger.

Prof. Leyhausen was especially interested in the ecology and behaviour of cats and his book '*Cat Behaviour*' (1979) became a standard work. He also collaborated with Konrad Lorenz and together they published '*The Motivation of Human and Animal Behaviour*' (1973). He studied cat behaviour at the Natural History Museum Koenig in Bonn and later was head of the Biology Department of the German Scientific Film Institute.

(From *CAT NEWS* no.28)

objective of the weekend's events was to reduce poaching and boost protection efforts.

Tiger bones are used mainly for "*aches and pains*", but alternatives are recognised by Chinese medicine experts. "*Tiger bones have never been something that have been used for life-threatening diseases*" said John Seidensticker, chairman of the Save the Tiger Fund and mammal curator at the National Zoo in Washington. Dr Seidensticker also said that contrary to popular belief, the use of tiger penis is not recognised in traditional Chinese medicine, despite a tradition in folklore.

Source *AFP*, in *The Asian Age*, 14 June 1998

• *WWF joins Global Tiger Forum*

WWF International is the first NGO to join **Global Tiger Forum**, the inter-governmental organisation whose objective it is to promote a worldwide campaign to save the tiger, its prey and its habitat. Of the 14 tiger range countries, 4 have ratified the statutes and have formally joined as members of the GTF. These are India, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Letters of intent have also been received from Nepal and Laos.

Source: *GTF News* June 1998; WWF-TCP, WWF-India

• *Rapid Response Tiger Emergency Fund*

WWF and IUCN/SSC agreed to combine skills and resources in the management of a **Tiger Emergency Fund**. The idea is to create a quick-funding mechanism able to respond to urgent, unplanned events which significantly increase the threats to tiger populations. The Fund has been designed as a user-friendly mechanism, avoiding cumbersome application as well as lengthy screening and approval procedures. It has the potential to provide a quick solution to funding problems of limited amplitude which, if not quickly solved, could seriously worsen the conservation status of a tiger population.

The Fund will be managed by a Committee composed of three Members representing IUCN/SSC's Cat Specialist Group, and WWF International's Asia/Pacific Programme and Species Conservation Unit. The entire process of proposal screening and approval/rejection will not take more than five working days after receipt of the application by the Committee and whenever feasible and appropriate, the process of disbursement of funds will be shortened by requesting the local WWF or IUCN Office to advance the amount of the grant.

Selection criteria and conditions of acceptability of the applications submitted to the Fund include the following:

- 1) Applications must emanate from a tiger range state.
- 2) Applications from individuals, local groups or NGOs must be endorsed in writing by a relevant regional/national wildlife authority **and** by either WWF's local national organisation, or the local WWF's or IUCN's Programme Office.
- 3) Applications from local wildlife or protected area's management authority must be endorsed by the relevant hierarchical officer in their administration.
- 4) Consideration will only be given to applications for field emergencies directly related to tiger protection (such as a sudden need for a key piece of equipment or a spare part, an urgent management operation, an urgent need for technical support etc.).
- 5) Funds must be requested for one-off expenditures and not for recurrent expenses.
- 6) The amount of funding requested per application must not be higher than US\$ 10,000.
- 7) Applications should be short (max. 4 pages), well-structured, and to the point.

Further criteria and details from: Tiger Emergency Fund Secretariat, c/o WWF International, Av. du Mont Blanc, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland. Tel: 41 22 364 9111; Telefax: 41 22 364 5829; E-mail: jpdhuart@wwfnet.org

• WPSI records of poaching and seizures in brief:

7 February 1998: **2 tigers** found poisoned in Lansdowne Forest Division, U.P.

9 February 1998: **1 leopard** trapped in Ramnagar, Nainital District, U.P. The leopard was said to be a man-eater.

11 February 1998: **4 shahtoosh shawls** seized by Police in Bangalore, Karnataka.

16 February 1998: **1 leopard** found poached inside Rajaji National Park, U.P. and **1 leopard** found poisoned near Mussoorie, U.P.

19 February 1998: **1 leopard** found poisoned in Haldwani Forest Division, Nainital District, U.P.

25 February 1998: **3 leopard skins** seized by the Police in Dehradun, U.P.

26 February 1998: **1 tiger skin** seized near Kalagarh, Corbett TR, U.P.

28 February 1998: With the assistance of WPSI the U.P. Forest Department **seized 1 leopard, 2 lions, 1 leopard cat, 2 jackals, 2 common foxes, 2 giant squirrels, 1 grey langur, 2 hyenas, 2 Indian wolves, 1 Indian rock python, 1 marsh crocodile, 1 palm civet, 2 porcupines, 1 rhesus macaque, 1 rosy pelican, 2 slender loris, 1 sloth bear and 1 stump tailed macaque** at Vrindavan (UP) from the Veena Kamal Golden zoo. All the animals that were seized were live.

6 March 1998: **1 leopard skin, 1 chinkara skin, 1 chinkara horn, 1 chital skin and 2 chital antlers** seized in Sidhi District, M.P.

7 March 1998: **1 leopard skin** seized by the Forest Dept near Dudhwa TR, U.P..

11 March 1998: **1 tiger** found poached in Nainital District, U.P. and **1 tiger** found dead in Seoni District, M.P.

20 March 1998: **4 leopard teeth** were seized in Sidhi District, M.P.

21 March 1998: **1 leopard skin** seized in Siliguri, West Bengal.

22 March 1998: **1 leopard** killed in Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh. The leopard was believed to be a man-eater.

27 March 1998: **1 tiger skeleton** (weighing 15 kgs), 1 rhino horn (fake) and 1 otter skin seized by the Forest Department in Sonitpur District, Assam.

29 March 1998: **1 leopard** shot by FD staff in Dharmapuri Dist., Tamil Nadu.

30 March 1998: **1 tiger** found poached in Lansdowne Forest Division, U.P.

2 April 1998: A number of **tiger paws and claws** seized at Varanasi airport, U.P.

3 April 1998: **1 leopard skin** and 1 goral skin seized in Pauri-Garhwal District, U.P.

7 April 1998: **1 tiger** found electrocuted in Pench Tiger reserve, M.P.

8 April 1998: **1 leopard** found poached in Purnia District, Bihar.

22 April 1998: **1 leopard** found dead in Corbett TR, U.P.

27 April 1998: **7 shahtoosh shawls** seized from the I.G.I. Airport, Delhi by Customs officials assisted by WPSI. One British and one Canadian woman were arrested.

28 April 1998: **1 leopard skin** seized by police in Siliguri, West Bengal.

10 May 1998: **1 tiger** killed by the FD staff in Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal.

11 May 1998: **3 leopard skins, 105 grams of bear gall bladder** seized in Chamoli District, U.P.

18 May 1998: A quantity of **leopard bones, leopard teeth, 1 chital skin** seized by police in Bijnor District, U.P.

29 May 1998: **46 shahtoosh shawls, 1 scarf** seized by DCP of-ficers (Special Cell) from a shop in New Delhi. WPSI assisted the police.

5 June 1998: **1 tiger** found poached near Melghat TR, Maharashtra.

19 June 1998: **3 leopard skins** seized by police in Katraj forests, Maharashtra.

22 June 1998: **1 leopard skin** seized in Noida, U.P.

28 June 1998: **2 leopard skins** seized by the police in Haridwar, U.P.

Wildlife Protection Society of India, Thapar House, 124 Janpath, New Delhi 110001. Tel:6213864; E-mail: wpsi.wildlife@gems.vsnl.net.in

• Tiger poacher arrested

Raj Kumar, alias Pappu who is the younger brother of the well-known wildlife trader, Sansar Chand was **arrested** in Sadar Bazaar, Delhi on **20 June 1998**. Pappu is believed to have been involved in the wildlife trade for many years and was caught by Delhi Police in 1993 when **6 leopard skins** were recovered from the possession of Pappu and Sansar Chand's brother-in-law, Krishan Lal. Pappu has been arrested a number of times in Delhi and other States on offences related to the illegal **trade in leopard and tiger parts**. He is also the accused in a **narcotics** case.

Pappu had been evading arrest and not co-operating with enforcement agencies and absconding from court hearings for many years. As a result Pappu was declared a proclaimed offender by the CJM Court of Alwar in a case of 1988 relating to the recovery of **six leopard skins and fourteen otter skins**. He is also an accused in a case related to the **shooting of a tiger in Sariska Tiger Reserve**.

After appearing before the magistrate in Tis Hazari Court in

Delhi, he was ordered to present himself at the Court of CJM Alwar. Wildlife Protection Society of India, Thapar House, 124 Janpath, New Delhi 110001

• 334 skins seized

On the night of 31 March 1998, seven gunny sacks stuffed with the skins of small carnivores were seized in Satna. The 334 skins, mainly jungle cat, jackal, fox and common palm civet were seized by the Police headed by S.P., Mr Rajiv Tandon. Unfortunately when the Police appeared, the four culprits, who had been reported as engaged in trading the skins, escaped.

