

WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT NETWORK



FINAL REPORT

*Additional materials on file - too bulky
to fit in project folder*

**SUBMITTED TO: THE NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE
FOUNDATION (NFWF), JUNE 2000**

WILDLIFE PROTECTION SOCIETY OF INDIA

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WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT NETWORK

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Annexure A - Warden Alert Vols. 1 & 2, Nos. 1& 2 (English & Hindi)

Annexure B - Wildlife Crime: An Enforcement Guide (2nd Edition - English & Hindi)

Annexure C – Wildlife Protection Act and a Hand Guide (Text in English)

1. SUMMARY

Since the start of the Wildlife Law Enforcement project in April 1998, the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) has contacted over 350 Honorary Wildlife Wardens (HWWs) through out the country. Many of these HWWs have been corresponding regularly with WPSI, giving information on poaching, illegal wildlife trade and habitat conditions. Many HWWs have sought WPSI's advice and assistance with wildlife conservation activities in their areas. In a number of cases, information on poaching and wildlife trade received from HWWs has been passed on to enforcement authorities leading to the seizure of wildlife articles and arrest of offenders.

In October 1998, WPSI published "Wildlife Crime: An Enforcement Manual" with the aim of providing constructive information and advise to HWWs enabling them to take an active role in wildlife protection. This publication has been well received and a number of enforcement officials, members of the judiciary and HWWs have commented on its quality and usefulness. In November 1999, a second updated edition of the publication was released. In addition a Hindi Language version of the Enforcement Guide was also published

A newsletter titled "Warden Alert" has been published in both English and Hindi. During the project period of two years, four editions of the newsletter were produced. The newsletter was distributed to all HWWs, many enforcement staff and individuals working to protect wildlife throughout India. The primary aim of the newsletter was to make HWWs aware of their obligations, rights and powers as well as to provide up-to-date information on major issues concerning endangered species and their habitats.

To date WPSI has filed a total of 95 cases in the Supreme Court, High Courts and District Courts throughout the country relating to poaching and illegal wildlife trade as well as wildlife conservation policy issues. A number of court cases have also been filed after successful 'sting' operations conducted by enforcement authorities with the assistance of WPSI. In all the cases where WPSI is involved, information on wildlife trade collected by us has been provided to the public prosecutor for preparing the case and used during court proceedings.

The hand guide of wildlife laws of India has been prepared and is being printed in both English and Hindi. This is currently in press and printed copies will be ready by mid June. (Copy of the text in English is enclosed as Annexure - C). Unfortunately, the much awaited amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act was delayed by parliament and expected changes to the Act could not be incorporated in this publication. WPSI will print an updated version of the hand guide once the proposed amendment bill for changes to the Wildlife (Protection) Act of India is passed in parliament, possibly early next year.

2. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

2.1 Collection of Information

Since the beginning of the Wildlife Law Enforcement Network Project WPSI has communicated with over 350 HWWs throughout India. In the last year a number of States have made new appointments of HWWs. WPSI has made contact with these newly appointed wardens as well.

Many HWW's have provided information on poaching and illegal wildlife trade as well as other issues related to habitat management. In a number of cases, upon verification of the information received, WPSI has approached enforcement authorities to take appropriate action. WPSI's has also provided assistance to carry out a number of 'sting' operations which have resulted in the seizure of wildlife articles and arrest of offenders. Between 25th April 1998 and 31st May 2000, assistance provided by WPSI to various government enforcement agencies has led to the arrest of wildlife criminals and the seizure of wildlife articles in 48 cases. During the same period WPSI investigated and documented tiger poaching incidents and seizure of tiger parts amounting to the loss of at least 107 tigers.

Apart from information on poaching and wildlife trade, HWWs have also been providing important information on habitat conditions, wildlife movement and destruction of forests. In a number of such cases WPSI has filed a public interest litigation in court to prevent encroachment of important tiger habitats.

With the assistance of HWWs and co-operation of enforcement staff poaching and the illegal trade of tigers and other endangered species has been brought under control in a number of places and has been stopped from expanding in others. The additional vigilance of the appointed HWWs has had a significant impact on controlling wildlife crime in many parts of the country. Efforts need to be maintained and enhanced in some areas to ensure that poaching and the clandestine trade in wildlife articles is brought under control.

