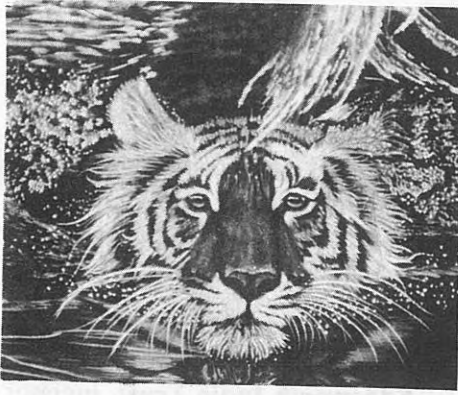


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TIGER LINK

A Linkage of Concerned People and Organisations
across the Globe to save the Tiger

NEWS

Vol. 2, No. 2, December 1996

TIGER LINK AWARDS

At a special ceremony in Bhopal held in July 1996, the Honourable Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Digvijay Singh, presented a Rs.10,000/- TigerLink Award to **Shri Mukesh Gupta**, Supdt. of Police, Balaghat District, M.P., for his exceptional work in combatting tiger poaching. Special certificates of appreciation were also presented to **Shri Ganga Ram Panday**, Forest Guard, **Shri Ramesh Chand Sharma**, Forester and **Shri Noval Singh Chauhan**, Forester, for their outstanding work in wildlife protection and management. Shri Panday, Sharma and Chauhan were also given a cash award of Rs.1000/- in appreciation of their efforts towards tiger conservation by Tiger State Committee member, Shri Valmik Thapar.

Balaghat District, where **Shri Mukesh Gupta** was posted, is primarily forest and a great portion of Kanha National Park lies within its boundaries. Earlier there had been reports of large scale poaching of tigers and other wildlife from the area but only random individual cases were caught by the police and forest officials. To feel the scale of poaching and to check the illegal trade, Shri Mukesh Gupta made a determined effort and employed a team of officers for the sole purpose of creating informers. This process was undertaken in all parts of the district. The information received was further developed and policemen were trained in the subtleties of undercover work through which they were able to infiltrate the trade. As a result of this concerted work a number of raids were conducted and large quantities of hides, skins and bones recovered, including 3 tiger skins and 5 sets of tiger bones. In the first phase of the operation 22 arrests were made. This was continued and in the second phase of the operation 14 skins (including 2 tiger skins and 9 leopard skins), 5 kg of tiger bones and 96.5 kg of antlers were recovered. 20 arrests were made. Shri Gupta and his force then

launched another operation against illegal weapons and were able to unearth an illegal arms factory and seize 7 muzzle loaders, 3 barrels and all the equipment for making these weapons which are commonly used against the tiger prey species, sambar, chital etc.

The success of these operations and the information that was thereby created gave a pattern for a successful series of such operations to be carried out in various parts of Madhya Pradesh. Due to this new dimension of general police working a number of seizures have been made (see p. 23) and a blow has been struck to the morale of the poachers and traders.
(Shri M. Gupta, S.P. Sehore, Dist. Sehore, M.P.)

Shri Ganga Ram Panday has worked as a Forest Guard in the Bori Wildlife Sanctuary and Satpura National Park since 1979. With the help of forest villagers, he has been fully devoted to controlling encroachment on forest land and to controlling illegal grazing of cattle in prohibited parts of the sanctuary. Now posted in the Madhai area of Satpura N.P. he has discovered the habitat and breeding places of crocodiles and is engaged in the important work of maintaining these.

Shri Ramesh Chand Sharma was appointed Forester in the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department in 1974. Since then he has taken a keen interest and performed all his duties well and has been highly commended for his hard labour and honesty. His work in controlling illicit felling in the Angandhana circle of Game Range Matkuli which comes under the Pachmarhi Sanctuary, has been particularly appreciated.

Shri Noval Singh Chauhan began his career as a Barrier Guard in 1983 and was subsequently promoted to Game Guard in the Bori Wildlife Sanctuary. He was then deputed for game guard training at Bandhavgarh where he stood first. As a result he was sent to the

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Tiger Link and Other Awards

Forester Training School in Betul after which he was appointed Forester and posted in the Bori Sanctuary where his laudable efforts have helped control encroachments and forest fires in the Khodri circle of the Bori Range. He is also commended for his wildlife knowledge and work in collecting information on the wildlife in his area.

(Shri Panday, Sharma and Chauhan may be contacted c/o Director Satpura N.P., Pachmarhi 461881, Dist. Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh)

♦ The Chief Wildlife Warden, Shri R.G. Soni was present at the ceremony when Shri Fateh Singh Rathore on behalf of TigerLink presented the TigerLink award, posthumously, to **Shri Badhya Lal** for his excellent work in tiger conservation. Shri Lal was found dead near a railway track in December 1991. His wife received his award.

Other Awards

♦ **Maharaja Martand Singh Award**

The Chief Minister conferred the prestigious **Maharaja Martand Singh Award** on former Forest Secretary, **Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh** for his exceptional lifetime contribution towards wildlife protection. Dr Ranjitsinh is well known nationally and internationally for his enthusiastic and constructive dedication to wildlife conservation. Few have as much knowledge of India's wildlife and have put as much energy into its preservation as Dr Ranjitsinh in whatever capacity he served since he joined the IAS in 1961. International recognition came in 1979 with the Order of the Golden Ark and in 1991 when he was elected to the Global 500 Roll of Honour of the UNEP "in recognition of outstanding practical achievements in the protection and improvement of the environment".

(Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh, 'Krashnasar', 5 Tiger Lane, Sainik Farms, New Delhi)

♦ **Fred M. Packard International Parks Merit Award**

At a ceremony of the World Conservation Congress in Canada on 18 October, the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA) of the IUCN **Shri H.S. Panwar** was presented (in absentia) the **Fred M. Packard International Parks Merit Award**. The citation recognised his 'outstanding contribution in protected areas work in India over some 25 years'. It singled out his contribution in raising the profile of Kanha N.P. and commended his 'innovative management'. It stated that under Mr Panwar's direction Project Tiger became one of the world's leading conservation projects. Mr Panwar is a former Director of Project Tiger and former Director of the Wildlife Institute of India. He is presently assisting the Sri Lankan Department of National Parks in implementing projects in protected areas. In a message sent on the occasion, he said he wished to acknowledge the work of his colleagues, including the guards at Kanha, who had contributed to the success of Project Tiger. However he added that in spite of concerted global efforts 'the threats and pressures continue to grow, making it difficult to sustain achieved conservation successes to attain new ones'. The other awardees were **Mr Abdullah Jang** from Pakistan and **Mr Perez Olindo** from Kenya. (H.S. Panwar, 7/7 Isipathana Mw, Colombo 5)

(Source: *The Hindu*)

♦ **Assam Awards**

At the concluding meeting of Wildlife Week in Assam which took place in Guwahati zoo, the Chief Minister of Assam awarded a num-

ber of wildlife field staff for their dedicated work.

♦ **Panna Awards**

TigerLink participant Valmik Thapar has instituted a yearly award of Rs.7,500/- and five other awards to Panna Tiger Reserve.

♦ **WPSI Annual Bird Conservation Award**

Edgeworth India Trust, initiator of and generous contributor to the TigerLink awards, is also sponsoring a WPSI bird award which will be given to "individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the study or conservation of birds or their habitat in India and Nepal beyond and above their call of duty." Three citations and cash awards of Rs.10,000/- will be given annually and a special award of Rs.20,000/- given in exceptional cases.

As part of the Birth Centenary celebrations for the late Dr Salim Ali, the Mumbai Natural History Society has announced two awards to recognise the contribution of individuals in the field of conservation of nature.

The Salim Ali Young Biologist Award - to be presented annually to scientists below the age of 35 years. A citation and cash award of Rs.15,000/-

The Salim Ali Naturalist Award - to be presented annually to an individual or NGO for outstanding work in the field of nature conservation, nature study, nature education or restoration anywhere in India. A citation and cash award of Rs.15,000/-

Nomination forms are available from: The Curator, BNHS, Hornbill House, Dr Salim Ali Chowk, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Road, Mumbai 400 023. Tel.: 2843869, 2843421; Fax: 283-7615.

Arunachal Pradesh

♦ Dr. Anwaruddin Choudhury trekked (in 1994) through the **Kamlang Sanctuary** which borders Namdapha Tiger Reserve in south-east Arunachal Pradesh near the Burmese border. He reported that *"tiger is not uncommon. In fact there is evidence that it is still hunted. I actually saw a tiger skin being sun-dried in the Tawam village near Wakro. Since the habitat is in excellent condition, man-eating and cattle-lifting are virtually unheard of in the area."* (Sanctuary Asia Vol.XVI.No.5 1996)

Assam

♦ Rhino State

The Government of Assam has declared Assam a **"Rhino State"**. The rhino is the indicator species of the flood plains and terai swamps which are also ideal habitat for the tiger. Such habitats are now extremely rare and are only to be found in Assam, protected in Kaziranga, Orang, Pobitora and Dibru-Saikhowa. It is thus the only state where rhino, wild buffalo and tiger are all found.

♦ A **Wildlife Trust** has been set up on the initiative of the Forest Minister, Nagen Sarma who himself donated one month's salary to it. Other wildlife officers of the state have also donated a portion of their pay. The trust money is exclusively for wildlife, mainly for the welfare of field staff and other wildlife related concerns. This shows an unusual interest and commitment from a Forest Minister and must be a unique occurrence in the country.