There have been several seizures in Satna in the past, but this was the largest so far.

Source: *Navbharat*, Jabalpur 2 April 1998

• Wildlife trade study in Maharashtra

On the completion of the West Bengal wildlife trade study project, WPSI approached the state Government of Maharashtra for a similar project to study the totality of wildlife crimes in the state and recommend measures for its control.

As in West Bengal, the project aims to suggest a strategy for the control of illegal wildlife trade and the ensuing legal process. The Maharashtra Government has approved WPSI's proposal to carry out this project.

WPSI, Tel:6213864;

E-mail: wpsi.wildlife@gems.vsnl.net.in

• Tiger hunts

From time to time information comes along the grapevine that highly secretive wildlife hunts are still organised for 'sport hunters' by former shikar-organising outfits and others. **TigerLink participants are urged to keep a lookout** for suspicious activities which may take place in tiger

bearing forests away from Tiger Reserves and report such incidents to the Director, Project Tiger.

• WPSI's legal project

The total number of cases being pursued by the legal cell of WPSI is 51 of which 30 are in trial courts, the remaining in High Courts and the Supreme Court. Of these, 19 court cases are tiger related. WPSI has received information of other tiger related court cases for which intervention petitions will be filed shortly. Once again WPSI offers to pursue every tiger related court case if basic details are made available.

The legal process is very important because wildlife offenders continue to by-pass the wildlife law. In one instance, accused **Abdul Khalique** was arrested with a tiger skin near **Sunderbans Tiger Reserve** in 1992. The trial court awarded him five years imprisonment in 1993. However, he appealed to the sessions court where the case has been pending for nearly six years. WPSI has filed an **intervention petition** and hopefully the offender will actually serve his sentence.

WPSI, Tel: 6213864;

E-mail: wpsi.wildlife@gems.vsnl.net.in

• Nameri-Pakhui seizures

The 'Tiger Conservation Unit' of **Nameri-Pakhui** on the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border covers a combined area of 3,000 km² harbouring "not less than 100 tigers". The area includes Nameri National Park and Sonai Rupai Sanctuary as the core area on the Assam side surrounded by Reserve Forests as buffer. On the Arunachal side, Pakhui Sanctuary may be considered core, with Eagle Nest Sanctuary, Sessa Orchid Sanctuary and Doimara, Amartala and Papum RF as buffer. Officially,

Nameri NP records 29 tigers and Pakhui, 40.

The following are details of recent seizures:

In **January 1993**, 36 kg tiger bone including 5 skulls were seized and Ram Sanga Lushai of Mizoram was arrested.

In **November 1993**, two Home Guards and the Senior Commercial Manager of Sonajuli Tea Estate were accused after a dead male tiger was seized.

In 1996, the DFO, Sonitpur West Division reported that Tezpur encroachers killed "at least one tiger in Batasipur area of Chariduar RF. No arrest was done."

In 1997, the State Police killed one tiger "to save civilians".

In **March 1998**, 15 kg of tiger bone, including a skull, one false rhino horn and one otter skin were seized and 5 persons arrested near Biswanath RF.

"The above figures prove death of at least nine tigers in the buffer areas from 1993 to 1998. The prime accused in the 1993 case is still absconding and a warrant for failure of appearance is filed. His bailer was fined Rs 80 in 1994!" The tea estate manager, Mr Basant Kr. Khandelwal is also evading the court.

Although the State Police was condemned for their action, no inquiry was ordered.

"Efforts are on to nab the main architect in the recent case. The raid was jointly carried out by the DFO and staff of Western Assam Wildlife Division and by the DFO and staff of Sonitpur East Forest Division, Biswanath Chariali."

"Shri Bani Kanta Saikia, Driver of Kaziranga N.P., Bokakhat and Shri Khagen Borthakur, Game Watcher of Western Assam Wildlife Division, Tezpur were most instrumental in detecting and arresting several smugglers on 27

March 1998. Their names are recommended for handsome reward."

Source: R.K. Das, DFO, Western Assam Wildlife Division, Dolabari, Tezpur, Assam 784001

• Antler trade

In India, 24 licenses have been issued for trade in antlers, including 17 in Nagpur and one in Gondia (on the M.P. border). The smallest trader has an annual turnover of over Rs 50 lakh where usage is 4–6 tons. Larger traders have a demand of 10–15 tons. **Shed antler collection is only permitted in Karnataka, U.P. and Tamil Nadu. It is banned in all other states.**

The main suppliers are Karnataka and U.P. Many have 2–3 licenses on their names. Transportation often goes unchecked as it moves in private vehicles. Rates have more than doubled in U.P. since collection was stopped in Maharashtra.

Antler products have no value in India but are exported for buttons, knives, dagger handles, ashtrays, revolver handles, butts etc.

Source: Mr K. Mishrikotkar, RFO Anti-poaching, Nagpur quoted in 'The Report of the Anti-Poaching Training Camp at Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TR) from April 8–10, 1998'

• TRAFFIC-India's anti-trade work

TRAFFIC-India is reported to have increased its vigilance in North-East India, where in a span of five months tiger bones, tiger and otter skins, ivory and a rhino horn were seized in Jowai, Mizoram, and in Guwahati, by the Forest Department and the Customs, with the help of the TRAFFIC network.

WWF TCP has committed Rs 2,50,000 for field consultants in Northern, Eastern, North-Eastern India and Delhi, for investigating

poaching incidents and trade related to tiger derivatives. A sum of Rs 1,00,000 has already been transferred to TRAFFIC-India.

A survey has also been conducted in and around the **Sunderbans Tiger Reserve** in West Bengal.

WWF TCP, WWF-India, 172B Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003,
Tel: 4697224/4698072;
e-mail: mkr@wwfind.ernet.in

• West Bengal tiger trade

—observations

The *Indian Society for Wildlife Research* have collected some information from government agencies in Calcutta revealing that between 1993 and April 1997 **four tigers** are recorded as **poached** in West Bengal, of which 3 were from **Sunderbans Tiger Reserve**. Between 1989 and 1996 twenty tiger skins, 13 kg of tiger bone, one skull, 290 nails and 7 teeth are recorded as having been seized. One person was convicted in 1994.

They also give the findings of their "covert data collection" conducted amongst the fringe population of the reserve—nearly one third of the people they spoke to had "no idea about tiger poaching/illicit trade", a little over half were aware of poaching but not of the means nor of the trade, a few were more informed, but only a tiny fraction were actually engaged in the trade ("0.5%") according to their research. Around two-thirds interviewed felt positively about the Tiger Reserve, "7% feel that the project should be abolished". (The sample size is not given.)

Source: "Observation on illicit trade on tiger skin and its body parts (particularly bones) in West Bengal with particular emphasis to Sunderbans Tiger Reserve", ISWR, c/o Anuradha Dasgupta, Purbachal Cluster-2, G/7, Salt Lake City, Calcutta-700091

• Kashmir refuses to ban Shahtoosh trade

In May the Union Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr Suresh Prabhu, wrote to the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr Farooq Abdullah, urging his State Government to ban the trade in *shahtoosh* so that "this rare and endangered species is saved". In his letter he reiterated that there was overwhelming evidence proving that *shahtoosh* is a product of the Tibetan antelope, *chiru*, and that the trade violates India's export and import policy, CITES and other laws. In response, on 12 June, Dr Abdullah announced at a press conference that "as long as I am the Chief Minister, *shahtoosh* will be sold in Kashmir".

WPSI's petition, filed in the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir, was admitted on 25 May 1998. It points out that the Constitution of India makes it obligatory for the state to protect its wildlife and that despite this, J. & K. still permits sale of *shahtoosh*. A show cause notice was issued on the State Government with an order to reply within six weeks. At a hearing on 8 July the Court took strong note of the fact that the State had not filed their response. The State counsel was directed to do so and the next hearing was fixed for 10 August 1998.

Source: WPSI, Thapar House, 124 Janpath, New Delhi 110001

• Shawl seizure

On 31 July, the CBI raided a shop in a smart shopping complex of New Delhi, Santushti. An officer's wife was arrested and 17 shawls were seized on suspicion of being *shahtoosh*. The shopkeeper was remanded for fourteen days but she appealed to a Sessions Judge who released her on Rs 10,000 bail after the first night.

- **Simlipal Petition**

Concerned by administrative lapses which hinder flow of project funds to **Simlipal National Park** and consequent impact on management, **WPSI** has filed a **Public Interest Litigation** in the Orissa High Court seeking the following orders from the Court:

a) to direct the Central Government as well as the State Government to ensure that the **funds** allotted for the purpose of protection to wildlife and its habitat in Simlipal Tiger Reserve area **be transferred** for the said purpose **at the earliest** and ensure they are utilised and that the funds do not lapse due to administrative procedures;

b) to direct the State Government to **fill up the staff vacancies** of the Tiger Reserve to ensure effective protection of the forests and wildlife;

c) to direct the State Government to **provide** the forest staff with **essential equipment** (uniforms, wireless communication systems, weapons etc.) in compliance with the directions issued by the Supreme Court in August 1997; and

d) to **appoint a committee** to inspect and report to the court on the current status of the park and what measures need to be taken to enable proper protection and management of the park.