2.2 Wildlife Law Enforcement Manual

"Wildlife Crime: An Enforcement Guide", was published in October 1998, in collaboration with Natraj Publishers. The aim was to provide HWWs and enforcement staff with the knowledge of how wildlife criminals operate and vital information on how to improve enforcement of wildlife laws. This publication has been well received and a number of government enforcement staff, HWW's and concerned individuals have commented on its usefulness. A second edition of the Enforcement Guide was published in November 1999 to meet the demand from various government enforcement agencies and other sources. In addition a Hindi language version of the guide has also been published and distributed to HWW's

and enforcement officials in the Hindi speaking states of India. Producing the Hindi language version of the guide proved to be challenging. Translation into Hindi, especially of the technical and legal content of the guide was painstakingly done and took some time to complete. Every effort was made to ensure that the translation was accurate and that the meaning and emphasis in some sections was not lost. The second edition of the guide contains some minor changes and eight additional pages of information. Copies of the Enforcement Guide in both Hindi and English enclosed as Annexure – B.

The guide has resulted in improved enforcement of wildlife laws across the board from detection of cases, recording of evidence, filing of charge sheets to the follow up of cases in courts of law. The work is used extensively for wildlife law enforcement training.

2.3 Wildlife Protection Act

The hand guide of wildlife laws of India has been prepared and is being printed in both English and Hindi. Both Hindi and English editions are currently in the press and printed copies will be ready by mid June 2000. The text in English is enclosed as Annexure - C.

Unfortunately, the much awaited amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act was delayed till the next parliament session and expected changes to the Act could not be incorporated in this publication. WPSI will print an updated version of the hand guide once the proposed amendment bill for changes to the Wildlife (Protection) Act of India is passed in parliament, possibly early next year.

Apart from containing the text of the Wildlife Protection Act, the wildlife laws hand guide also contains selected judgements of wildlife related court cases, articles by experienced wildlife conservationists and a guide on how to use the Wildlife Protection Act in relation to successful prosecution of wildlife criminals. The section on wildlife case law is the most comprehensive compilation ever done in India and will be of great use to practitioners. It was prepared for WPSI by a retired District Judge.

2.4 Newsletter

WPSI has produced four editions (in both English and Hindi) of the newsletters titled "Warden Alert" in the past two year (enclosed as Annexure A). These were sent to all HWW's. Copies have also been sent to a number of enforcement staff, government officials and to NGOs and individuals working to save endangered species. The primary aim of the newsletter is to make HWW's aware of their obligations, rights and powers as well as to provide up-to-date information on major issues concerning the tiger and other endangered species. This includes information

on poaching, illegal wildlife trade, destruction of habitats, relevant court cases, enforcement news etc.

2.5 Legal Assistance

To date WPSI has filed a total of 94 cases in the Supreme Court of India, High Courts and District Courts throughout the country. Out of these, 34 cases are directly related to tiger poaching and trade in tiger parts and destruction of vital tiger habitats. The remaining cases are concerned with trade in other endangered species such as the elephant, musk deer, Tibetan antelope, rhino, leopard and lesser cats. In addition a number of cases have been filed to prevent destruction of wildlife habitats and on important policy issues related to wildlife.

A number of court cases have been filed after successful 'sting' operations conducted by enforcement authorities with the assistance of WPSI. In all the cases where WPSI is involved, information on wildlife trade collected during the course of the investigation project has been used while preparing the case and during the actual trials. WPSI is also involved in filing intervention petitions in all tiger related cases that are brought to our notice.

3. PLANNED ACTIVITIES

3.1. Training Workshops

In July 1997, WPSI had submitted a proposal to the US-FWS for holding wildlife enforcement training workshops for enforcement staff and HWWs in selected locations around the country. The aim of the workshops is to advise law enforcement authorities (State forest departments, police, customs, and coast guard) and HWWs on wildlife laws, species identification and details of the illegal wildlife trade. The US-FWS had agreed to support the project, however, before the grant agreement could be signed sanctions over the nuclear tests were imposed on both India and Pakistan. These funds have now come through and six training workshops will be held within the next twelve months. The first workshop is scheduled to take place in July 2000. Members of various government enforcement agencies will also be invited to participate in the workshops.

WPSI staff members have been resource persons at enforcement workshops held through out India by various bodies including the Wildlife Institute of India, the National Police Academy, Delhi Police Academy, the Andhra Pradesh Police Academy and the Maharashtra Forest Department.