♦ Commandos for Wildlife?

Army commandos on a routine patrol inside World Heritage Site, **Manas National Park** are reported to have recovered 400kg of bones from carcasses of a number of en-

dangered animals shot by armed poacher gangs. They also came across a large tusker poisoned by poachers. Lt. General R.K. Sawhney, officer in charge of the counter insurgency operations in the State said that the poachers revealed that they were backed by militant groups in the area to kill the game both for meat and for money gained through trade of rare animal parts. Gen. Sawhney offered to station troops at the park permanently if the State Government agrees. He also volunteered the army to repair the unserviceable boats in the wildlife sanctuaries if the government provided the necessary spare parts.

Strangely and disturbingly, Manas wildlife authorities have no information regarding this seizure. Also it seems that the army offer of assistance was given at a press conference and has apparently not been given officially to the Assam Forest Department who were unaware of it.

(Sources: *The Asian Age* 3/10/96 and *The Sentinel*, Assam 31/10/96)

♦ Nature's Beckon News

Nature's Beckon, an NGO based in Assam and a TigerLink participant, has brought out a newsheet giving information of the work they are doing. It details the education and awareness programmes they have initiated and other environmental activities they have taken up. The organisation has been making concrete efforts to enlist the people's participation at a village level and has encouraged restoration and conservation through unique plans and projects. They have been particularly active in the **Chakra Shilla Wildlife Sanctuary** set up after agitation initiated by Nature's Beckon. This sanctuary is habitat for the golden langur as well as tigers and other fauna. The newsheet they have brought out presents an interesting round up of their activist ventures.

Edited by J.M. Dutta and published by Nature's Beckon, "Datta Bari", Ward No.1, Dhubri - 783301 (Fax: 03662-20076).

Bihar

♦ **Valmiki Tiger Reserve** is reeling under overwhelming problems threatening to destroy its very fabric. It is particularly important due to its position on the Nepal border contiguous to the Royal Chitawan National Park there. Together they represent one of the few areas in the sub-continent large enough to maintain a long term viable population of tiger. (see International section: Nepal). A few of the most immediate and major problems are:

52 offenses committed against forest staff by the criminals which have been reported to Police.

61 gangs of criminals are operating inside the reserve.

The Bagda (Bihar) - Chitauri (U.P.) Link Railway which has led to:

- 5500 acres (16km²) of land permanently submerged—more than 1 lakh large size trees have totally dried.
- Natural drainage through Kotraha and Rohua streams blocked.
- Part of the Madanpur range has become completely isolated resulting in blockade of natural corridor of movement of wild animals. They are trapped and killed by villagers as they are moving towards cultivation.
- Semi-permanent inundation in places is changing the ecosystem from miscellaneous forest to cane brakes.
- Uncontrollable soil erosion.

Bihar, U.P., GOI, MoEF and the Railway Board need an on the spot meeting to sort out the problems. Possible solutions include spurs and embankment to be built on the Bihar side, the natural drainage should be

restores and corridors for wild animals created so that they can move across the tracks. Compensation should be paid by the Railways for the destruction of the Madanpur range.

◆ **Nepal/Bihar Border Problem**

The boundary between Bihar and Nepal extends up to Triveni in the North Bhiknatori in the east to Bhitauri and Dhumataur. In the middle of Madanpur comp. 23 is the trijunction bordering Bihar, U.P. and Nepal. Triveni to Bhiknatori - no problem of border and the pillars are intact except for pillar no 94885. Between pillar no. 63 to 72 on the Nepal side ex-soldiers are settled, causing heavy damage to the habitat and wildlife. They are all armed. Gandak is changing its course and a new island called Susta (after an old village which does not exist any more) has become a no mans land and the criminals are operating from that side, crossing over to Bihar (Valmiki) fully armed to cut trees, kill animals and return to Susta which is originally Indian soil. This can happen because of the change in the course of the Gandak and erosion on the Bihar side and for want of any international boundary. Nepal do not claim it officially but they do not allow Indians to possess the area. The criminals operating from the other side of the Gandak have all Nepali support.

The forest officials and staff are being made scapegoats because they have no police protection, no administrative support and no border posts to stop infiltration whereas in Nepal security camps are stationed at every kilometre distance throughout the border.

What happened to the Indo-Nepal Commission? The Government and Home Ministry need to urgently address the India/Nepal border dispute.

Karnataka

◆ **Wildlife First!**, a Karnataka based NGO, teamed up with **Global Tiger Patrol (GTP)** U.K., to **donate three new jeeps** and field gear kits to forest protection staff in **Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary**. This donation resulted from the active interest shown by Peter Lawton, Valmik Thapar and Geoffrey Ward who had visited the park in January 1996. The vehicles were handed over at an impressive ceremony on 13th October at Chikmagalur where Mr. K.M. Chinnappa, President of *Wildlife First!* handed over the keys to the Honourable Minister for Forests, Mr Gurupadappa Nagamarpalli, while pleading that they be used properly. In his thank you speech, the Minister assured that the vehicles would be used exclusively for protection work in Bhadra. Mr. B.R. Bhaşkar, Chief Wildlife Warden, Mr Sadashivaiah, PCCF and other senior officials of the State Forest Department were present. *Wildlife First!* was represented by its executive committee members, Praveen Bhargav, Krishna Prasad, H.N.A. Prasad, Sanath Kumar, D.V. Girish and its scientific advisor, Dr Ullas Karanth.

Kerala

◆ **Denotification**

It is understood that several hectares of Parambikulam were recently denotified by the Kerala State Assembly for an irrigation project. Will this ever stop?

Maharashtra

◆ **Sanctuary Problems**

TigerLink participant **Tapankumar Mukherjee**, R.F.O. Chaudampalli reports that **Chaprala Sanctuary** is a good area for tiger, blackbuck, sloth bear, chinkara, nilgai, giant squirrel and wild boar and chital. However it is suffering from severe biotic interference. Problems of grazing, tendu leaf collection and

summer fire have yet to be resolved. Recently tiger and leopard skins were seized in 3 different incidences and the teak smuggling activities have been reduced by sincere and continuous efforts on the part of the forest officials. Cattle kills by tiger are said to be common within the Sanctuary and compensation is regularly paid to the villagers included in the PA. However daily relations between the wildlife wing and these villagers is not good.

◆ **New Sanctuaries**

Bittu Sahgal, member of the Wildlife Advisory Board of Maharashtra, has added his weight to the request for two new wildlife sanctuaries to be notified in the Amravati District. **Malked Wildlife Sanctuary** is 70 km² and supports leopards, hyaena, chinkara, and over 200 bird species. The proposed **Mahendri Wildlife Sanctuary** is also approximate 70 km² and is mixed deciduous forest adjoining the Satpura range. Its importance lies in its position as the linking corridor between Melghat in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and is important for the tiger in this area. Kishor Rithe of the **Nature Conservation Society, Amravati**, has done considerable work in these areas and has passed the results of his surveys to the Forest Department of the state.

◆ **Renotification?**

In the light of the issue of renotification of **Melghat Tiger Reserve** coming up at a meeting of the Wildlife Advisory Board, Maharashtra, member, Bittu Sahgal has requested a meeting in the State Ministry of Forests with various concerned persons to fully discuss the issue '*in a holistic fashion so that both tigers and tribal people are equally secure in the future*'. He points out that this meeting is particularly significant in the light of the tragic malnutrition deaths which have taken place in Dharni and sur-

rounding areas. He believes that some of the best options to permanently solve the problem has not been examined as the issue is poorly understood. *'Instead of securing the food security of the adivasi population, demands are being made for development works which will harm both the forest and the interests of the adivasis.'* *'...instead of looking to road building we should be undertaking soil and moisture conservation works...'*

◆ **Melghat Tiger Reserve** has begun a quarterly newsletter, '*Mel-Vyaghra*', with the objective of interacting with a wider cross-section of people as they have always believed that nature conservation is a people's programme. The inaugural issue of October 1996 is packed with information on the area, its background history, human communities, wild fauna, medicinal plants and other flora and reserve activities. It also includes a page of humour and is illustrated with drawings and amusing cartoons. Published by the CF and Field Director, Project Tiger Melghat, Amravati 444 6027

◆ **Rejected**

Kishor Rithe of the **Nature Conservation Society**, Amravati reports that the 1,500 hectares of land in **Melghat Tiger Reserve** is not, as earlier thought, going into the **Chikhaldara pump storage** project but the project remains on the boundary of the reserve and massive destruction is expected to take place in this area. The project has not been cleared by the MoEF.