The petition was **admitted** by the High Court of Orissa on 24 July 1998.

Wildlife Protection Society of India, Thapar House, 124 Janpath, New Delhi 110001. Tel:6213864;
E-mail: wpsi.wildlife@gems.vsnl.net.in

- **INDAL in court**

The **Bombay Environmental Action Group** (BEAG) filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court challenging the illegal mining of bauxite within the heart of the **Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary** (see last *T-L News* vol. 4 no.1). The Division Bench, comprising of Chief Justice M.B. Shah and Justice A.Y. Sakhare also stayed the 'renewal' of the lease granted by the Trade & Commerce Department of the Maharashtra Government. This department had issued a 20 year 'renewal' to INDAL without seeking the necessary permissions of the State Forest Department or of the Central Government as per the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

The petition relates to INDAL's operations in the 777 hectare Iderganj area of the Sanctuary. Although this land was originally leased for a 30-year period from 1958, no commercial mining had been done in the area and only some alleged 'preliminary work' between 1973-1977. Thus the lease had lapsed. In a petition dated March 1997, INDAL specifically said that they would carry out no activity whatsoever in

respect of the Iderganj mines which were on forest land, without the necessary sanction. The relevant Central Government permission has apparently not been granted. However in December 1997 INDAL **commenced clearance and mining operations** at the Iderganj land. Activities included levelling and widening of a kutch road passing through the sanctuary, felling and lopping of several dozens of trees and bulldozing several thousand of karvi bushes. The **Deputy Conservator of Forests, Kolhapur** took action and **seized equipment** belonging to INDAL.

On 1 April 1998 the **Court restrained INDAL** from carrying out the mining activities in spite of the letter they produced from the Section Officer of the Trade and Commerce Department enclosing an order dated 16 March 1998 purporting to renew their lease up to March 2018. BEAG contend that this order is "*bad in law and liable to be set aside*" as the Section Officer has no powers to pass such an order and in spite of being forest land, the Forest Department were not even consulted. BEAG also argue that the so-called renewal is against public interest and in violation of the statutory provisions and judgements of the Supreme Court. The final hearing was set for 19 June 1998. On this date **the case was adjourned** but no new date fixed.

Source: BEAG Press Release May 1998

- **S.C. ruling rattles coffee planters**

"The Supreme Court's directive to the Karnataka Government to immediately evict encroachers from the ecologically sensitive reserved forestlands in the Western Ghats has sent shockwaves among the State's coffee planters. The strictures against the State Government come in the wake of allegations that influential politicians, including State Janata Dal president B.L. Shankar, had encroached on forest land in the Chikmagalur district."

On 5 May, "the Supreme Court warned the Karnataka Government that it may have to appoint a receiver for the entire coffee belt in the Chikmagalur district if it failed to evict the encroachers. In a strongly-worded observation, the judges remarked. "*What can you expect of a government which has given permission to 3000 saw mills and says that it has banned felling of trees? What can one expect of a government whose might cannot find and nab one sandalwood smuggler (Veerappan), while he happily gives interviews to all and sundry?*"

The *Sunday Pioneer* also reports that the Chief Minister, J.H. Patel, has defended Mr. Shankar and refuted the charge of encroachment. He said the land

in question was not more than 31.2 acres and it was the property inherited by Mr. Shankar's wife..."

"Bharatiya Janata Party group leader in the Assembly, K.S. Eshwarappa has alleged that about 3,975 acres of precious forest land worth Rs 135 crore had been encroached upon. Mr. Eshwarappa claimed that when a forest official tried to prosecute Mr. Shankar and others, he was transferred. But the official returned to his post following court intervention..." (See *T-L News* vol.4 no.1.)

"According to a rough estimate, about 1 lakh acres of forest land has been encroached by planters in the Western Ghat districts."

By July, a total of 568 cases of encroachment had been booked, involving 4,457 acres (1,804 ha) in the Reserve Forest areas of Chikmagalur Division. Of these, eviction orders have been passed in 83, covering 826 acres and eviction proceedings are underway in a further 104 cases (1,143 acres).

Earlier a joint survey had been ordered to look into the encroachment issue but heavy rains brought this to a halt in July. However the Survey of India submitted an interim report to the P.C.C.F. on 17 July, which reportedly shows that the amount of land allegedly encroached by B.L. Shankar is around 50 acres as against the 32 acres initially reported in the first FIR.

At a hearing on 28 July, the Supreme Court appointed Mr. R.M.N. Sahai, Conservator of Forests as the Court Commissioner to submit a report on the large-scale encroachment of Thatkola RF by influential persons. Mr. Sahai was the Conservator of the area but just before the hearing he was transferred out. It is reported that he is one of the officers in the department who will not bow to political pressure. The S.C. has asked Karnataka to file a complete report on encroachments in all districts.

Source: P. T. Bopanna *The Sunday Pioneer*, 10 May 1998; local T-L participants

• *New litigation unit in Delhi*

The **Centre for Law and Environment (CLE)**, set up a year ago by the late Chhatrapati Singh and Sarbani Sarkar, announces the **launch** of its **litigation unit**, which will function similar to a legal aid cell. The Centre will take up select Public Interest Litigation (PIL) on environment, forests and protected areas, problems afflicting people in relation to environmental and conservation issues, particularly those of rights, habitat protection, biodiversity conservation, endangered species, issues related to women and human rights issues.

"PILs related to the environment would be the Centre's special concern through which it would try

In Memoriam

Dr. Chhatrapati Singh, an eminent legal expert on environment, passed away on 1 February 1998. After receiving a doctorate in environmental jurisprudence at Ottawa, Canada, Chhatrapati Singh came to India and served in various capacities, including Adviser, Dept. of Science and Technology and Consultant to various agencies both national and international until he joined the Indian Law Institute where he pursued an ambitious Water Law Programme. Thereafter, he set up the Centre for Environmental Law at WWF-India in 1992. Under his leadership, the Centre thrived and soon became a centre for excellence with a dedicated staff to support the its varied activities. Chhatrapati Singh was a multifaceted personality—he had a keen interest in music, drama, poetry, philosophy and painting. With Dr. Singh's demise the environment movement has lost a fine legal mind, leaving a vacuum difficult to fill.

Submitted by Sanjay Upadhyay

to advocate alternatives and better management methods for habitat protection and the lives and livelihoods of the people therein. A panel of lawyers are available to attend the cases."

CLE, 15B Gangaram Hospital Road, New Delhi 110 060. Tel/fax: (011) 5744002; e-mail: sarbani@del3.vsnl.net.in

• *Amendments to EIA Notification, 1994*

"The EIA Notification of January 27, 1994 has been **amended on April 10, 1997**. By this amendment, a **public hearing is mandatory** for all the 29 categories of activities which require environmental clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. The public hearing will be conducted by the State Pollution Control Boards on the basis of information made available to them by the project authorities, after giving due notice to the public. The public will also have **access to the documents**. The public hearing panel will consist of representatives of the State Pollution Control Boards, State Government, District Collector and local bodies apart from three senior citizens of the area to be nominated by the D.C. The details of the public hearing will be made available to the MoEF which will appraise the project thereafter."

By the same notification, "the **MoEF has empowered the state governments** to accord environmental clearance to: 1) cogeneration plants, 2)

captive power plants up to 250 MW (both coal and gas/naphtha-based), coming up separately and not along the main industry, 3) coal-based plants up to 500 MW using fluidised bed technology, 4) coal-based power plants up to 250 MW using conventional technology, and 5) gas/naphtha-based plants up to 500 MW. (See *T-L News* vol.3 no.2 Dec. '97.)

"The State Governments will follow the **same procedures** as being followed in the Central Government **with regard to environmental appraisal** of such power projects after conducting public hearing."

Source: *ENVIRO NEWS* March 1998

• **States must comply with wildlife act—S.C.**

In response to a petition filed by **WWF-India**, alleging that State Governments had not implemented many provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 the **Supreme Court** has taken a **strong view on non-registration of firearms** in the vicinity of over 500 National Parks and Sanctuaries in India despite a mandatory provision in the WPA in this regard.

A three-judge Bench, comprising Justices S.C. Agarwal, S. Saghir Ahmad and M. Srinivasan, directed all State Governments and Union Territories to state steps taken towards framing such rules. Section 34 of the Act stipulates that within three months of the setting up of a National Park or Sanctuary, **all firearm holders within a 10 km radius should register themselves with the Wildlife Warden**. The Act also provides that after notification of National Parks and Sanctuaries, new licences for firearms, within the 10 km radius of these parks and sanctuaries, can only be granted with the concurrence of the Chief Wildlife Warden. Except for Madhya Pradesh, no State had framed rules for such registration and even in M.P. no steps had been taken to start the actual registration of firearms.