WPSI plans to raise funds to continue project activities and remain in contact with enforcement staff and HWWs throughout India.



Mr. David Phemister
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20036
USA

Ref:WPSI/FC-NFWF-HWW/6-2000/
7 June, 1999

Dear Mr. Phemister,

Sub: Wildlife Law Enforcement Network (98-093-053) - Final Report

Please find enclosed WPSI's final report for the "Law Enforcement Network Project" (a floppy disc containing the final report is also enclosed). The project has resulted in improved enforcement of wildlife laws throughout India. The response from HWW's, enforcement agencies, other NGOs and individuals interested in wildlife conservation has been extremely positive, so much so that WPSI plans to raise funds to continue project activities in the future.

With the assistance of HWWs and the co-operation of enforcement staff poaching and the illegal trade of tigers and other endangered species has been retarded or brought under control in a number of places and has been stopped from expanding in others. The additional vigilance of the appointed HWWs has had a significant impact on controlling wildlife crime in many parts of the country. Efforts need to be maintained and enhanced in some areas to ensure that poaching and the clandestine trade in parts of tigers and other endangered species is brought under control.

"Wildlife Crime: An Enforcement Guide" published in both English and Hindi has resulted in improved enforcement of wildlife laws across the board from detection of cases, recording of evidence, filing of charge sheets to the follow up of cases in courts of law. The work is used extensively for wildlife law enforcement training.

Wildlife Protection Society of India

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Registered under the Societies Registration Act No. S/27248

The "Hand Guide on Wildlife Laws", apart from containing the text of the Wildlife Protection Act also contains selected judgements of wildlife related court cases, articles by experienced wildlife conservationists and a guide on how to use the Wildlife Protection Act in relation to successful prosecution of wildlife criminals. Both English and Hindi language versions of this guide are being produced. This publication is currently in press. Printed copies will be ready by mid June. Enclosed as Annexure – C, is the text in English of the hand guide. Printed copies of the guide will be sent to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) as soon as they are ready.

WPSI has produced four editions (in both English and Hindi) of the newsletters titled "Warden Alert" in the past two year these are enclosed as Annexure A (Vol. 2 No. 2 of the Hindi newsletter is currently being translated, printed copies will be ready within a week, this will be sent to NFWF separately). The newsletter has been vital for informing HWWs of their rights and obligations and exchanging information on important issues related to wildlife. Attachment A (pg. 6) contains the financial report for the project.

An invoice for the balance funds (US \$ 3,300) is also included in the package. Could you kindly arrange for this amount to be sent to WPSI.

I look forward to your comments on the final report. If you require any additional information please contact me. I take this opportunity to thank you and all at NFWF for their support to WPSI's efforts to protect the tiger and other endangered species. I wish you all the best in you future studies.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Bindia Sahgal
Projects Manager

Regulate shahtoosh trade: HC tells J-K

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, MAY 7

POSSESSION of shahtoosh shawls without a licence from the government would attract penal action even in the militancy-infested Jammu and Kashmir, the high court here held yesterday.

In a landmark judgment, Justice O.P. Sharma directed the state government to regulate trade in shahtoosh and its shawls under the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Wildlife Protection Act. He also directed it to initiate action against those carrying on shahtoosh trade in violation of the provisions of the

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

The judgement came in a petition filed by a Delhi-based voluntary organisation — Wildlife Protection Society of India — through its vice-president Ashok Kumar. Pointing out that the underwool of Tibetan antelope Chiru was used for manufacturing shahtoosh shawls, the petitioner had drawn the attention of the court towards the threat of extinction the animal faced.

He noted that there had been startling seizures of shahtoosh shawls in the world from 1992 to 1998, and India accounted for most of them. This is despite the fact that

the animal has been declared endangered and there is a ban on the import and export of shahtoosh. Kumar regretted that the Jammu and Kashmir state, however, had neither imposed a ban on the trade of shahtoosh nor regulated it.

Opposing the petition, the state government had submitted that though the Tibetan antelope was not a protected animal under the provisions of the State Wildlife Protection Act, the government had not issued any licence for its hunting ever since the Act came into being in 1978. It also said that shahtoosh shawls were made of underwool shed by the animal and

collected by locusts.

The petition had also been opposed by the Handicraft Traders Association, Srinagar. The Central Government, on its part, had told the court that it had been persuading the state to bring the State Wildlife Protection Act on a par with the Central legislation.