Madhya Pradesh

◆ **Tiger State**

At a meeting of the Tiger State Committee held in Bhopal in July 1996, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Digvijay Singh directed

the police and forest officials to take strong action against those indulging or abetting poaching. He also said that immediate compensation must be given to villagers who have lost cattle to tigers and other predators as he believed that this was essential for changing the mindset of people in regard to wildlife. He remarked on the importance of improving socio-economic conditions of tribal people living in forest areas and sought people's participation in the protection of wildlife. At this meeting the Chief Minister announced an award scheme for those doing outstanding work for wildlife protection. (see Awards page)

(*National Mail*, Bhopal. 11 July 1996)

◆ **Vanishing Sanctuaries**

It would appear that even our Sanctuaries and National Parks are not safe from the pressures of 'development'. Not only are India's forests disappearing under mining, dam and other 'development' projects, but also areas specifically designated for the protection of wildlife are going the same way, sometimes with the concurrence and approval of the Chief Wildlife Wardens supposedly responsible for their well-being. The Amadehi Tank Project in Madhya Pradesh which will submerge part of the **Pachmarhi Sanctuary** was approved by the GOI after advice from the CWW that the flooding would *"improve the quality of the habitat for the animals"*! Indeed one can argue that such action goes against the Wildlife (Protection) Act as land may not be released from a PA without clearance from the legislative assembly.

◆ **The Missing Sanctuary**

Adjacent to **Panna Tiger Reserve**, nearly 100 km² of forest area of vital tiger habitat was notified 13 years ago as **Gangau/Panna Sanctuary**. (No one is sure what the correct name should be). Yet this has re-

mained unlisted in Central and State Government records! There are more than **40 violations** in this area and its immediate vicinity including 5 serious cases of white sandstone mining. It is believed that after a complaint was made on this issue by the MoEF, the State Government has woken up and appointed a Sanctuary Superintendent and essential staff for the first time. How many other missing PAs are there around the country?

◆ **Forest violations**

After several representations to the MoEF concerning irregular quarrying and encroachments in the forest areas of **Panna** district, a site inspection was carried out and the report sent to the State Government for comment and actions to stop the violations. A year later the M.P. Government has informed the MoEF that the Mineral Resource Dept. has been *"requested"* to close all such mines that were accorded approval without prior permission under the F.C. Act. The D.C. Panna, jointly with the DFO, has been asked to examine all cases pertaining to grant of permission for mining as well as for the felling of trees and the Divisional Commissioner, Sagar, under whose jurisdiction Panna district comes, has been directed to constitute a team to conduct detailed field inspections to identify F.C. Act violations.

◆ **Forest Department denies its own census figures**

MP's state government **Environmental Planning and Coordination Organisation (EPCO)** recently brought out the third **environment status report** in which they point out that the population of tigers which had been increasing, has decreased now owing to *"poaching and territorial fighting among tigers"*. The figures quoted are those of the official government census

which show a state decline from 985 in 1989 to 912 in 1993. However Mr P.K. Mishra, the Addl. PCCF (Wildlife) rejects this and apparently claims that the tiger population is increasing, citing the example of Kanha where last counting was one more than the 1993 census, 96 to 97. (The official figure for Kanha in the 1993 census was 100). Regarding EPCO's numbers (i.e. the state's figure forwarded to MoEF) The PCCF said, "This is a wrong figure. It is only guess work and government census which show a no study has been conducted."! He also stated that 89% of tigers are outside the national parks. The 1993 census figure from the state revealed 71% outside National Parks, 50% outside PAs (N.P. and sanctuaries). The PCCF, Mr. D.P. Singh revealed that he had not supplied any figures about poaching of tigers to the government for the status report. Why is there such disagreement and lack of cooperation between these departments? So much so that the Forest Department denies its own figures culled from a census the department itself conducted?

(Source: *The Times of India*. 8/11/96)

♦ **Forest destruction**

The Forest Survey of India's publication on the state of the country's forests, based on satellite data, reveals an overall decrease of 232 km² of forest cover in 1995 for M.P. A total of 264 km² of forest cover has been lost in the Seoni Bilaspur, Sagar, Sarguja, Bastar, Shivpuri, West Nimar, East Nimar, Chhatarpur, Chhindwara, Damoh, Dewas, Indore, Bhopal, Panna and Raisen Districts. 36 km² increase is shown in 5 other Districts.

(Source: *The State of Forest Report 1995*, Forest Survey of India, MoEF)

♦ **Missing jeeps**

Under the massive World Bank project in Madhya Pradesh **5 jeeps**

were presented for the zonal areas around **Project Tiger Reserves**. It is shocking to hear that although delivery of these vehicles was taken by the Forest Department a year ago, they have still to reach the field. Do the 'tigers' in Bhopal need them more desperately? Perhaps all those interested should ask the PCCF about this.

♦ **PAs for Paper Mills?**

Orient Paper Mills situated in the **Shahdol** District have requested the Forest Secretary to allow "exploitation of bamboo resources located within notified wildlife sanctuaries in districts of **Bilaspur, Sidhi, Sarguja, Mandla and Balaghat**". They apparently have an operating agreement with the M.P. Govt., dated 14.11.1986, to provide one lakh units of bamboo every year for 12 years. They complain that actual supplies are well below this amount and that therefore there should be a review of the policy of non-exploitation of bamboo in PAs. In a letter to the Forest Secretary, they argue that bamboo forest is being worked in some sanctuaries in Andhra Pradesh "without any adverse effects on wildlife habitat", that not exploiting bamboo renders it "unproductive" and that the government is thus losing a valuable source of revenue. Such are the pressures our PAs and wildlife authorities are under!

♦ **Police to give way to tigers**

The former prince of Rewa state, Mr Pushpraj Singh, who is currently a Minister of State in M.P. and who chairs the State Tiger Committee has a plan to introduce **white tigers** in a captive enclosure of the **Govindgarh Palace**. Rs.10 lakh is said to have been earmarked and Rs.10 lakh more is being collected to fund the plan to bring white zoo tigers to roam the palace and its grounds. The Govindgarh police training centre, which is currently

housed in the palace grounds, is being vacated in order for the white tigers to be placed there! Contrary to popular belief white tigers are **not** a separate species but generally a melanistic form of the royal Bengal tiger.

♦ **Corridor Survey**

The Jungles, an NGO based in Calcutta made a **corridor survey** between **Achanakmar Sanctuary** and **Kanha National Park** through a little known route. A report is available. They had 8 tiger sightings besides 32 gaurs, 17 wild dogs, python, blackbuck and other life forms.

♦ **Lions for tigers**

Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh, Wildlife Institute of India

Efforts are afoot to establish a second home for the Asiatic lion in **Palpur-Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary**, M.P. A 20 year project has been started with a financial outlay of Rs.64 crores. A 1,000km² National Park out of a 3,300km² forest tract is to be created. Around 7,000 people, largely Saharia tribals will be relocated and they have indicated their keenness to do so as presently they are 30-40kms away from basic facilities. Besides the Forest Department package is attractive with each family (a male above 18 years is considered one family unit) will be given 2 hectares of cultivable land near the Kunwari river, 500km² of housing plot and Rs.1 lakh in the form of assistance like transport and building materials.

In the process of creating this N.P. about 250km² of excellent valley habitats will be freed of disturbance which can lead to abundance of sambar and wild pig which can enable the tiger population to rapidly build up. I believe that the N.P. can easily support 20-40 tigers. The present estimate for the entire forest tract is eight.

Available literature suggests that tigers and lions have co-existed in

the same tract in the past. Therefore, with appropriate management input, it is possible to enable both the predators to live here. Fencing on the south western, southern and eastern side of the proposed park where the terrain is undulating, will be necessary to prevent lions from straying into villages which have large numbers of cattle. Fencing in other directions may not be either necessary or feasible because of the vast hilly forested tract. Poaching seems to be a problem in this area as very few ungulates were seen during my visit in October 1996. If the villagers are doing it, poaching may reduce when they are relocated. Nevertheless this management problem needs immediate attention.

Meghalaya

♦ **Balpakaram National Park, Anpratoli Reserve Forest and Nokrek National Park** continue to be threatened by the proposed ACC cement plant and limestone mining in the corridor between them. However, timely intervention by 15 eminent wildlife scientists and conservationists may have helped prevent the area's fate from being prematurely sealed. The fifteen, meeting at the Wildlife Institute of India's annual research seminar, sent an appeal to the Ministry of Environment and Forests emphasising the importance of the area for many endangered species, including the tiger but especially the elephant, and pointing out the dangers of allowing ACC to go ahead with their plans. They appealed to the Government to immediately take steps to acquire the corridor and declare it a protected area and pointed out that the proposed mine and factory could be located elsewhere in the State where damage to the environment is minimal. Their appeal arrived just as a decision was being taken on the issue and may have prevented clear-

ance being granted. The Ministry is now planning to send a small committee to assess the area. Amongst those who signed the appeal were Dr. R. Sukumar, deputy chair of the IUCN Asian Elephant Group, from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh, head of wildlife biology, Wildlife Institute of India, Dr. Asad Rahmani, Chairman of the Centre for Wildlife & Ornithology, Aligarh Muslim University, Dr. J.R.B. Alfred, acting Director of the Zoological Survey of India, Shri S.K. Mukherjee, acting Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dr. J.C. Daniel, executive committee member of the Mumbai Natural History Society, Shri S. Deb Roy, former Additional Inspector General of Forests (Wildlife), Dr Ajith Kumar, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Prof. K.C. Malhotra, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta and Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh, former Secretary to the Government of India.

Orissa

♦ In November, the **Rengali Irrigation Project** of the Government of Orissa agreed to compensate the sum of Rs.25 crores over the next ten years for the field protection of elephants, tigers and wildlife in general in a 25km radius of impact from their left and right bank canals which stretch over hundreds of kilometres. This will effect **Satakoshia and Halgarh Sanctuaries** and also the Anantpur and Kapilas forest divisions where new sanctuaries are to be created. It is hoped that the Chief Wildlife Warden of Orissa will have a fresh opportunity to preserve this entire belt.