The Act also envisaged **immunisation of the cattle population** in a 5 km radius of the PAs and the Supreme Court directed all concerned governments to establish cattle **immunisation centres** in the immediate vicinity of the National Parks and Sanctuaries.

WWF's Counsel also brought to the Bench's notice non-implementation of the earlier orders of the Court regarding settlement of rights and **PA notification**. The Bench asked the States and Union Territories to file affidavits detailing the steps they had taken to implement the earlier order.

Source: *Hindu*, New Delhi, 20 July 1998

• **Appeal against PIL dismissal order**

A Petition has been filed in the **Supreme Court** by **Ms Pinki Mishra** seeking special leave to **appeal** against the judgement and order of the Madhya

Pradesh High Court in the PIL concerning poaching and the protection of wildlife, that was disposed of in September 1997 (see *T-L News* vol. 3 no.2 Dec. '97).

The Petition contends that the High Court committed an error of law by failing to issue specific directions on a number of issues including in regard to: i) establishment of special courts for trying the cases of violation of Wildlife (Protection) Act; ii) centralised monitoring and centrally maintained data, asserting that to date not a single person has been convicted which in part is due there being no specialised prosecution agency in M.P.; and iii) creation of a special cell at a State level with the co-ordination of Central Agencies like CBI, as recommended by the Subramaniam Committee, to check poaching. The Petition therefore requests the Supreme Court to pass orders as it sees fit in relation to the points raised in the Petition.

The Petition has been listed for 19 December 1998 before Justice Anand.

• **Save the tiger petition**

Shri Navin Raheja has also filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court seeking a direction with regard to *"taking effective steps to stop poaching and save the tiger from becoming extinct"*. Raheja was appointed to the Tiger Crisis Cell in January 1997 but found that no meeting was called, *"despite repeated requests and reminders"*. Detailing the decline of the tiger in India "since 1989", the petition states that *"the government is lacking the will, proper direction, commitments and initiatives"*. *"The present system is hopelessly lacking and inadequate and helpless to save the tigers from extinction"*, as it *"is full of loopholes and lacunae for presenting a correct picture about the population and state of affairs concerning the tiger."*

In his petition Shri Raheja requests the Court to direct the respondents—the Union Government of India, the Chief Secretaries of all the tiger states and the Director, Project Tiger—to take immediate and effective steps to save the tiger including timely meetings of the various expert committees so that concerned officers may be made accountable, directions to *"close and shift all the highways, PWD and Revenue roads to outside the Tiger Reserve areas"*, to direct the Central and State Governments to revamp the system of allocation of funds to the Field Directors and to constitute a committee to study, analyse and, if necessary, upgrade the plan 'Saving the Tiger' and implement it in a time-bound manner. The petition was admitted in April 1998.

Source: N.M. Raheja, 150-A Sainik Farms, New Delhi 110062

Update on the research project "*Ecology of tiger: to enable a realistic projection of the requirements needed to maintain a demographically viable population*" in Panna National Park, Madhya Pradesh

A total of twenty-seven months of field work has been completed in the project. So far four tigers have been radio-collared—an adult male, and three females. The research team has been able to monitor the male for over twenty-six months and have detailed information on its movement, ranging, territory and food habits. The radio-collar of the male was replaced in November 1997, after it was damaged in a fight with another male. Since this interaction the collared male has had one more fight and as a result, has lost a substantial part of its 250 km² territory to the other male. However he still holds two female territories within his range.

One of the radio-collared females—a dispersing sub-adult—died. Another was monitored for eleven months before the transmitter on her collar stopped functioning in December 1997. She was using an area of 32 km² with her three two-year-old cubs (all females). This tigress has now given birth to another litter of two cubs, which were seen in May 1998 when they were three months old. By then the cubs from her previous litter were moving independently although still using the area that forms her territory. One of these large cubs, now sub-adult, who was moving separately from her other two siblings, was radio-collared in April 1998. Her monitoring will provide information on dispersal of sub-adult tigers and their chances of survival. After the mother produced a new litter, the cubs from her previous litter moved out of their natal range.

In the approximately three hundred square kilometre area of intensive monitoring, we have found only two females breeding successfully. We find that in Panna, breeding territory requires 20 to 30 km² disturbance-free area with good cover and

prey base. In Panna such areas are limited and for inexperienced sub-adult tigers it will be hard to find such an area in which to establish their territory. It is particularly important for dispersing females to find suitable areas to be able to raise their cubs successfully. Our monitoring in Panna indicates that due to lack of such habitats, dispersing young tigers are settling in areas where prey in the form of cattle are easily accessible. This exposes the tiger to potential threat and makes them highly vulnerable due to increased conflict with the local human populations.

The sub-adult which was collared in April has moved out to adjoining forest east of her natal range, and for the past two to three months has settled in an area adjoining Talgaon village. During this period she has killed over eight cattle. We know from other studies that the mortality rate is anyway high for dispersing tigers so the chances of survival for this female, vulnerable also to man-animal conflict, are not very good.

The other siblings are presently moving in coalition and ranging over a larger area mainly in the south-west. This includes part of their natal range and part of another adult female's territory.

In Panna, restoration of potential breeding habitats to make them available for dispersing tigers is one of the major problems that needs immediate attention. There are over fifteen villages inside the National Park and some of them occupy the best tiger habitat. Rehabilitation of these villages, who in the main are keen to move out of this remote area, must be pursued with great urgency if the future of the tiger population of Panna National Park is to be secured.

Dr. R.S. Chundawat, Neel Gogate, Wildlife Institute of India, P.O. Box 18, Dehradun 248001

Wildlife Conservation Society (India Program)—activities update

The field work on the research project titled "*Ecological Status and Conservation of Tigers in India*" was continued in Nagarhole National Park and Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuaries. Dr. Ullas Karanth and research assistants N. Samba Kumar, Siva Sundaresan, Srinivas, Farshid Ahrestani and Umesh Nair carried out the field activities.

Six transect lines totalling a distance of 18.2 km were cut in Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary. Research assistants and volunteers walked a distance of 728 km

on these lines during January to April 1998, to sample prey animal densities. We established 184 pellet density plots in Bhadra and monitored dung densities and decay rates at Bhadra WLS. Six camera trap lines with 78 trap points were established in Bhadra. A limited amount of camera trapping (25 trap nights; two sample capture-recapture) for tigers and leopards was also carried on these, resulting in 12 photographic captures of tigers and 6 of leopards.

Line transect sampling of prey densities was continued for the tenth year in Nagarahole and the work expanded to include Arkeri area in the northern part of the park. A total distance of 1166 km was walked along 13 transects during May–June 1998 with the help of research assistants and volunteer trainees. The annual line transect training programme attracted a significantly increased participation largely because of its reputation for quality. Consequently, the camp was extended over a month, and over 40 trainees were trained in prey population sampling methods. The participants included students of forestry, biology, employees of WWF-India and officials of the Forest Departments of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. *TigerLink* participant and Hon. Wildlife Warden, Melghat, Mr. Kishor Rithe of NCS, Amravati also visited Nagarahole for the training camp which was run by Dr. Karanth with the assistance of Samba Kumar, Sanath Kumar and Soorya. Dr. Joshua Ginsberg, Director-Asia Program of WCS presented certificates to the camp participants.

Camera trapping work was continued for the eighth year in Nagarahole. The total sampling effort was 695 trap nights and covered 62 different trapping points and yielded 42 photographic captures of tigers and 25 captures of leopards. A research article titled

"Estimating tiger densities from camera trap data using photographic captures and recaptures" authored by Dr. Ullas Karanth with Dr. James Nichols was accepted for publication in the prestigious international scientific journal, *Ecology*.

Detailed ecological mapping using a Garmin GPS unit was carried out in Bhadra and Nagarahole sites to establish the habitat benchmarks for the Karnataka Tiger Conservation Project. The GIS software MAPINFO was obtained and installed on the WCS research computer in Bangalore.

The preliminary questionnaire surveys being carried out as a part of all India tiger surveys were continued and new data on tiger distribution was collected. As a part of the all India tiger survey, Dr. Ullas Karanth visited Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan.

Dr. Karanth has collaborated with J. Amarnath (an engineer who volunteers time for *Wildlife First!*) to develop the prototype of a theft-proof protective device for camera traps. After preliminary indications that this protective device may be useful, it is now undergoing extensive field tests.