Allowing the petition, Justice Sharma held that underwool or shahtoosh was the property of the government under the Wildlife Protection Act, irrespective of the fact as to how it had been obtained by a dealer or the manufacturer. He also criticised the state government for not implementing the Wildlife Act.

Name of Publication

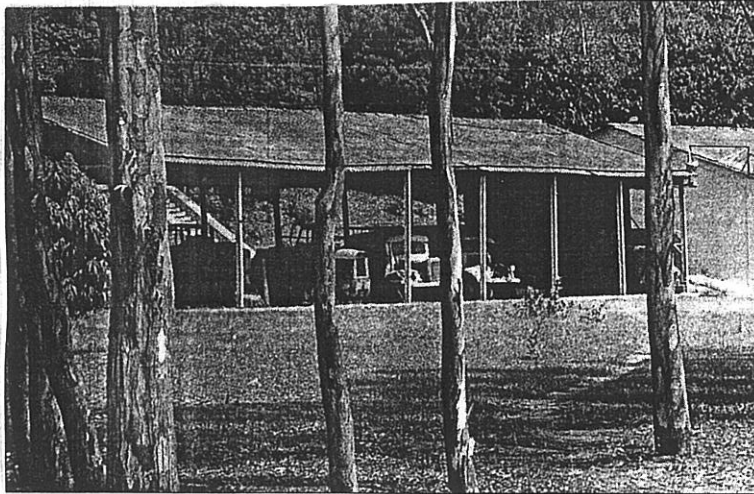
HINDU

Place of Publication

NEW DELHI

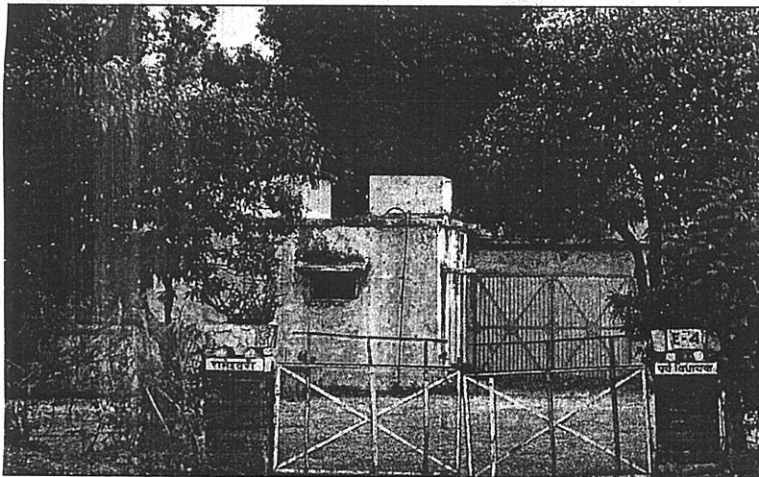
Date of Publication

- 9 APR 2000



The challenge lies in....

Restoring forest corridors



Illegal constructions on forestland of Kalaghar division, Corbett National Park.

In a unique case, the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) successfully moved the Judiciary for returning forest land to the Corbett National Park. The land was temporarily given 38 years ago to the Uttar Pradesh irrigation department for construction of the Kalaghar dam on the Ramganga.

When the forest land was transferred, the provision was that when the dam was completed, the land area used for

were *kutchas* or built of mud so that they could be demolished easily when the land had to be restored to the Corbett Park. But for 19 years after the dam was completed, the Irrigation Department clung to the land and even leased it out to traders and businessmen for quick money. Every 15 days a new shop was coming up, says Mr. Ashok Kumar of the WPSI.

Repeated requests of the Forest Department to return the land went unheeded. Rajiv

wild elephants found their migratory route blocked, the WPSI decided to take up the issue with a public interest litigation at the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court.

Investigations by the WPSI showed there was elephant dung up to the colony. In fact there is a five km area next to the spillway that could serve as a corridor to the Kalaghar Forest Division if there were no shops and houses.

Apart from poaching for ivory, a major problem for elephants is the blockage of their migratory routes by construction of dams and other structures. This has turned them into violent creatures – destroying crops and trampling people to death.

Last July, the WPSI moved the courts. The Irrigation Department, by continuing to hold on to the forest land after completion of the dam, was violating the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and the December 12, 1996 interim order of the Supreme Court which states that non-forestry activities should not take place on forest land.