♦ **Black Tigers**

Forest Department staff have again sighted 'melanistic' tigers in **Simlipal National Park**. A full-grown tiger with a black coat and yellow stripes was seen by forest

officials on 3rd April 1996. About a week later a forest guard saw one again in the same area. Later that month anti-poaching squad members saw a black tigress with three normal coloured cubs. Two days later three black cubs were spotted. Earlier sightings had occurred in 1975/76, 1991 and 1993. On the earlier occasion two full-grown black tigers were seen by the Asst. Field Director, Range Officer and two tourists. In 1991 a forest guard reported seeing one black tiger cub in a litter of two accompanying two adults. In 1993 a tribal villager from Podagad in the western periphery of the park found a full grown black and tawny striped tigress near his cowshed. It is reported that the tigress charged and injured him and was subsequently killed by bow and arrow by his son.

(Source: *The Pioneer* 6/9/96)

Rajasthan

♦ **Health for the Tiger?**

Dr G.S. Rathore, Field Director, **Ranthambhore Foundation** reports, "That the tiger and its habitat is fast depleting is a major cause of concern for the Ranthambhore Foundation. The Foundation since its inception tried to find ways in which local people could be involved in the tiger's conservation as this, we feel, is the only way in which the tiger's survival can be ensured, if at all.

One of the ways in which Ranthambhore Foundation has been trying to involve local people in conservation related activities around the Ranthambhore National Park has been by taking care of some of their day to day needs like primary health care. The Foundation has been financing and implementing a Mobile Primary Health Care programme around the park since 1989. This program mainly provides immunization, ante-natal and post natal care, treatment of minor ailments and family planning services.

However an effort is also put to organise special health camps in the area providing much necessary specialist care in the field of gynaecology, eye care etc.

In all these activities there is always the message of saving the tiger and the environment that is passed on to the people. This includes a drawing of a tiger, a happy family under a banyan tree with a bright red sun in the backdrop on the sides of the mobile van.

Recently the Foundation supported a local NGO, **Prakratik Society** to organise a camp with the **Lifeline Express**, the first hospital on wheels in the world, from 20th August to 20th September 1996. This train, launched by Impact India Foundation, has a well equipped operation theatre to perform cataract, orthopedic and ear surgeries. The camp was also supported by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Edgeworth India Trust and local people and organizations of Ranthambhore. The main message that was conveyed through the camp was "*Bagh bachao, jungle bachao, Bharat bachao*". The doctors came from S.M.S. Medical College for Ear and Orthopaedic surgery and from Venu Eye Institute, New Delhi.

More than 2000 people with cataract, polio and deafness were screened." Of these over 42% were able to be significantly helped. Polio sufferers were given corrective surgery or received calipers, cataracts were operated, ear surgery done and hearing aids given. All this was done free of cost.

♦ **Village Action**

Two villages in the Alwar district on the periphery of the **Sariska Tiger Reserve** have devised their own laws and means to conserve forests and forest produce, successfully reversing the severe denudation and degradation in their part of the Aravali hills. The villagers of Bhavta and Suratgarh have formed a *gram*

sabha which meets regularly to discuss how to stop degradation of the forests and what each person can contribute towards their preservation. They have proclaimed their own set of laws and punishments. No one can cut green wood without permission of the *gram sabha* and no villager is permitted to carry an axe while grazing their goats. There is also a bar on increasing the number of domestic animals. Punishments range from soft fines to social ostracisation and these have been enough to deter further plundering of the Aravalis. Besides, the results of their actions are so beneficial that there is much to encourage observance.

Mooli Devi of Bhavta reports, "*since the formation of the gram sabha and construction of a johad (catch dam) the irrigated land has increased from 4 hectares to 23 hectares. Even the crop yield has multiplied four times. We have planted peepal and banyan trees around the johad. Grass, fuelwood and fodder are now available in plenty. There is a good yield of ghee and milk. Our village also has a gram kosh, to which each family contributes one day's labour in a month, besides money and grain*".

Gayatri Bai of Suratgarh, a village with a population of 1,250 whose main diet used to be chilli chutney and chappati, says, "*now in every house green vegetables are cooked. Our menfolk who had left the village and gone to nearby cities and mines in search of labour have returned to follow the ancestral profession of farming. Children can now go to school and are not compelled to take the children out for grazing. The ground water has risen.*"

(Source: Neena Bhandari, *Hindustan Times* 31/10/96)

♦ **Sariska Mining**

Mining has restarted in 10 pockets in the buffer area of **Sariska Tiger**

Reserve. This follows a recent judgement concerning a revenue sharing case in a Rajasthan court which apparently is being interpreted as permitting mining operations in these reserve forests. The **Tarun Bharat Sangh** are taking up this issue and will be pursuing legal action.

♦ **Open House on Tiger Safety**
WWF-India Rajasthan State Committee organised a meet in July 1996 to try to "*establish a core group of dedicated persons to assist the Government & NGOs in saving the tiger, its associated species and its habitat which are under increasing threat from people themselves.*" We await the results.

Tamil Nadu

♦ **Relocated Tiger**

A tiger that had been killing calves and had mauled several people was effectively tranquillized around Topslip and relocated to dense forest. This is the first time such an operation has been tried in Tamil Nadu.

(pers.comm. PCCF Tamil Nadu)

♦ **"Is poaching a big problem in Kalakad?"**

Asks Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh after walking 40 km in the Kalakad hills, the southern portion of the **Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve** and not seeing a single sambar in spite of traversing some excellent sambar habitats. A large king cobra, one leopard track, six sloth bears and one wild boar was all that was seen. Some of the local poachers have farms on the forest boundary and in the past they were notorious for flushing and hunting sambar - he wonders whether this could be happening even after it has become a tiger reserve? Dr. Johnsingh urges the Forest Department to look into this as empty habitats will not help tiger conservation!

Uttar Pradesh

♦ **Tiger Losses**

In reply to a Lok Sabha question the Environment Minister, Capt. Jai Narain Prasad Nishad reported that according to State Government census figures the estimated population of **tigers** in U.P. had **declined from 735 in 1989 to 465 in 1993** (a drop of over 36%). He said that the main cause for the decline is the recent increase in poaching to meet the demand of illegal international trade in tiger bones and other tiger parts. Shrinkage of habitat due to biotic pressure has also substantially contributed to the loss.

(Source: *National Mail*, 11 July 1996)

♦ **Save the Tiger Youth Association (SATYA)**

reports that observations of local people around the terai forests of U.P. (Dehradun, Kalagarh, Ramnagar, Haldwani, Pilibhit, South & North Keri, Bahraich, Gonda & Gorakhpur forest divisions) indicate a decline in the tiger population (outside PAs) from "ten to one between late eighties and now. The fact remains that population of herbivores was at least ten times more between late seventies and early 1980s than today". "The existence of tigers in the above mentioned Terai forest of U.P. has become negligible now. Besides ecological imbalance and mounting pressure of biotic influence on these tiger lands, unrestricted poaching of herbivores and tigers due to relaxed attitude of forest officials in these non-protected forest areas, has definitely been responsible for landslide in wildlife population."

SATYA is organising an "oath-taking ceremony" to protect wildlife, at **Palia** involving 500 Tharus and 500 farmers residing in and around **Dudhwa National Park**. SATYA is requesting the Governor of U.P. to preside and hope it will take place in mid December 1996.

SATYA has also published a **booklet** listing their members and giving other information concerning their work and beliefs. They suggest that "all the NGOs should join hands and start a mass movement to mobilize people's votes in favour of the said cause." The lack of priority given to environment and wildlife preservation by the political parties is because they "are not yet convinced that voters are really concerned about careless attitude of the governmental agencies regarding preservation of forest and fauna." The booklet continues: "TigerLink has already started developing a joint front, involving all organisations and individuals in favour of wildlife preservation, especially the tiger. In a country like India where villagers of the forest areas speak and understand only local languages, communication media of T-L does not percolate down to the masses. It is suggested that different agencies (NGOs) should take up particular areas and make it a massive movement with the local people. SATYA offers its services in Lakhimpur-Kheri (DNP area), Pilibhit, Bahraich and Nainital districts of U.P., for the time being. If all the NGOs join hands and motivate people against poachers and traders of wildlife, we hope that poaching and wildlife trade can be brought to an end.....We approached hundreds of farmers and other villages living around the forests...., most of them expressed hatred for such activities....If we are able channelize their feelings, a mass movement can crop up from the society itself and commercial killing of wildlife can be stopped."

SATYA, c/o Chairman, Kabir Ahmad, S.D.O. Forests, Pilibhit, Dist. Pilibhit, U.P.

♦ **Diamond Jubilee**

Corbett National Park was established on 8th August 1935 and is

celebrating its sixtieth anniversary. Celebrations will begin from 15th November when the reserve formally opens for visitors with the inauguration of the new visitor centre proposed to be established at Dhangarhi and a competitive photographic exhibition. Meritorious members of staff who have dedicated their lives to the preservation of CNP will be honoured on the occasion.

A bird-watching camp on raptors is being organized from 11th to 15th December and a number of activities are proposed to be held in educational institutions for school children including essay, painting, quiz and debating competitions, audio visual shows and distribution of interpretative literature.