Dr Ullas K. Karanth, WCS India Program, 403 Seebo Apts, 26/2 Aga Abbas Ali Road, Bangalore 560042;
E-mail: karanth@blr.vsnl.net.in

Wildlife Conservation Society web site:

<http://www.wcs.org>

Royal Bardia National Park—research project

A five-year research and training project is underway in the Royal Bardia National Park in west Nepal. Funded by the Norwegian aid agency, NORAD, the project is a joint venture between the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) H.M. Government of Nepal and the Agricultural University of Norway. The King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC), Nepal, provides technical support in the field. The Director General of DNPWC is the overall project leader and Prof. Per Wegge is the Norwegian co-ordinator. The project consists of staff development and training of DNPWC staff and joint research, with the overall objective of enhancing the capacity of DNPWC to administer and carry out ecological research and monitoring of biodiversity within their protected areas, principally in the *terai* lowland of Nepal.

The project has three components—on elephants, on gharial and one on predator/prey. The latter has several main objectives—to quantify the predation

rate and selectivity on the main natural prey species within the Karnali flood plain of RBNP; to infer from this to what extent predation by large predators regulate or limit the population sizes of their main prey species; to compare food habits and predation impacts between the subpopulation in the dense core area with that in marginal habitats peripheral to the core area and to identify and map dispersal 'corridors' in remaining natural forests outside RBNP.

Tiger is the main predator in RBNP and the focal species, but the project intends to collect information also on leopards and, if possible, on wild dogs and hyaena. With some background data already collected in previous years, more intensive field work was started in Bardia in January this year. The tiger population was censused by camera trapping and pug mark sampling, indicating that this local 'subpopulation' in Karnali is quite dense, with several reproducing females. The prey populations were intensively sampled by drive counts and line transects.

Two tigers, 1 leopard, 15 hog deer and 6 barking deer were captured and radio-collared in January–March and their movements have since been monitored regularly. The capturing and radio-collaring methods used for tiger and leopard were the same as those that were developed and used in Chitwan—baiting, bith cloth and darting for tiger, and box traps for leopard. Ungulates are captured in long nets.

The two tigers (an adult male and a female with about 8–9 month-old cubs) were immobilised with ketamine/rompun drug mix. After collaring and recovery, their behaviour and movement patterns have been as expected—the male roaming over a very large territory along the Karnali flood plain and the female in a smaller home range with her cubs. The Telonics collars have not functioned as well as expected—signal range has been poor, even after larger receiving antennas were procured from USA.

Last contact with the female was on 15 April, about 3½ weeks after darting and she has not been found again, in spite of very intensive searches. Two cubs have since been found dead in the same general area as her previous home range. Although it is not known for sure if these two cubs belonged to the radioed female, it is possible. Project scientists suspect that she may have died a month or so after she was radio-collared but the collar has not been found so the circumstances surrounding her disappearance are not known. They speculate that there is probably a very high level of aggression among the tigers in the core area due to the many animals residing there, and she may have suffered fatal wounds in combat. The radio collar could have been damaged in the fight or perhaps she retreated to a wet place where moisture has crept in and caused transmitter failure. (During the last ten years, a minimum of three tigers have died from intra-specific fighting in the same general area of roughly 20 km².) However, although there is a high probability that the tigress is now dead, pugmarks have recently been found which may be from the collared animal. Thus, her fate is still not resolved and searching for her continues. The male also ‘disappeared’ for a period of 28 days but was re-found and his signals were being tracked in early July.

Unfortunately, two other tigers have been lost from Karnali this winter—one male found dead in a wire snare presumably set by poachers for capturing deer, nilgai or wild boar, and another tigress first observed in very weakened condition outside the park. This female was later found dead near the park,

too decomposed to establish cause of death but presumed to be as result of intraspecific fighting. Professor Per Wegge writes, "it is tragic that these fine animals should succumb and be lost from the local population in Bardia. However, if this can be any consolation, the population is very strong—remaining numbers are high and recruitment seems to be good at the moment. What is needed is to safeguard and protect the remaining tiger habitat outside this very important ‘hot spot’, so that new recruits can find suitable living space outside the Park without causing conflicts with human interests. I hope that our project will generate information that will help in this endeavour."

Unfortunately the project has been somewhat undermined by dramatic headlines and unresearched stories by the local and Norwegian press who have blamed the cubs’ deaths on the research team. Sadly such negative coverage seems to be a regular feature of many large mammal studies in the sub-continent, particularly those on tiger.

Prof. Per Wegge, Dept. of Biology & Nature Conservation, Agricultural University of Norway, P.O. Box 5014, N-1432 As, Norway; **Dr. Shanta K. Jnawali**, Director of Bardia Field Station, KMTNC, c/o Pashupati Autoworks, Dhamboji, Nepalgunj, Nepal.

• *An additional skull of the Bali tiger, Panthera tigris balica (Schwarz) in the Hungarian Natural History Museum*

Abstract: A Bali tiger skull from Tanjung or Gunung Gondol, northwestern Bali, Indonesia, in the Department of Zoology, Hungarian Natural History Museum (HNHM 4250.17) is described in detail. It is believed to be the ninth specimen of this now extinct subspecies preserved in a museum collection. Circumstances of its killing are also given on the basis of the collector’s account.

Mazák et al. (1978) reviewed all material (eight skulls, five skins and some limb bones) of the Bali tiger, *Panthera tigris balica* (Schwarz, 1912) deposited in museum collections. Additionally, the Department of Zoology of the Hungarian Natural History Museum possesses a skull evidently unknown to the scientific community. According to the museum records, the specimen was shot by Oszkar Vojnich at "T. Gondol", on the northern coast of Bali, Indonesia in 1911... . Although shot in 1911, the specimen was not actually catalogued until 1947... .

Vojnich (1913) provided the following measurements for the Gondol tiger; total length, 245 cm; body length, 174 cm; tail length, 71.5 cm; height at shoulder, 90 cm... . Apparently, the skull is the

largest Bali tiger cranium available, which can easily be explained by the fact that most (=six) other known skulls are of females...

It was long believed that *balica* is the smallest of all tiger subspecies e.g. Mazák 1976 and Mazák et al. (1978) even suggested that inaccurate measuring of a skin obtained in the vicinity of Sumbar Kima by its original collector, now in the Museum Zoologicum Bogoriense, was to blame for the inflated head and body length (1770 mm) calculated by these authors. Considering the size of the skull, and the total length recorded by Vojnich (1913) for the Gondol tiger, however, we have surprisingly matching data...

Gondol is a new locality record within the presumed former distribution of *Panthera tigris balica* in western Bali...

Extract from: *Miscellanea Zoologica Hungarica* Tomus 11, 1997 p. 101-105

Balázs Buzás and **Balázs Farkas**, Department of Zoology, Hungarian Natural History Museum, H-1088 Budapest, Baross u. 13., Hungary

E-mail: <buzas@zoo.zoo.nhmus.hu> and <farkas@zoo.zoo.nhmus.hu>

• *"The last known evidence of a Bali tiger was one shot in 1937, but reports of sightings were received during the 1940s. No photographs of live Bali tigers appear to exist, only some strung on poles after being shot."*

Source: *CAT NEWS* No.28 Spring 1998 ed. Peter Jackson

• *New research organisation*

A small group of wildlife biologists, recognising "that conservation today needs the skills and understanding of a wide spectrum of people, scientists, educationists, policymakers, administrators and social activists", have set up the **Nature Conservation Foundation** (NCF). Their aim is "to facilitate constructive interactions and efforts of individuals and institutions that embody these several roles".

The **Centre for Ecological Research and Conservation** (CERC) (see *T-L News* vol. 2 no. 2) becomes a subsidiary unit of NCF. CERC will handle research activities in the field of conservation ecology, wildlife management, population and community studies and human ecology as well as status surveys and standardisation of field methods for sampling biological populations.

For further information contact: NCF, No.4 IInd Main Road, Bakthavatsalam Nagar, Adyar, Chennai 600020. Tel: (044) 4915341/412502; fax: 4915341; e-mail: CERC@arbornet.org

Ecocart: <http://www.ecocart.com>—a new environmental database published by **International Centre for Environmental Scientific Resources**. *The best European researchers (CNRS, ORSTOM...) have gathered their results into the new database.*

For further information contact: Ecocart, 6, impasse Couzinet, 31500 Toulouse-France.

Pending issues concerning tiger conservation in the MoEF

Project Tiger special allowances for staff and field personnel, **PT anti-poaching strike force** and declaration of **new tiger reserves**, all proposed for inclusion in the 9th plan are still pending. **Tiger estimations** in the country are based on research guidelines created by a constituted subcommittee of the Steering Committee of Project Tiger under the chair of MEF. Some states have not followed the recommendations. This process of estimation is becoming more and more embarrassing as state Chief Wildlife Wardens hold their own press conferences and announce their own figures without proper or detailed analysis, in spite of GOI being the coordinator of the count.

No serious effort or strategy has been created to address or resolve the worsening **insurgency** and militancy.

Different state governments are violating the norms and guidelines of Project Tiger, **F.C. Act, Wildlife Protection Act**.

1997-1998 has seen serious delays in the **release of funds** from the centre to the state and severe bureaucratic obstacles are being created by the MoEF.