The judges had pointed out in July that the "State government failed to settle the dispute between its two departments. It is surprising that the State government has filed a counter affidavit, admitting the controversy, yet taking no steps to settle the dispute. Had the Government had acted, there would not have been any need for an NGO to go to court, the judges said.

Asking the State to ensure that no more encroachments took place or land sold to third parties, the Court asked the Irrigation Secretary and the Forest Secretary to be present in the court for the next hearing. At this second meeting in August, both said they would work out the area which had to be returned to the forest department, keeping only land required for running of the dam establishment within the forests. This, the Irrigation Secretary assured, would be done by November 15, 1999.

However, providing for delays, the Court gave time till December 15. On January 15 this year, the two departments had to report to the Court.

Some of the land has since been handed to the Forest Department, but encroachments have not been removed. In fact, encroachers have been agitating for continuing on forest land. Less than 10,000 people may have to move out. But encroachers are fighters and so the battle continues in the U.P. forest tracts. The silver lining is that no further encroachments are taking place in this forest segment.

Encroachments on forest land are a major problem for many parks and sanctuaries. Often, the encroachments are by another department of the same government or the encroachers have the backing of politicians. In the case of the Corbett Park, it is the WPSI that is fighting for restoration of forest land. In Maharashtra, the Bombay Environment Action Group has successfully moved the court for moving some thousands of people encroaching on the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Borivli. Only those who were living in the Park area prior to the notification of the Park have been allowed to stay on.

In Kaziranga National Park, Assam, the biggest home of the one horned rhino, Bangladeshi refugees have an extended area of the park.

A State Minister stopped the clearance of the encroachments and now the Park authorities have gone to court for removal of encroachments. But not many have the courage of B. S. Bonal, the Kaziranga Park Director, for fighting poachers and other encroachers.

In the Melghat Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra too, the Irrigation Department has created problems like those in Corbett, U.P.. As population increases, ensuring the inviolability of the protected areas will be an uphill task. So the recovery of even a few hectares of forest land in U.P. is cause for celebration. But the challenge will be in re-greening the area and restoring forest corridors so that the elephants can move freely again. ■

GREEN TALK

infrastructure would be handed back to the Corbett National Park authorities. The transfer of 8,390.69 hectares took place in 1961. The Kalaghar dam was completed in 1970 but to date the 802.3 hectares of forest land, downstream of the dam, where a residential colony came up, has not been handed back to the forest department.

Gandhi who loved nature reserves and wildlife, visited Kalaghar and saw the encroachments. As Prime Minister, he then wrote to the U.P. Chief Minister, Veer Bahadur, to have the encroachments removed and return the land to Corbett National Park. Even his request went unheeded.

As more encroachments came up on those

Asian elephants endangered by rampant poaching for ivory

Satyen Mohapatra
New Delhi, April 2

POACHING FOR ivory has put a question mark on the survival of the Asian elephant in India because of certain peculiar factors.

Among the Asian elephants, it is only the male which has tusks and therefore, it falls prey to the poacher more frequently.

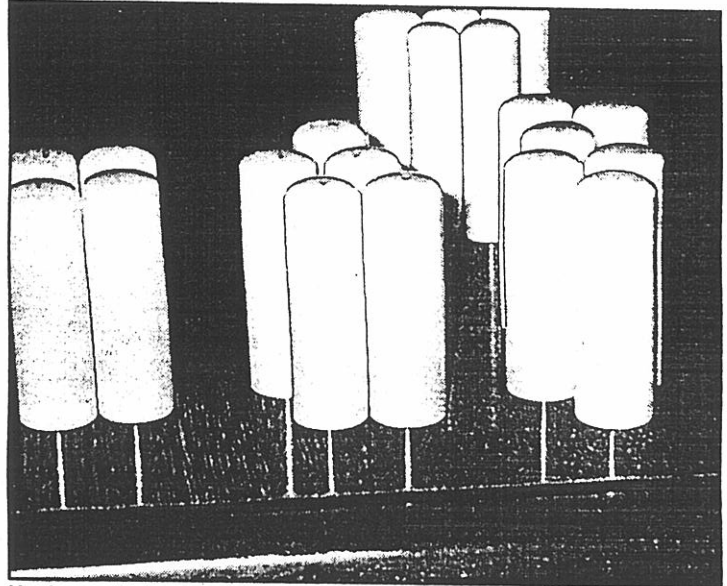
While the total number of elephants in India is approximately 20,00, only about a 1,000 tuskers in breeding ages are left in the country today. Females elephants far outnumber the males with sex ratio at some places as low one male to 1,000 female, according to Mr Ashok Kumar of Wildlife Protection Society of India.