The foundation stone for a Wildlife Training School for wildlife guards will be laid at Kalagarh.

Other proposals under consideration are upgradation of **Sonanadi Sanctuary** to national park, creation of new posts for a park ecologist and veterinary doctor.

Several mementos, t-shirts, cards calendars etc. are being brought out to mark the occasion and all vehicle entering the park will get a complimentary logo sticker. Celebrations will continue until 7th January 1997. (Source: *Corbett* Vol.2 Nos 1 & 2 Spring/Summer 1996)

♦ **Tourists v. Tigers?**

Concern is being expressed at the potential dangers of unregulated tourism in and around the **Corbett Tiger Reserve** especially as a result of the purchase of village land in Tehriya village by a tour company of New Delhi. The village is a small enclave of revenue land inside Corbett National Park inhabited by local hill people and to date its biotic impact on the park has been low. The villagers had apparently almost agreed to voluntary resettlement but it seems they now see commercial potential and have refused to move out.

It is contended that development of tourism or any other commercial activity at Tehriya would be a violation of the Environment (Protection) Act and rules framed thereunder. In Civil Writ No.4918/93 and CM No.326/96, the MoEF has given an affidavit to the High Court of Delhi that they will critically examine any new industrial development within 25kms of a National Park. Hotels are defined as industries.

WPSI have suggested a number of steps for ensuring that tourism does not become detrimental to the bio-diversity of the Tiger Reserve. These include acquisition for the park of the Tehriya village land, with Project Tiger funds, restricting tourists entering Sonandi Sanctuary from also entering Corbett N.P and not opening access to Dhikala or Gairal from Kanda. The Wildlife Institute of India is in the process of conducting a **study on the tourism capacity** of the park.

♦ *Operation Eye of the Tiger*

Mr. A.S. Negi, Conservator Forests and former Director, Corbett Tiger Reserve, Dr. A.J.T Johnsingh of the W.I.I. and Dr. R. Sukumar are registering a trust called **Operation Eye of the Tiger - India** which will focus on "*boosting the morale of the staff and eliciting the support of the villagers*" in prime tiger habitats. Their objectives are also "*to help create disturbance free tiger habitats, to help carry out eco-development and conservation education and to promote research on tiger, its habitat and allied species.*"

The foundation, Operation Eye of the Tiger, USA was established by Michael P. Keegan and Joseph H. Keegan. (Mr Joseph H. Keegan is also CEO of **Outdoor India/Outdoor India Tours Pvt.Ltd.**, New Delhi, and President **Kentucky Fried Chicken, USA.**) Their major role of the U.S. foundation will be to raise funds.

Work has already been started in **Corbett Tiger Reserve** through free medical camps, distribution of bee colonies and cattle improvement programmes. The Forest Department is being helped by providing relief for field staff killed on duty, in establishing a network for apprehending poachers and providing jackets and wrist watches to field staff. Now a Gypsy is available for field work and Shri N.S. Negi, who worked in the Reserve as a senior Ranger for 20 years, is spear-heading the work there.

♦ *Corbett Tiger Survey*

In June 1996, in response to a number of tiger deaths in the area, WPSI's wildlife biologist commenced a field survey to formulate strategies for the long term survival of tigers in forests around Corbett Tiger Reserve. The project is being conducted in collaboration with the U.P. Forest Department and is funded jointly by WPSI and the Corbett Foundation. Little is known about the effects on tiger populations from the spurt in wildlife crimes and increased pressure on forests in areas adjoining protected areas such as Corbett. A final report will be prepared on the completion of the project in December 1996.

♦ *Tigers and Banks!*

The **U.P. Forestry Project** is going to be launched from 1st April 1997 and will be carried out with the assistance of the World Bank. The total outlay of the project is around US\$65 million of which almost 15% (\$9.75 million) has been allocated for biodiversity conservation. The aim of the project is the development of the forestry sector in U.P. with the objectives of increasing forest cover, raising productivity and ensuring their sustainable use and management through involvement of communities and private sector.

The four components of the project are: Institutional development; Forest development including

JFM, farm forestry, urban forestry and fire protection; Research and technology and Biodiversity conservation "*including strategic planning, management and consolidation of PA system, ecocodevelopment and research training and public awareness*". The **Corbett Foundation** has been selected as one of the NGOs for implementation of the biodiversity component.

Kurt Jenson, a Swedish anthropologist and Malcolm Janson, a Sri Lankan environmental specialist visited Corbett in January 1996 as members of the WB preappraisal mission. The mission is likely to visit in December to give final shape to the project.

(Source: *Corbett* Vol.2 Nos 1 & 2 Spring/Summer 1996).

♦ *Rajaji initiatives*

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has initiated a project on *Building Partnerships for Biodiversity Conservation in Rajaji National Park* which, among other objectives, will provide training to develop conflict resolution skills to the various stakeholders in the park. Meetings are being held in villages in the adjacent area and with lower level Forest Department staff.

WII is also assisting in the implementation of the UP Chief Wildlife Warden's directive of May 1995, one of the provisions of which enable the Field Director to allow controlled extraction of bhabbar grass from the park by local communities. The **Ghad Kshetra Mazdoor Sangharsh Samiti**, working with the baan workers has undertaken to facilitate the process in collaboration with the FD in some villages. Meetings have been held in recent weeks with representatives of the FD, WII, NGOs and other interested organisations to work out a mutually agreeable system of benefit sharing and forest protection procedures. The system should come into operation this bhabbar grass-cutting season (November '96 onwards).

West Bengal

♦ **Cutting Canal**

It is understood that the Government of West Bengal has not been taken into confidence regarding the 'Sankosh Multi-purpose Project'. This seems extraordinary considering that the project involves a 142km long, 26m. wide, 6m. deep canal traversing the northern part of the state, from the Sankosh river on the eastern border to the Teesta river in the west, effectively cutting the region into two halves, north and south. The effect on wildlife will be drastic. Surveys have shown that the proposed canal alignment cuts through natural elephant migration routes at many places. West Bengal already has the highest number of casualties due to elephant-man conflict and this seems designed to further exacerbate the problems. Apart from utilising 509 hectares of tea garden and 663 hectares of reserve forest, the proposed canal route also goes through many Protected Areas, including the core area of **Buxa Tiger Reserve, Jaldapara Sanctuary and Gurrmara Sanctuary** the latter two both important also for providing habitat for the highly endangered one horned rhinoceros. Buxa alone contains around 1% of India's tiger population.

The purpose of the canal is said to be for irrigation in Bihar and West Bengal. The canal crosses many rivers and streams en route and besides the area is not short of rainfall; this makes such a claim suspect. Thus some observers feel that the true objective is to extend the canal further in order to add the Sankosh waters to the Ganga before Farakka. This, however, is denied by the Ministry of Water Resources. But why has the State Government not been consulted on this plan, potentially devastating to the State's wildlife?

♦ **The Institute of Climbers & Nature Lovers (ICNL)** reports a different view of the dolomite mining threat to **Buxa Tiger Reserve** (reported in TigerLink News vol.2, no.1). The secretary of the Calcutta-based NGO, in a letter to the Field Director, writes: "*it appears...your main thrust is to stop the dolomite mining though it does, in my opinion, affect the eco-balance of the area in a meagre scale.... Moreover, it is the only source of sustenance for a large number of poor people of the area which should be taken into account.*" He has other criticism of the situation: "*cattle grazing is going on unabated*"; "*so far as wildlife sighting is concerned - it is better not said*"; "*EPCs and EDCs have no real existence in most of the ranges*"; "*law and order situation in the reserve is worst possible and can be compared to the adjoining Bodo-land. You have absolute no control so far as poaching is concerned*". However he is also concerned that the regulations designed to protect animals are denying 'sustenance' to the people living in the forest of Buxa and reports that the shifting of the villagers from Bhutia Bustee is not being done properly. Indeed he is so concerned for the people that he feels that Buxa should be excluded from the World Bank's IDA/GEF funding programme as the Field Director's '*activities do not conform to the Project strategies for the people in (the) park*'. The Field Director refutes most of the allegations. He also states that the '*BTR has nothing to do in allowing or in disallowing mining*'. The ICNL raises doubt as to whether the North Bengal Dolomite Ltd. has the appropriate and necessary clearance from the Forest Conservation committee of the Central Government.

♦ **Buxa Newsletter**

The **Buxa Tiger Reserve** Newsletter published by the Field Director is now over one year old. It reports on the different happenings and activities occurring inside and around the BTR. Vol.2 no.2 gives a round up for 1995/96 including health camps organised, drinking water supplied, training given, plantations raised, promotion of handloom industry, distribution of sewing machines, provision of skimming machines for making butter and ghee, cattle improvement activities, ponds dug for pisciculture, timber and firewood extracted for local consumption and opening of a Nature Interpretation Centre already visited by over 5,000 people. This is a quarterly publication brought out as part of a Nature & Eco-development awareness programme.

Enquiries should be addressed to the Field Director, BTR, P.O. Alipurduar Court, Jalpaiguri, 736 122.