The tragic **Subramaniam Committee** report, Delhi High Court Coimmittee report and other committee reports, gather layers of dust in the corridors of the Ministry.

40% of **positions** in all our tiger reserves are still lying vacant.

70% of tiger reserves cannot effectively contain poaching because of **missing vital infrastructure**.

60% of tiger reserves have not been able to register **arms licences** in the 10 km radius of the reserve.

For many years it has been recommended that Project Tiger, Delhi be expanded, and strengthened to cope with new and ever-increasing problems but nothing has happened.

90% of the recommendations of the Steering Committee of Project Tiger and Tiger Crisis Cell since 1992 remain **unimplemented**.

Extracts from a letter by Valmik Thapar to Minister, Environment & Forests

A story of tragic success

It was just a beginning of celebrating the success of 'the much talked about but seldom practised' principle of people's participation in forest management. A new consciousness of 'togetherness' was unfolding, when tragedy struck like an avalanche. Vinod Sidam of village Rantalodhi in Tadoba-Andhari Tiger reserve, proved to be the first martyr in a war between well-intended conservation efforts and the sinister plans of the destructive forces...

...There are six villages within the Andhari Sanctuary. For the last 12 years the villages are being told about their inevitable displacement, but nothing has yet been finalised. This status quo has brought great suffering to the villagers...

The rich natural resource surrounding the villages was once the main source of substantiating their meagre agricultural produce...It is still available but not accessible due to the stringent restrictions that come with the declaration of the sanctuary...

...Several departments of the Government like Tribal Development, Agriculture, Dairy, Horticulture and Fisheries can substantially help these villages. 3 of the 6 villages are totally tribal villages and 2 have majority tribal population. The Dept. of Tribal Development has more than 245 developmental schemes...Yet it has not done anything more than distributing a couple of bullocks and some goats...Other departments too have grossly neglected these villages...

For the Forest Dept. these villages have become unwanted babies now. ...Officials accuse them of theft of timber, illegal collection of forest produce and the like...

However, the officials working in the field who come into contact with the villager directly agree that whenever they were associated with some developmental work in the villagers, their relations with the villagers improved. The animosity between the two is mainly due to conflicting approach and outlook. If the two could come together and work together towards protection and management of the protected area, both would benefit.

With this view in mind the office of the Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) under the able guidance of the present Conservator, Shree Bhagwan, was probing the possibilities of involving the villagers in protection activity for the last one year, convincing them that this is in their mutual interest. The initial reluctance on the part of the villages was met with frequent visits and regular discussions. The outcome was the setting up of a committee named 'Adiwasi Youth Wildlife Protection Committee' with representatives from the villages. To add to the enthusiasm

and authenticity of the select group, the department arranged for guerrilla uniforms with caps and jungle shoes bought from the Project Tiger funds. With a whistle-string hanging down from their shoulders, the boys felt proud to be part of a responsible job like protection of forest and fast vanishing wildlife.

The Committee's impact was instant. With the thorough knowledge of the forest area and with intensified patrolling, first success came very soon. In the first week of May a group of the young guards detected a group of poachers operating in deep forests.

The working and movements were keenly observed and plan of action was finalised to nab the poachers. The plan was successfully executed. A gang of 22 hard-core poachers from Jabalpur, both men and women, were caught, along with 8 tiger traps, other smaller animal traps, axes, bows and arrows etc.

It was not an easy game. The gang resorted to all kinds of pressure tactics, threats and allurement. While a couple of women members threatened to drag them in molestation cases, an 8-month pregnant lady threatened to cut open her own belly if not left alone. Yet the young guards refused to budge. However, finally only 3 members were put behind bars. The group earned not only a well-deserved pat from the forest higher officials but it also multiplied their enthusiasm.

This was followed by several instances of catching illicit bamboo fellers red-handed... This incident proved to be an eye-opener for the forest officials. It proved the existence of professional gangs of illicit timber fellers and poachers in the sanctuary area. It also brought home the realisation that the meagre staff of the department was grossly insufficient to watch and protect the spread of forest area...

The ambitious drive of setting up of protection committees received a severe jolt when Vinod Sidam was found missing on 14 May. Later his body was found near his village. He was found brutally murdered. The police investigation is in progress. But the coordination and cooperation that followed the tragedy is praiseworthy. The villagers of Rantalodhi sounded unanimous when appreciating the efforts made by the department in searching for Vinod when he was found missing. The Dept. staff of the Sanctuary under the active leadership of the two Range Forest Officers, Shri Washishtha and Shri Gaikwad, did not leave a single stone unturned...The staff voluntarily came forward to help the wailing parents by contributing Rs 5,000 immediately. The Officer of the CF (WL) made an appeal ... and within a month Rs 15,000 was deposited in Vinod's father's account. More help was in the pipeline when the picture changed drastically.

The understanding between the locals and the department became a secondary issue once the local politicians entered the picture. The leaders, indifferent to the plight of the villagers of the six villages in the sanctuary and oblivious of the positive efforts on behalf of the department, decided to use this opportunity to prove their love and devotion for the tribal cause. They organised a procession with a charter of demands in Chandrapur. In Vinod Sidam's case, the demand included arresting the culprit and compensation to be paid to the parents of the deceased. Later, it was feared that the money received in form of help was being used by some unscrupulous elements under the guise of helping the hapless parents.

One thing is clear that those who have indulged in this ghastly act considered the protection group a threat to their activity. They also have attempted to dishearten both the forest department and the local villagers, discouraging them from the joint venture. Instead it is time the department put its foot down firmly and continue with the well thought activity. The villagers too should realise that all these years the economic interest of poachers and illicit timber fellers were safeguarded due to lack of cooperation between the department and locals.

The realisation of the enhanced strength due to this 'coming together' could mean the end of illegal activities. This coordination alone could prove to be an ultimate solution to the threatened extinction of wildlife.

Extracts from an article based on a study undertaken by *Shodh*: The Institute for Research and Development, Nagpur by **Rucha Ghate**, Postgraduate Training Dept., Economics Dept., Nagpur Univ. Campus, Amravati Rd, Nagpur and **Mukund Kulkarni**

The Palamau crisis

The Palamau Tiger Reserve is languishing for want of funds and the cash crunch is so severe that about 125 personnel, including the wildlife trackers, are sans salary for the last sixteen months. It seems that wildlife protection and conservation is on the non-priority list of the powers-that-be, who are more obsessed and preoccupied with day-to-day political manipulations...

The apathy of the government, that has affected wildlife here, is enormous. To cite just a few examples. For the year 1997-98, the Project Tiger (PT) officials sent a proposal worth Rs 6.5 lakh for development of water sources and waterholes for wildlife. The government did not send a single penny for it...The PT officials here demanded Rs 4.13 lakh for road repair during the year 1997-98. The government just did not listen to it. The days are not far off when the project and sanctuary will die a slow and agonizing death.

The PTR is infested with dreaded ultras whose writ runs large. Such is the fear of the ultras in Palamau that even the CRPF jawans do not like to penetrate deep into villages. The district Police prefer patrolling on metalled roads to marching in remote areas. When this is the state of affairs of a regular armed security personnel, then one can imagine the plight and nervousness of ageing and unarmed forest personnel...

The ultras indulge in doublespeak. For media publicity the ultras reiterate their vow to protect the forest. But side by side, the same ultras patronise and lionise mafiosi of the forest. In the history of roughly 16 years of extremism in Palamau, no big and bad wood smuggler or mafia has been fatally punished by the ultras. Why? On the other hand the number of sawmills has shot up over the years. How? Can any ultra deny the mushrooming of *kattha* manufacturing units in the forest? Who are the protectors of these *kattha* manufacturers—the ultras, the police and the forest personnel? The answer is all three.

No forest official or environmentalist should forget the gory incident of 16 February this year when Palamau went to the polls for the Lok Sabha elections. According to Police sources, *kattha* operators masterminded a landmine blast with the active support of ultras of a particular outfit. The mine blasted, killing two innocent daily wagers. Police in Palamau have evidence that a senior DFO's life is at stake as he is on the hit list of an ultra outfit. As per police records the ultras in Palamau have so far killed one Superintendent Engineer (Irrigation Dept.), 3 junior engineers, one block development officer, 2 journalists, 56 mukhiyas (village headmen) and many others. Under such circumstances no PT official would muster courage to stand before the all-pervasive uncongenial atmosphere.

...Quite recently a senior police officer was caught with a truckload of illegal wood. Everyone believed the DFO in whose jurisdiction the man in uniform was caught would be bold enough to initiate action...but came the anti-climax. The DFO let off the Police Officer.

The NGOs which boast of campaigning for wildlife do only lip service...

Incredibly, for lack of funds no census of wildlife has taken place for the year 1997-98. The last census was done in 1996-97. Similarly the wildlife week, an annual ritual could not be held either for want of money. Now it will not be too imprudent to ask any PT official as to how many tigers are in the Reserve. Do not ask. It hurts.