India, along with Kenya, is now planning to oppose any move by the ivory trade lobby for resumption of international ivory trade, he added.

A joint resolution by both countries would be brought at the forthcoming 11th Conference of Parties affiliated to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, to be held in Kenya later this month.

CITES is the world's largest conservation treaty and is an inter-governmental body that regulates international wildlife trade. It has 151 member countries.

At the 7th Conference of Parties in 1989, a ban was imposed on international trade in ivory by an overwhelming majority vote as it had been noticed that the African elephant population had been



Hankos, which are cylindrical pieces of ivory, are used as signature imprints in Japan. Photo: Vivek Menon

drastically brought down from 2 million to 0.6 million due to merciless poaching in the previous ten years (during 1979-1989).

The ban on ivory sales resulted in reduction in poaching levels and illegal movement ivory internationally, Mr Kumar said.

However, the 10th Conference of Parties held in Zimbabwe permitted a limited sale of 59 tons of ivory to one buyer country, Japan. This sent out wrong signals and poaching of both African and Asian elephants were again on the rise, he alleged.

Over 80 per cent of ivory is used

in Japan just to produce 'Hanko', which is a cylindrical piece of ivory carved with one's name and used to imprint one's signature.

There are several African countries which are interested to sell ivory to Japan. These include, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa tons, he said.

With no system in place for monitoring the illegal killing of elephants and extremely weak enforcement of existing laws, opening of even limited ivory trade could unleash unacceptable pressures on the elephant population, he added.

PRESS CUTTINGS BUREAU

90/49-B, MALVIYA NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110017 PHONE : 6461442, 6444836

Name of Publication	Place of Publication	Date of Publication
INDIAN EXPRESS	NEW DELHI	17 MAR 2000

Cops take coaching on wildlife crimes

SONU JAIN
NEW DELHI, MARCH 10

A TEAM of wildlife experts gave tips to 450 police personnel in the first ever training session organised at the Police Training College to deal with wildlife crimes.

The training exercise focused on enforcement of wildlife laws and after the enthusiastic response from the police is going to be part of training for every passing batch.

With the legislation on wildlife protection in India being one of the best in the world, the loopholes were obviously in the enforcement of these stringent laws. "It is very clear that the police force is not familiar with the Wildlife Protection Act or their own powers and it is not so much a lack of willingness but ignorance (that shows through) when they are confronted with a wildlife crime," said Aparna Rajgopal, the brain behind the programme. Rajgopal is also a lawyer who runs her own organisation, Environment Solutions. She found an eager supporter in Kiran Bedi who agreed to let this training workshop be conducted in the Academy.

The session was divided into

two parts — one on Wildlife Protection Act and the other on Prevention of Cruelty against Animals Act, both of which give enough teeth to police. "The normal response is that we do not have enough time to tackle human problem, to think of animals is a far cry," said Rajgopal.

But not so in this workshop. The participants got to know of how and when they can intervene and make a difference: when they see an over-loaded cattle truck, chicken hanging upside down, a snake-charmer or when an animal is run over by a vehicle. The trainers were inundated by questions from the participants on such situations.

"These are situations which they encounter on a daily basis but do not know how to recognise as crimes," said Kartick Satyanarayan, Wildlife SOS who conducted part of the training. The other lecturers were Ashok Kumar from Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) and Ambika Stukla an animal rights' activist.

The reason why 450 policemen could be trained at the same time was because of the excellent multimedia system at the Police Training College at Najafgarh.

PRESS CUTTINGS BUREAU

90/49-B, MALVIYA NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110017 PHONE : 6461442, 6444836

Name of Publication	Place of Publication	Date of Publication
HINDUSTAN TIMES	NEW DELHI	- 7 FEB 2000

Marine life threatened by constructions: PIL

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 6

THE DELHI High Court has criticised the Government over the amendments in the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ), 1991, allowing storage of hazardous materials and construction activities.

"By these amendments (six till 1997) the Government seems to have come under pressure of some vested interests," a Division Bench comprising of Chief Justice S N Variava and Justice Cyriac Joseph said.

The court was hearing a petition by the Wildlife Protection Society (WPS) seeking quashing of the 1997 amendment.