♦ **Playing with Figures**

In a misleading report from UNI that appeared in *The Asian Age* of 3rd October under the banner "the GOOD NEWS", it was claimed that the **tiger population** of West Bengal had increased five times in the last 20 years to its present official number, 326! As the official figure for the state in 1972 was 73, this might appear true. However there is obviously some discrepancy as the census figure for 1979, only 6 years later, has leapt to the miraculous figure of 296! 1989 claims the high - 353 tigers. Since then the numbers, even according to the official count, have been **falling** - to 335 in 1993 and now this quoted 326. And they call this '*good news*'? (The same report claims 108 '*cheetahs*' for the state! Now, that **would** be good news!)

FIELD SUPPORT

Care for the Wild has continued its active support for tiger conservation in India. They have donated a boat to **Kaziranga National Park** to assist in anti poaching and other essential conservation work of the area and is providing vehicles to the **Panpatta Range of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, M.P.** and **Bansbari Range in Manas Tiger Reserve, Assam.**

The **Cat Specialist Group's** speed boat for anti-poaching on the Tawa Reservoir bordering the **Satpura National Park** and **Bori Sanctuary** has now been delivered and is in operation.

Global Tiger Patrol, through *Wildlife First!*, has given 3 vehicles to **Bhadra Sanctuary** in Karnataka for anti-poaching and conservation work in the protected area; a motorcycle to **Bandhavgarh**; 12 motorcycles and 1 truck to **Panna Tiger Reserve** and 150 jackets and 150 pairs of shoes to forest staff in **Rajaji National park.**

♦ *Action not Advertising*

A number of foreign NGOs have given their support to tiger conservation by providing infrastructural equipment for different tiger areas around the country. By December 1996 the **NGO sector** will have **provided over Rs.80 lakhs** in anti-poaching infrastructures to the wildlife administration of 11 national parks and sanctuaries - **Kaziranga** and **Manas** in Assam; **Bori, Pachmarhi, Satpura, Panna** and

Bandhavgarh in M.P., **Corbett** and **Rajaji** in U.P. and **Nagarahole** and **Bhadra** in Karnataka. (see box, left & previous T-L NEWS).

These NGOs have made their contributions after consultation with and on the advise of TigerLink participants working in the field (individuals, NGO representatives, forest/wildlife depts.)

Foreign funds are able to be channelled directly and speedily (through the equipment suppliers) to tiger conservation work, complimenting the efforts of people on the ground. This avoids the many problems and time constraints associated with monetary donations, arising from the regulations surrounding the entry of foreign funds into India. Thus it is not a choice, for example, between spare parts/repair costs of existing equipment and the new items, as certain criticsers have implied, but rather new equipment or nothing at all. The foreign NGOs, through TigerLink participants, also keep a monitor on the vehicles/boats to ensure they are used properly in the anti-poaching and other conservation work for which they were donated.

♦ **Tiger-Direct** has now begun fund raising in the UK and proceeds will be given to Global Tiger Patrol for passing on to tiger conservation activities.

Tiger-Direct, 37 Burnaby Court, Sheffield S6 2QY

♦ *Blue blood for the tiger!*

The upper crust of Britain's society held a musical evening partially in aid of Global Tiger Patrol. The 56 strong, "TigerStar" committee organised a concert, dinner, auction and dance at the Royal College of Music in London on 15th November 1996. Tickets cost £125 - approximately Rs.7,300.

Another international organisation actively working in India for the tiger (see last T-L NEWS)

The **Wildlife Conservation Society**, International Programs, 185th St. & Southern Blvd., Bronx, New York 10460, USA. Tel: 718-220-5155 Fax: 718-364-4275

India Program, 403 Seebo Apartments, 26/2 Aga Abbas Ali Road, Bangalore 560042, India

♦ *Red tape*

Tiger and Rhino Fund (USA) are insisting on Government endorsement letters from all NGO research institution applications for funds, further causing anguish to the already (financially) depleted NGO movement. Since when did NGOs have to get an approval stamp from the Government?

TigerLink is very sad to hear of the death of **Capt. N.S. Tyabji** and mourns the loss one of its most senior, and engaging, participants. Capt. Tyabji attended the inaugural TigerLink meeting in Delhi and he was an untiring and enthusiastic supporter from his home in Hyderabad. His life-long passion was for nature, and was presented the Green Mind award by Prince Philip on behalf of WWF in recognition of his dedicated conservation work. He was also a member of the State Wildlife Advisory Board. With his departure, the environment movement has lost an energetic fighter.

Appointments & Committees

- ♦ The **Inspector General of Forests**, Shri M.F. Ahmed who chaired the High Court of Delhi Committee on Wildlife Preservation, Protection and Laws (reported February 1996) reaches the end of his tenure on 30th November. At the time of going to press the appointment has yet to be made.
- ♦ Director, Project Tiger, Mr Arin Ghosh's tenure ended on 30 July 1996 and he handed over interim charge to the Director, Project Elephant, Mr Vinod Rishi. It took 67 days for the bureaucratic machinery of the Central Government to finally install **Mr P.K. Sen** as the new **Director of Project Tiger**. Shri Sen was Director of Palamau Tiger Reserve and Chief Wildlife Warden in Bihar and comes from long field experience only in the wildlife sector.
- ♦ The tenure of the **Steering Committee of Project Tiger** lapsed in July 1995. It was only reconstituted by the new government in October 1996 and has yet to meet. Do we have a tiger crisis? Non-officials of the new committee are S. Deb Roy, Brijendra Singh, Bittu Sahgal, Valmik Thapar, Dr. Ullas Karanth, Samar Singh and V.B. Saharia. Billy Arjan Singh, Ashok Kumar and Sati Puri are no longer members.
- ♦ The **Tiger Crisis Cell** remains as it was: S. Deb Roy, Brijendra Singh, Bittu Sahgal, Valmik Thapar, Ashok Kumar, Ullas Karanth and the Director, Project Tiger.
- ♦ The **Indian Board for Wildlife** was reconstituted in September 1996 on the instructions and approval of the new P.M. who chairs this board. After a long gap of 8½ years we anxiously await its first meeting.
- ♦ An important new '**Wildlife Advisory Cell**' has been created in the Ministry of Environment and Forests to advise it on various aspects of wildlife conservation and related matters. Members are: Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh, Brijendra Singh, Bittu Sahgal, Valmik Thapar, Ullas Karanth, Secretary, MoEF (Chairman), IGF & Spl. Secretary MoEF, the Addl. I.G.F. (WL) and the DIG (WL), MoEF (Member Secretary).
- ♦ **Shri P.K. Thosre**, the former Field Director of Melghat Tiger Reserve, has been appointed Conservator of Forests, **Nasik**. He requests all those in this area who are interested in the tiger and wildlife conservation to please contact him.
- ♦ **Dr. V.K. Melkani**, IFS has been appointed Field Director of **Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve**, Tamil Nadu. He replaces Promode Kant, IFS.
- ♦ **Shri Promode Kant**, after completing his full tenure at Kalakad-Mundanthurai, has become the **Conservator of Forests, Vellore Circle**. Shri Kant requests assistance from committed NGOs in his area who have experience of working with tribals and who could help create a rapport between the Forest Department and the tribals. This is especially necessary as unfortunately many of the tribal population in the Javadhi Hills work as labourers for the sandalwood smugglers. Shri Promode Kant will also be working to control the elephant poaching in his Circle. Any individual or NGO who can help should contact him at 5 Balaji St. (III Cross), Krishna Nagar, Vellore 632001. Tel: 20857.
- ♦ The **Wildlife Institute of India** will be appointing a **Director** in place of Shri H.S. Panwar who left formally in early 1995. **Shri S.K. Mukherjee** continues as acting Director while 'formalities' for the appointment are completed. The appointment procedures have raised the issue of WII's autonomy vis à vis the Ministry. MoEF created its own methods and eligibility criteria for selecting the director without reference to the WII which is a registered Society with its own rules and regulations for making such appointments. The acting director petitioned the Minister, regarding the matter and the W.I.I. made its stand as an autonomous body when members of the society and the AGM pointed out that under Society rules the Ministry did not have control of the decision and thus the steps they had taken in this regard were illegal. The AGM, held on 2nd November, set up a committee to report back within three months so that the procedure for selection could begin. How many years does it take to appoint a director?
- ♦ One of India's oldest wildlife NGOs, the **Bombay Natural History Society** will have a new Director. **Dr. Asad Rahmani**, presently chairman of the Centre of Wildlife & Ornithology at Aligarh Muslim University, has been selected to replace Dr. J Samant who resigned earlier in the year. Dr. Rahmani is no stranger to the BNHS having worked there under Dr Salim Ali for over 10 years. He is a 'field man' best known for his extensive work on the great Indian Bustard and the floricans.
- ♦ The **Zoological Survey of India** is also in the process of finding a new Director. **Dr. J.R.B. Alfred** is presently the Acting Director.