M.F. Ahmad, Correspondent, *The Times of India*, Nawa Tolee, Daltonganj

To those who ask about becoming a 'member' of TigerLink 'society':-

TigerLink is not another society nor organisation with members. It is rather a network with participants—individuals and NGOs. Being a network, TigerLink's main 'objectives' are communication between participants, support for each others' conservation endeavours and mobilizing joint actions. The effort is to prevent anyone working in the field from feeling isolated or alone and to provide the means for them to tap into different support structures to facilitate better and faster action in the interest of the tiger and other wildlife. The effort is also to identify all such people and to bring them together to exchange ideas, alert each other of national and local threats and encourage more concerted joint action in the cause of conservation.

TigerLink is the sum of its parts, not a centrally organised body. Consider these letters addressed to **you** and do respond and make contact with people in your area offering or needing help.

Tigers in Gujarat

In one of my recent trips in February 1998 to the Panchmahals district of eastern Gujarat I was shocked to hear about the poisoning of a cow near the famous hill shrine of Pavagadh which resulted in the death of two leopards. The news not only is sad for the conservation community but also speaks of forest department apathy towards the wildlife of this area.

Also towards the middle of February around 50–60 people returning from a function in a village near the hill which has a healthy leopard population,

spotted a large male tiger standing in the centre of the road at about 6.30 in the evening when there was enough light. I have visited that area myself to confirm the sighting and believe that it is quite likely that there could be 2–3 tigers in these forests which are connected to the Chotta-Udepur and Devgad-Baria forests of Gujarat. If TigerLink could put in its might and resources we could get some great and exciting news on the tiger front. Establishing the presence of tigers, whether migrant or resident, would boost the efforts of the forest department and conservation NGOs like ours to protect these forests from heavy human pressures and other nuisance in reserve forests.

Sandip S. Diwan, Baroda Nature Lovers, 302, Chandralok Building, Opp. Childrens Hospital, Karelibaug, Baroda 390 018, Gujarat,
E-mail: karvy.sprintrpg.ems.vsnl.net.in

The TigerLink News in its volume 4 no.1 states that, the Manas Tiger Reserve census operations revealed a population of 80 tigers. I am not aware of the source of this information. In fact during 1997, the estimation for tigers in Manas National Park which is the core zone of Manas Tiger Reserve is 125.

R.P. Agarwalla, Field Director, Manas Tiger Project, Barpeta Road 781315, Assam.

(The item in question actually read "over 80 tigers" but we appreciate the point that there was confusion between Manas NP and Manas TR. The information came via Project Tiger.—ed.)

Radhanagari tigers

Our organisation, namely Green Guards, is working in Kolhapur district for the protection and conservation of nature and natural resources.

Since 1990, we have been studying wildlife in Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary (old Dajipur Bison Sanctuary) in Western Ghats of Kolhapur district and we have prepared a report on its faunastic analysis.

Ever since the start of tiger census in India, there has not been a single authentic record of tiger in RWS. It is believed to have become extinct from the sanctuary area. But after declaration of the Sanctuary in 1985, with good protective measures there is an improvement in wild habitat and increase in herbivore prey base and the stray tigers occasionally coming into the sanctuary from North Karnataka are now residing there. In the 1997 census there is the first authentic record of tiger in the sanctuary. Now in all there are 5 tigers (2 males, 2 females and 1 cub).

Our organisation wants to work to protect and conserve this pride of India. Here in Kolhapur we used to conduct anti-poaching campaigns, wildlife awareness campaigns, nature education courses, etc. Your material and information will help us much. So please link us with TigerLink of India.

Faruk Mhetar, Secretary, Green Guards, 2541, B Ward, Khasbag, Mangalwar Peth, Kolhapur 418012, Maharashtra

My name is Monica Chopra. I would love to be a part of this 'TigerLink' organisation to save the tiger from poaching, etc. I am a member of PFA. I am 15 years old.

Monica Chopra, 605/8, Twin Towers, Lokhandwala Complex, Andheri (W) Mumbai 400053

Besides being a journalist engaged with the largest circulated Hindi daily published from Bhopal, I am one of the keen TigerLink participants. I usually file stories related to wildlife conservation in general and tiger conservation in particular. Keeping in view my small contributions in this field, the Government of Madhya Pradesh has nominated me as a Honorary Wildlife Warden.

Abdul Khalique, 106/85, Shivaji Nagar, Bhopal 462016, M.P.

People understand nature emotionally and start valuing intellectually which we believe to be the seed of a nature conservation movement.

Revtubha P. Rajjada, President, Sky Forest Youth Club, c/o Vaibhav Book Store, Nr. Dena Bank, Keshod 362220, Gujarat

Namaskar, I am an resident of Sawai Madhopur where we have the world famous Ranthambhore National Park.

I run a organisation called People For Animals under the supervision of Shrimati Maneka Gandhi and would like to know how we can help to save the wildlife.

Manoj "Sawgani", People for Animals, Moon House, Sinobha Gali, Sawai Madhopur 322021, Rajasthan

Being a participant to TigerLink, I would like to bring these lines for the perusal by all interested.

...In comparison to its geographical area, Maharashtra has very little area of dense forest. The north-eastern part known as Vidarbha gives good shelter to wildlife and our tigers.

Now, with the change of government in Centre and State, the politicians this side are continuing their pressure on MoEF, GOI to relax all norms for the 29 new major irrigation projects which are likely to damage a very good part of forest in this area...

...To develop irrigation facilities with major projects, would seriously affect the existing forests with more environmental disturbance.

...I request the forest authorities of the state not to act under the pressure of politicians but to see

the future of keeping forest, wildlife and other allied subjects related to natural imbalance. Concerned NGOs and environmentalists are also requested to fight against such wrong ideas being harvested.

Someone said, that "a nation's development depends upon ecological balance" and environmental imbalance brings disaster in every respect of human living system.

Mahendra Singh Chauhan, Hon. Wildlife Warden, Village Chaprala, P.O. Chaudampalli, Chamorshi, Dist. Gadchiroli, M.P.

Hi! I am just a crazy tiger lover and I just wanted to say I read an article the other day saying that there is a restaurant in Shanghai that sell tiger meat foods (it's one of their exotic menus) and there was a Japanese programme which showed a few TV stars visiting that restaurant and trying that tiger foods and complimenting them. I mean when so many people are risking their lives to save the tiger how can they do this? I don't understand. No offence, but are tiger conservationists performing works to educate people? Or are they just following tiger tracks all the time? It is important to know tigers and to save them but I think it's more important to educate people not to EAT or to use tiger products. I know it's not easy as it sounds, but as an Asian I don't really see any people performing campaigns at streets trying to teach people and to let them know how precious this animal is! Hope you can show some action this time.

Joy Hwang <eugene63@hotmail.com>

TigerLink has really linked up the tiger conservation campaign all over the country. The newsletter of TigerLink is very much beneficial for this campaign.

SESA, being a voluntary organisation working for environmental protection in south Bihar is always keen to co-ordinate with you in this effort....

Kaushik Mallik, Society for Environment & Social Awareness, Church Road, Daltonganj, Bihar 822101

Ours is an active group of people in the field of nature education and environmental awareness programmes. We carry out various activities throughout the year to fulfil our goals and to make people aware of their natural heritage, its importance for the survival of mankind and its protection (which we believe to be our prime duty).

One of the most effective tools for environmental awareness is Nature Education Camps. We organise many such camps in the Gir lion sanctuary every year, with the help of the Forest Department. People participating in our camps find out their inherent love for nature which eventually results in an emotional bondage with nature.