The WPS petition filed by its counsel Raja Panjwani said the Government was allowing construction activities and storage of

hazardous material, including petroleum products, up to 100 metres instead of the earlier 500 metres.

This, the petition said, was affecting marine life along the 6,000-km coastline of the country, which covers nine states.

The 1991 CRZ rules strictly prohibited expansion fish processing activities within the 500-metre limit of the coastline from tidal waves.

But amendments in 1997 allowed up to 25 per cent expansion of fish processing activities within the prohibited area.

Mr Panjwani told the court that changes had been made by the Surface Transport Ministry without consulting the Environment and Forest Ministry.

He told the court that CRZ rules had been amended six times since they were framed in 1991.

ASHOK KUMAR, Vice-President, Wildlife Protection Society of India

“More than 10 tonnes of ivory is stocked illegally across the city”

Fifty leopards, three tigers and five otters, all reduced to dead skins, were seized in Ghaziabad last month while they were on their way to Siliguri to be smuggled out of the country. The haul, one of the biggest wildlife seizures, according to Ashok Kumar, Vice-President, Wildlife Protection Society of India, has highlighted once again the failure of the government in protecting wildlife. And as the consignment originated from Delhi, the haul has reaffirmed the fact that the city has become the centre from where ivory, leopard skins, shah-toosh shawls and a variety of other animal skins are smuggled to other states, before finally reaching the international market. Wildlife conservation calls for greater sensitisation to the issue and empowerment of the NGOs, feels Ashok Kumar. Excerpts from a conversation with ABHILASHA OJHA.



RENUKA PURI

illegal trade in wildlife. I was a Member Secretary of the committee, and along with other members one of the major recommendations we made was the creation of a specialised unit to tackle Delhi-based masterminds in wildlife trade. Till date, there's been no progress in this direction and with over 15 wildlife seizures that took place in the city in 1998-99, there's ample evidence to prove that things have gone totally out of control. Culprits are let off for a measly sum of Rs 50-100. In fact, the seizure at Ghaziabad showed that the consignment of wildlife skins were tanned professionally, folded with great expertise, pressed by a machine to make the packages small and then triple packed in polythene, cloth and finally in gunny bags. Obviously, there is sufficient evidence that the entire administrative machinery is in a shambles.

■ Why has Delhi become the centre of illegal trade in wildlife?

There is a complete breakdown of law and order in the city and the government has simply ignored the cause of wildlife. Despite the Wildlife Protection Act and more than 200 wildlife cases that are languishing in Delhi's courts, in the past 10 years the city has emerged as the centre of illegal trade in wildlife. To make matters worse, there are no expert wildlife prosecutors who can see these cases through. The so-called wildlife inspectors who are supposed to look into the various wildlife cases fail to even turn up in the courts. Couple this with little powers given to the NGOs and you find a city which has failed in even respecting the cause of wildlife. In fact, I am personally aware that despite the ban more than 10 tonnes of ivory is illegally stocked across the city. The borders with the other states are also so porous that it doesn't take much to smuggle your way to the other states and then to the international market.

■ Why do you believe the authorities are not doing enough in this regard?

I maintain that environment and conservation of wildlife is of little concern to the authorities. All the government does is to create numerous committees and initiate projects, but the fact is everything works only on paper. The Subramanian Committee, for instance, was formed in 1994 by the Ministry of Environment and Forests to study

■ What do you think the government should do to tackle the situation?

There has to be a change in the law and the NGOs should be given more powers to represent wildlife cases. Otherwise, the situation will continue to deteriorate. In 1993, a consignment of 400 kg of tiger bones, over 40 leopard skulls and eight tiger skins were seized from Majnu Ka Tila, but the culprits got away scot-free. In fact, the trade is now booming in areas as diverse as Mayfair Gardens, Greater Kailash, and Lajpat Nagar, besides Old Delhi areas like Chandni Chowk. It is only by sensitising the government as well as the citizens towards wildlife that the situation can be improved.

■ Criticising the government is fine, but what has the Wildlife Protection Society of India done to stop this illegal trade in wildlife?