♦ *Crisis Meeting*

The **Tiger Crisis Cell** was set up as an advisory body by the Minister of Environment and Forests in 1994. The initial intention was that it should meet on a monthly basis or as often as necessary to deal with the crisis facing the tiger in India. The cell met for the first time under the new Minister on 31st October 1996. Present at the meeting with the Minister, MoEF, Capt. Jai Narain Prasad Nishad, and Director, Project Tiger (PT), Mr. P.K. Sen, were S. Deb Roy, Ashok Kumar, Brijendra Singh and Bittu Sahgal. The **Minister** said that the **Government** was **committed to protect the tigers** in the country. The **Director PT** acknowledged and **highlighted the existence of a serious tiger crisis** and undertook to draw up an immediate action plan in consultation with the crisis cell. The following suggestions were put forward for immediate implementation:-

i. Tiger Reserves affected by militancy should be taken up on a priority basis - i.e. Manas, Valmiki, Palamau, Indravati and Nagarjunasagar Srisailem. In these areas trained forces should be brought in under the control of the Field Director. In this regard it was also suggested that the MoEF should raise its own commando force units of which would be available to be sent for such purposes when required.

ii. The Subramanian committee report should be implemented by the Director, P.T. in close consultation with Crisis Cell members. Anti-poaching must be strengthened. It was suggested that intelligence gathering was not possible by the wildlife wing and that it should be collected by the I.B. of the Home Ministry in close cooperation with the wildlife authorities.

iii. Proper financial backing was required for all actions. The Finance Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office should be approached by the Minister for granting wildlife its proper priority.

iv. The Project Tiger Office should be strengthened and given more resources in view of the extra burden of work. Tiger Reserves have been increased from the original 9 to the present 23 with no increase in office infrastructure.

v. All development projects with Tiger Reserves should come to the MoEF for study by the Project Tiger Steering Committee. The MoEF should call for details of all development projects which may have an adverse effect on tiger and its habitat.

vi. Tiger areas even outside the PA system should be given attention and cared for appropriately.

vii. The Minister should make an appeal to the Prime Minister to go on national T.V. and broadcast an appeal to save India's national animal, the tiger.

New Tiger Reserves

The Ministry is considering the declaration of **three more Tiger Reserves** in April 1997 - **Bhadra Tiger Reserve** in Karnataka, **Satpura T.R.** in M.P. (Pachmarhi Sanctuary, Bori Sanctuary & Satpura National Park). and **Topslip T.R.** (Parambikulam and Indira Gandhi N.P.) in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

viii. An awareness campaign would be launched. Posters, pamphlets and small booklets would be prepared and circulated to all schools, panchayats and bodies throughout the country to reach the heart of the people for saving the tiger.

ix. Specially constituted teams of crisis cell members and P.T. staff should visit particularly problem ridden tiger reserves to offer suggestions and solutions.

x. Global Tiger Forum should be properly activated.

♦ *Chief Wildlife Wardens 'Meet'*

At a (thinly attended) meeting of Chief Wildlife Wardens held in New Delhi in June 1996 the following points were made by the Addl. IGF (WL):

1) that certain research projects were being undertaken "*with aid from external sources*" without proper permission from the concerned State or Central Government. CWWs were asked to ensure that unauthorised people "*are not allowed to carry out research and studies on wildlife of India, specially in protected areas*";

2) regarding notification of PAs, CWWs were asked to provide up to date information on the number of people inside their PAs and to make a concerted effort to acquire and settle the rights of such people;

3) it was noted that the annual withdrawal from the forests of India is Rs.40,000 crores whereas the investment on the other side is meagre (1% - 3% of the State Plan). CWWs were asked to provide up to date estimates regarding total withdrawals from the PAs of the states in terms of fuelwood, fodder, timber, poles and NWFP;

4) concern was expressed over the large number of vacancies in the wildlife wings of different states and said that special incentives should be provided to attract staff to these posts. It was reported that 450 vacancies exist in the wildlife wing of Karnataka alone, ranging from forest guards to foresters;

5) concern was expressed over the increase in elephant poaching (7 cases registered from Bandipur alone last year) and CWWs were urged to work out a

strict schedule of night patrolling and to draw up biotic interference map for their parks to show the extent of stress due to various biotic factors. Field staff should also be involved in studying the behaviour pattern of the animals and maintain monitoring registers at every watch point. The great courage and commitment of the field staff of Kaziranga in Assam was held up as an example worthy of emulation;

6) concern was expressed at the limited progress in the states towards implementing the Subramaniam Committee Report. Special effort should be made in this regard and detailed reports on implementation submitted as decided at the meeting of PCCFs;

7) it was noted that not many nominations had come from the states for the Salim Ali and Kailash Sankhala fellowships and CWWs were asked to explore the possibility of nominations from their forest and wildlife staff;

8) CWWs were asked to have local checks so that endangered plant species which are listed in public notification 47 of March 1994 of Export-Import Policy are not doomed to extinction by overexploitation locally;

9) it was noted that Punjab and Haryana top the list as far as detection of wildlife offences is concerned though they have very limited wildlife. In many states the figures reported were dismal. Concern was expressed over the very limited conviction of prosecution offence reports submitted to courts due to lack of proper legal set up in the states and thus the need for legal cells in the CWW offices were emphasised. CWW, West Bengal was asked to contact the 'green bench' that has recently been set up in Calcutta to look into environmental cases to explore the possibility of the bench also covering wildlife cases.

♦ *Field Directors/CWW Meet*

The **Annual Meeting of Project Tiger Field Directors and Chief Wildlife Wardens** will take place at Corbett National Park on 21st-22nd December 1996 to discuss the Tiger and its problems.

♦ *The Race for "Development"*

At the 23rd September 1996 meeting of the **Forest Conservation Act Committee**, two of the proposals up for consideration involved mining and dam projects partially **within Tiger Reserves**. Those to be effected were **Palamau** in Bihar and **Srisaïlam** in Andhra Pradesh. The Horilong U/G mining project required 794.19 hectares, inside and adjacent to the Palamau Tiger Reserve. 81 hectares (out of a total of 113 ha) inside Nagarjunasagar-Srisaïlam Tiger Reserve are required for the construction of the Tail Pond dam downstream of the Nagarjunasagar dam.

Other protected areas were also under threat - **Mahdavi National Park** in M.P. by mining within it (see legal page), **Sitanadi Sanctuary** threatened by the Sondur Irrigation project involving 529 hectares of land inside the sanctuary as was discovered by a site inspection by MoEF's regional office (the State Government appears to have misled the MoEF by reporting the land to be **outside** any PA) and the **Balaram Ambaji Sanctuary** in Gujarat affected by a mining project on 1152 ha. land adjacent to it. All this, in spite of their supposed protection under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and the recent affidavit filed in the Court by the Addl. I.G. Forests (Wildlife) on behalf of the MoEF requesting treatment of PAs and a surrounding 5 km area as '*no development zones*'. Other mining and dam projects up for consideration affected Reserve Forests of vital tiger habitat and included rich areas of teak and rosewood.

What shocks is that these proposals invariably come recommended by the very officials who are supposedly the custodians of our wildlife - "DFO, PCCF & State Govt." sometimes also with additional supporting comments. The DCF(C) gives his opinion on the Srisaïlam proposal that "*the submerged area will provide additional marshy/wetland for crocodile which are available in the area*". The CWW agrees with the Field Director (PT) Srisaïlam, that "*though an area of 81ha. of tiger reserve would be lost under submergence, a new area of about 530ha. will be turned into an ideal wetland. Thus the reservoir also becomes an ideal breeding ground for fish population which in turn will attract diverse aquatic bird species in large numbers.*" It is a little heartening to hear that the Director Project Tiger, MoEF did not agree to sacrificing 81ha. of terrestrial habitat for aquatic habitat on ecological principles, observing that "*wetland development is not the primary objective of tiger reserves.*" The Addl. IGF (WL) also observes that this conversion is not appropriate and should not be allowed since the MoEF has filed an affidavit in the Court to treat protected areas as '*no development zones*'.

"*Forest officers are almost invariably subjected to political pressure and they have very little strength or will to oppose such pressure even when it directly conflicts with the interests of the forest,*" writes Bittu Sahgal.

♦ These are further demonstrations, as if the Dabhol Power Company and Congentrix examples were not enough, to engender serious concern at the **Prime Minister's** recent **announcement** that such clearances **for power projects**, of whatever size, will be given away from the centre into the hands of the states. "*Give a free hand to States, whether it is Rs 4,000*

crores or Rs.5,000 crores or Rs 10,000 crore, let them do it..." The P.M. apparently said that both the Environment Protection Act as well as the Forest Conservation Act would be amended to facilitate the process! His proposal even goes against his own inter-ministerial expert committee report which warned that there was not the level of expertise and manpower available in the states to evaluate these. A source in the power ministry was quoted as saying "competition among states to attract projects is rising rapidly and there is a genuine fear that certain norms may be overlooked". The move might lead to "a race to the bottom" - the lowering of standards (by acts of commission or omission) to attract projects.

(Sources: Bittu Sahgal, *Deccan Herald* 3/11/96, Express News Service, *Times of India*)

♦ *Irrigation for Wildlife*

Over the last three years the Expert Committee of the MoEF on **River Valley Projects** has insisted that project proponents pay for the impact of their projects. Nearly **Rs.50 crores** have gone to the **wildlife sector** (on paper!) (see 'News from the States', Orissa).

♦ *The Prime Minister Speaks*

Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda on Wednesday 16th October 1996 expressed his disgust over developmental projects getting obstructed by "vested interests" and "mean politics". These he said were impeding speedy economic growth..."

"Some people think that they are born only to protect the environment in this country" the P.M. said "...unfortunately today if we clear a project, the next day there will be a Public Interest Litigation."

"On the one side there is the environmental problem and on the other side solving the energy problem which the country is facing today is there. Are those people who are debating, discussing and fighting for the cause of the environment not interested in the development of the country?"

"Both things cannot go on simultaneously. I must provide basic infrastructure like land and water but if I take a decision they say the fish will die and some great legal experts will try to argue. Are they not patriots?"