- **Ranthambore Adventure: A Vikramaditya story** by **Deepak Dalal**. Tarini Publishing, Pune 1998. This adventure tale for children depicts the excitement of a tiger's life making the reader feel a kind of closeness to the tiger. "Alternating from the adventures of schoolchildren to the enthralling tale of a tiger family, the narrative moves with gathering pace" and through the excitement of the story comes the severity of the tiger crisis which is unknown to most children. This book will "inspire and provoke, educate and kindle...and play a vital role in a younger generation to make them aware of the plight of the tiger." Foreword by Valmik Thapar. Rs 90.
- **Reminiscences of Indian Wildlife** by **R.S. Dharmakumarsinhji**. OUP, Delhi 1998. "An engrossing...collection of hunting stories, anecdotes and reflections in natural history" by an "old-world hunter who closely observed the habits of the animals he hunted", enhanced by black and white photographs of the prince's hunting days. Pp. 115. Rs 225.
- **Fencing the Forest: Conservation and ecological change in India's Central Provinces, 1860–1914** by **Mahesh Rangarajan**. OUP, Delhi 1996. "An important contribution to a growing body of scholarship on the environmental history of South Asia". A paperback version will be available soon. A new work by Rangarajan, **Anthology of Indian Wildlife**, is currently in press.
- **In the Belly of the River: Tribal conflicts over development in the Narmada Valley** by **Amita Baviskar**. OUP, Delhi, 1997. Several significant themes of 'environmental movements' are explored through this study. "A captivating read" that takes an unromanticised, critical look at an adivasi community, its strengths and vulnerabilities. (Reviewed in Seminar 466.)
- **Building Bridges for Conservation: Towards joint management of Protected Areas in India** edited by **Ashish Kothari, Farhad Vania, Priya Das, K. Christopher and Suniti Jha**. Indian Institute of Public Administration, Delhi, 1997. Nine major 'documents'—an overview of the situation in India and abroad, proposed changes in India's wildlife legislation, a proposal to expand the system of categories that cover protected areas, three case studies of Kailadevi Sanctuary, Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary and Rajaji National Park and a bibliography on conservation and people. (Reviewed in Seminar 466.)
- **Nature and the Orient: The environmental history of south and southeast Asia** edited by **Richard H. Grove, Vinita Damodaran and Satpal Sangwan**. Published by Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998. Covering a wide range of areas and topics from the global warming that ended the Ice Age to the early 1990s, 31 scholars present their work and thought on "a whole range of issues highly relevant to contemporary debates on the environment". (Reviewed in Seminar 466.)
- **Ecology, Climate and Empire: The Indian legacy in global environmental history, 1400–1940** by **Richard H. Grove**. OUP Delhi, 1998. "...Grove argues that far more than just an economic rationale motivated colonial conservation policies in India and elsewhere". "...this new book takes the reader on a whirlwind, worldwide tour of conservation thinking and practice between the 17th and mid-20th centuries." (Reviewed in Seminar 466.)
- **The Tiger in Andhra Pradesh** has been published by the **WWF-India's** State Office of A.P. with a foreword by Mr. R. Rajamani. This small book contains some historical information on the presence of tigers from old gazetteers and reports of the Nizam of Hyderabad besides more recent details on the status of the tiger in A.P. Pp. 40. Rs 40.
- **The Tiger File-VI**—January 1998 to May 1998. Ranthambhore Foundation's limited edition compilation of press reports concerning the tiger crisis. Available from: R.F., 19 Kautilya Marg, New Delhi 110 021.
- **Wildlife Field Research and Conservation Training Manual** by **Alan Rabinowitz**. Wildlife Conservation Society, USA. Reprinted 1997. The author, one of the most experienced field scientists studying wild cats, conducted training courses on wildlife research and conservation in Sabah, Sarawak, Myanmar, Taiwan and China, and from this experience the training manual has emerged. "A reference section provides a valuable list of publications on the practical aspects of wildlife research and management. This is a publication which should be in the hands of, or available to, everyone in wildlife research and management"—Peter Jackson.

- **The Politics of Extinction: The orangutan crisis and the destruction of Indonesia's forests** a report by the **Environment Investigation Agency**, released on 1 July 1998, documents the current Orangutan crisis, aggravated disastrously by last year's fire which destroyed 2 million ha of forest. The report highlights the role played by massive corporations and a few individuals. EIA propose a detailed '*International Orangutan Conservation Action Plan*' to halt the decimation of this highly endangered animal. Available from EIA, 69 Old Street, London EC1V 9HX. Fax: 171 490 0436; e-mail: eiauk@gn.apc.org.
- **Who Will Save The Tiger** by **Michael't Sas-Rolfes**. PERC Policy Series, no. PS-12; February 1998. This essay documents the tiger's decline and presents ideas for halting it. Their remedy calls for "*market-based approaches*" such as privately owned protected areas, commercial tiger farming and commercial trophy hunting of wild tigers! Based on a longer paper, *Economic incentives for tiger conservation*'. Available from the Political Economy Research Center, 502 South 19th Avenue, Suite 211, Bozeman Montana 59718-6827, USA.
- **Wildlife—a symposium on reconciling the needs of man and wildlife in Seminar**—a monthly journal edited by Tejbir Singh. No. 466, June 1998 has articles by a number of well-known professionals in the field of wildlife and other related fields. Contrasting positions on issues of indigenous cultures and peoples' rights in relation to wildlife conservation appear and syntheses are presented. Fascinating reading for anyone interested in the "*complex and contentious world*" of wildlife conservation. Rs 15. Available from: Seminar, P.O. Box 338, New Delhi 110001.
- **Enviro News**—quarterly newsletter on environment and forest policies, programmes and activities brought out by the MoEF, GOI. The latest issue, vol.1 no.3 March 1998, includes lists of projects cleared by the Ministry and state-wise details of compensatory afforestation required and done.
- **GTF News**—a newsletter-cum-report of the Global Tiger Forum edited by S.C. Dey. Issued in June 1998, it contains status reports on the tiger from a number of range states compiled from written reports from the range countries and from information collated from international conferences.
- **Greenlaw Update**—a quarterly from the Centre for Environmental Law, WWF-India. Vol. 1 No. 1 & 2 1998. This is a newsletter launched "*to provide both an account of CEL's activities as well as a glimpse of some of the developments taking place in the field of environmental law.*"
- **ZooGoer**—a bi-monthly by **Friends of the National Zoo** edited by Susan Lumpkin. The March/April 1998 issue includes two articles by John Seidensticker: '*Saving the Tiger*' and '*Great Cats*' on the exhibit at the national Zoo, Washington D.C. Eric Dinerstein writes on a conservation effort in Nepal, '*It takes a village*'.
- **Envis**—a bi-annual bulletin published by the **Wildlife Institute of India on Wildlife and Protected Areas**. Vol. 1, No. 1; Spring; March 1998 edited by Biju Negi is devoted to elephants and the major elephant-bearing protected areas, many of which are shared by the tiger. The Environment Information System (ENVIS) Centre at WII, formed in September 1997, is a part of the ENVIS set-up of the Ministry of Environment and Forests of India.
- **Eco-Waves**—a Journal on Development and Environment brought out by **People's Group (VO), Nagaland**. The first volume, June 1998, includes an article on the tiger.
- "**Hamari Dharti**" (in Hindi)—a bulletin on fresh water crisis was released on the World Environment Day (5th June 1998) by **Hareetima**, an environment action group at Aligarh.
- **Save Forest and Wildlife**—a new quarterly journal of forestry and wildlife published from 17, New Survey Road, Dehra Dun, contains research articles on social forestry, joint forest management, silviculture techniques, biodiversity, wildlife conservation wildlife management etc. The editor, A.N. Chaturvedi, requests information for future issues. Annual subscription Rs 800.
- **The tiger: a symbol of conservation**—this is the theme of the Bombay Natural History Society's calendar for 1999. Proceeds from the sale will go towards the conservation of tiger and its habitat. Further information from: Products Dept., BNHS, Hornbill House, Dr Salim Ali Chowk, S.B. Singh Road, Mumbai 400023. Tel: (022) 2821811.

More Web Sites to check

Discovery Channel Website: <http://www.discovery.com>

This website also offers a 'conversation channel':

<http://www.discovery.com/conv/wilddiscovery/wilddiscovery.html>—this is a weekly online ask-an-expert series that puts the audience in touch with professionals who can answer queries about various aspects of the natural world, from animal behaviour to habitat conservation. The topics change weekly.

Environmental News Network: <http://enn.com>—this site links you to issues related to environmental education and awareness. It has up-to-date news, features, multimedia and special reports on environmental and wildlife issues. It also offers a package whereby subscribers will be supplied with daily news updates on environmental issues by email.

Jackie Wild Web-page and the Asian Conservation Awareness Program (ACAP): <http://www.jackiewild.com>—designed to raise awareness of the threat to illegal trade in animal parts especially of five key endangered species—Tigers, turtles, elephants, rhinos and bears. Provides information on the biology, status and threats to these animals and about some of the projects to protect them in the wild, and about ACAP's mission to raise public awareness.

Guide to Volunteering in Nature Conservation: <http://www.greenvol.com>

Earth Island Institute: <http://www.earthisland.org/strp/wto.html>

Art for Survival (AFS): <http://www.art4survival.org>—AFS is dedicated to the conservation of ecosystems globally, through the promotion and support of animal, botanical, and natural science art. The site also offers posters to the visitors on demand.

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TigerLink News is for private circulation, only to *TigerLink* participants. It records worldwide tiger news and information, some of which has come from participants and therefore represents their views. For any further details please write to the participants directly. We regret if any errors have been committed in the compilation of this document.

We thank Save the Tiger Fund, a special project of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in partnership with Exxon Corporation, for providing financial support for this publication. We also thank the David Shepherd Conservation Foundation, the Tiger Action Fund for India, the Wildlife Conservation Society, Global Tiger Patrol and Care for the Wild for their ongoing support to the cause of tiger conservation and their help in facilitating the networking of *TigerLink*.

Produced by the Ranthambhore Foundation. Typeset and printed by S.J.I. Services, B-17 Lajpat Nagar Part 2, New Delhi 24. Compiled and edited by Joanna Van Gruisen with assistance from Paola Manfredi and Uttara Mendiratta.