The Wildlife Protection Society of India was started in 1994 only with a view to tackle the menace of illegal trade in wildlife. We realised that the only way we could find a voice and a platform for the protection of wildlife was by forming a society which could actually question the authorities about the status of wildlife protection. Our organisation aims at giving legal assistance and is trying to solve a backlog of wildlife cases which keep languishing in the courts. At the same time, we're also attempting to sensitise the citizens towards protecting wildlife. ■

M. P. CHRONICLE

BHOPAL

24 AUG 1999

Handbook on environment, wildlife WS protection laws

DEHRA DUN, (UNI): Comprehensive information on rules and laws related to environment, forest and wildlife protection in India has been provided in a handbook on the subject brought out in the Doon Valley.

The book includes perceptive articles by eminent environmentalists like Maneka Gandhi, Ashok Kumar and Belinda Wright about such laws, the need for them and shortcomings in their implementation. These articles cover a lot of subjects, including cruelty to animals, endangered species and conservation of genetic resources of plants and microbes.

Published in collaboration with the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), the handbook stresses that more important than establishing new laws is to understand the existing procedural laws and rights.

The WPSI is a Delhi-based NGO working to combat the illegal trade in flora and fauna of India. The society has been in the forefront of the fight against poachers and traders of wildlife, working especially to save species such as the tiger, elephant, rhino and the Tibetan antelope. In his foreword to the book, Justice Kuldeep Singh says, "every citizen of this country must apply pressure to the rulers of the day, leaving them with no choice", but to play an active and constructive part in reversing the damage done to the ecology and preserving the future." The actual prevention of environmental injustices requires a strong knowledge of the basics. Another important aspect for effective implementation is to encourage people's participation? This handbook is a step in the direction towards educating and bringing about awareness.

Japan to blame for poaching of tigers, elephants in India

■ WPSI feels that killings will not stop as long as there is a consumer market.

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POACHING of tigers and elephants in India is directly linked with a ready and lucrative market in Japan and there is little hope for survival of these two endangered species as long as there is an ever-growing demand for ivory and tiger parts in that country.

According to the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), Japan is the major destination for elephants and tigers that are poached in India and as long as their products are legally available in Japan, their killing will not stop.

More than 25 tigers were killed by poachers in India so far this year. Compared to this 41 tigers were killed in 1998, 88 in 1997, 52 in 1996, 123 in 1995 and 95 in 1994. The figures are however, just a fraction of the actual poaching and trade in tiger parts in the country.

There are fewer than 5,000 to 7,000 tigers left in the wild, 60 per cent of which are found in the jungles of India. Such a small world population, which is widely scattered in isolated pockets, simply cannot survive unless there is an immediate ban on the trade in the parts of the animals.

Japan is the only major consumer country in the world where the sale of tiger parts is still legal. Tiger bones, and body parts can be purchased openly in every major town in that country and despite worldwide protests, the trade continues with devastating effect on India's wild tiger population. The poaching of tigers for use in traditional medicine is considered to be the single biggest threat to its survival.

Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) investigators, after visiting 26 traditional Chinese pharmacies in Tokyo and Yokohama late last year, found 54 per cent of them selling products which

contained tiger parts. A "virility" product shop offered powdered tiger penis. The investigators also discovered that bear gall bladder, rhino horn, snake, lizard, monkey head and hand, deer antler, sea horse, seal penis, wolf penis, turtles, insects and whale foetus were being sold in Japan.

The WPSI which is taking out a march here tomorrow in protest against Japan's decision to reopen trade in ivory and the continued legal sale of tiger parts throughout that country, said ivory trade has had a devastating impact on the wild elephant population in India which is home to 60 per cent of Asian elephants. More than 250 tuskers have been selectively poached in India in the last three years. Most experts agree that India's elephant population would not survive unless the killings stopped.

Trade in elephant ivory was banned in 1989 by parties to the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) because in the previous 20 years Africa had lost half of its elephant population.

The ban deprived Japan of ivory supplies for its traditional carving industry. Eighty per cent of Japan's ivory industry is the manufacture of Inzais — the signature seal. However, after intensive lobbying by Japan in June 1997 the CITES parties voted to reopen selective trade in African ivory. The decision was reached despite protests from many countries including India and the US.

Three African countries — Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe — were permitted by CITES to sell 60 tonnes of ivory stocks only to Japanese buyers. The auctions took place a few days ago. After the decision, poaching escalated across the African continent.

According to the WPSI, the decision created many loopholes and stimulated an increase in elephant poaching and smuggling of ivory from India. Ivory from Asian, rather than African elephants is sought after for Japanese Inzai seals because it is considered to be of a better quality.