(Sources: *Times of India*, 17/10/96, P.M.'s speech)

♦ "I see no relation between liberalisation and environment. My sole concern and objective is that Karnataka becomes number one in industries in the country". P.M. in an interview to *Down to Earth*.

♦ *"India's grave environmental crisis"*

"... Such thinking (re.above) can only produce policies that aggravate our already grave environmental crisis. This crisis is pervasive and involves the degradation and pollution of all our natural resources with disastrous consequences..."

And scores of plant and animal species, some rare and unique to India, are vanishing by the year, leading to the century's worst biodiversity depletion anywhere barring Amazonia"... "We must shake ourselves out of our complacency and admit that we have too little environmental regulation, and that we simply cannot afford the present development path. We need to tighten environmental scrutiny and conditions for project approval. Our experience with Sardar Sarovar and most other big irrigation projects tells us that the system of pari passu conditional clearance (make an environmental impact assessment and take damage control measures as you go on building the project) does not work. The lobbies that gain from felling trees, selling timber or tiger skins and ivory are far too vile and powerful to abide by reasonable conditions except on pain of punishment. This demands closer scrutiny and monitoring."

(P. Bidwai, *Frontline*, 29/11/1996)

♦ *'De-development'*

A study by two World Bank staffers, Carter Brandon & Kirsten Hommann, *The cost of inaction: valuing the economy-wide cost of environmental degradation in India*, tries to estimate the damage of industrialisation/ 'development'. Their assumptions are reckoned to be conservative and underestimations but still their conclusions make startling reading: "In 1992, environmental degradation cost India a total of Rs.34,000 crores (US\$9.7billion). This amounted to 4.5% of GDP" and is "significantly higher than that for China (2.6%) or Mexico (3.7%), both notorious for their environmental degradation and inappropriate industrialisation. Air & water pollution accounted for damage of Rs.24,500 crores while land degradation and deforestation inflicted a loss of another Rs.9,450 crores. In agriculture alone, land degradation causes a productivity loss of 4 to 6.3% a year, worth up to Rs.8,400 crores."

"The study leaves out of the reckoning several components of environmental costs" including "biodiversity loss, health costs due to exposure to toxic industrial wastes, (NTFP) loss due to deforestation, some health costs of air and water pollution". "...if more realistic estimates are made, the total damage would be Rs.50,000 crores to Rs.70,000 crores a year"

representing up to 9% of India's GDP. "This spine-chilling number shows that India's present development model is wholly unsustainable. The GDP loss of 7 to 9 per cent a year clearly exceeds the GDP growth rate. We are de-developing, eating into our environmental capital, going backwards."

(Praful Bidwai, *The Times of India* 5/11/96 & *Frontline* Nov.29 1996)

♦ ***So, does the tiger need to worry?***

"The Centre would soon convene a meeting of Chief Ministers to discuss the issue of conservation of ecosystem, particularly the endangered-species. Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda told the presidents of WWF India and Pakistan ...when they called on him here on Friday. The two conservationists drew the Prime Minister's attention to the depletion of forest cover and decline of tiger population in the country and urged him to initiate proper steps in this connection". (PTI. *The Pioneer* 23/11/1996)

"...Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda said on Friday 22nd November 1996 that the government would do everything possible for the protection of the tiger. He assured officials of the WWF who called on him here, that the various state governments would be asked to cooperate in this regards".

(UNI. *Asian Age* 23/11/1996)

♦ ***MoEF statements on the tiger situation***

"Tigers endangered, admits Minister"

"International conservation agencies have finally made the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF) accept that "a serious crisis" threatens the Indian tiger. The Ministry has also acknowledge that simple conservation alone will not help to protect the tiger. Minister of State for Environment and Forests J.N. P. Nishad told that Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda would be requested to address the nation on Doordarshan to highlight the crisis. Also, Mr Gowda would be requested to convene a special meeting of Chief Ministers of the "tiger states" to chalk out a strategy with the cooperation of the State Governments. However, Mr Nishad refused to make a commitment to stop and remove all developmental projects, which may endanger the tiger habitat, from the reserved areas. ..."

(A. Bhattacharya, *The Pioneer* 2/11/1996)

"Minister says situation is not so alarming"

"Coimbatore, November 9 : The Union Minister of State for environment and Forests, Capt. J.N.P. Nishad, on Saturday said that though the number of tigers in the country has declined, the situation was not so alarming as it has been made out to be by some people. "Actually

the number of tigers in the sanctuaries has increased. But we are anxious about the reports of the failure of the project tiger and we want to have things under control" (*Asian Age*, 10/11/1996).

♦ ***Green MPs?***

Perhaps our voices are beginning to get through the politicians' filters. It seems that over 30 questions concerning the tiger, from about 70 MPs, will be coming up in the present session, creating tiger history in Paliament.

♦ ***Tiger Conservation Secrets***

The Wildlife Institute of India had forwarded an application through the MoEF for necessary clearances for a British student, Sugoto Roy, to join their tiger ecology study in Panna Tiger Reserve. The student was extremely enthusiastic and appropriately qualified and, in the absence of applicants from India, the WII was willing to take him on as a researcher on the project. The Ministry unfortunately had other ideas and have rejected his application. It has stated its position that "*The Government of India considers conservation of tiger a sensitive issue*" and in view of his British nationality fear "*the chance dissemination of sensitive information on tiger conservation*". Does the Ministry want to censor academic research findings? Should Indian academics be isolated from the rest of the world - no discussion, no collaboration, no exchange of ideas? Shouldn't tiger conservation be a global concern? What exactly does the Ministry seek to hide in relation to tiger conservation?

Perhaps the Ministry should be reminded of the Delhi Declaration adopted in February 1993 at an International Symposium on the Tiger convened by the Government of India and attended by over 250 participants from eight range countries.. Part of this reads:-

"Considering that research is an essential input in the proper conservation and management of the tiger and its habitat and that it is our responsibility to posterity to preserve the tiger as part of the world's precious natural heritage, realising that coordinated research programmes, documentation and easy accessibility of research results are essential management tools, (the symposium) recommends that multi-pronged research to generate a proper database be carried out and such data be adequately disseminated and easily accessible, that countries should develop and exchange among themselves appropriate technologies and training programmes for scientific management."

♦ ***Eco-development Update***

On 5th September 1996, the **eco-development project** which covers 7 PAs, Periyar, Gir, Ranthambhore,

Nagarahole, Pench, Buxa and Palamau, received formal approval for disbursal of funds from the World Bank. This in spite of the continuing and vociferous criticisms of conservationists and environmental activists of various persuasions all over the country. In July a group of prominent people issued a statement criticizing the plan on a number of fronts. They echoed conservationists views that "in its present framework, it is difficult to believe that the project can actually relieve pressures on protected areas". The group felt that this was due to the plan being based on the premise that the main problem faced by those overly dependent on forest resources is one of poverty. In fact they contended, it is "disempowerment by wildlife laws and programmes and the erosion of their environmental right to use their habitat". Such alienation can only increase the costs of park management. They also point out that the programme has no answer to the increasing commercial pressures on wildlife habitats, that there was little constructive debate and dialogue with the local communities at the design stage and that in the light of the external funding, most in the form of loans, it is not a cost effective project. They also object to an "underlying emphasis on relocation of people" and are skeptical of the WB's emphasis on "voluntary relocation". They demand that "the ecodevelopment proposal be immediately withdrawn and an alternative approach to conservation, based on community initiatives, be supported and encouraged". The statement was signed by Anil Agarwal, Medha Patkar, Baba Amte, Madhav Gadgil and George Fernandes among others.

◆ The Cat Specialist Group (Indian Region) will be meeting in New Delhi on 18th-19th December 1996. A main topic on the agenda for discussion is priorities in field conservation for the tiger.

◆ Cat Group Advice Requested

In reference to the forthcoming meeting of the Cat Specialist Group (Indian Region) the Director, WWF-UK has requested "Indian tiger specialists" "to provide advice on what NGOs should be doing to achieve effective tiger conservation in India", and on the "best way of organising direct tiger protection on the ground. In his letter to the Vice-Chairman, he writes, "I think it is vital that the WWF Family work closely with you and your colleagues for tiger conservation in the field. He further states that Claude Martin, head of WWF-International, "shares my conviction that WWF must now reinforce the forest guards in the field".

The numbers game - Alarmist or realists?

"Alarmist reports about one tiger being poached every 18 or 24 hours cannot be called authentic or justified." "Wild conjectures or mere guessestimates, which cannot stand scrutiny, will not do....The only agency which has the authority....is the Forest Department". Samar Singh, Sec.Gen., WWF-India. Mr Samar Singh echoes the opinion of the MoEF, most recently stated by the Minister to the media in response to recent publications which include "exaggerated" poaching reports of one tiger per day!

Even official census figures of Forest Departments indicate otherwise:

1989: 4334 tigers; **1993:** 2750-3750*; indicating an official decline of **584 to 1584** Tigers.

If one assumes a modest increase of 150 cubs per year, taking into account natural mortality, the population could have increased by a minimum of 600 individuals in four years.

(N.B. official government records indicate an average rise in total population of 181 tigers each year for the period 1979-1984).

Thus the decline in fact would be $584 + 600 = 1184$ or, taking the lower 1993 figure, 2184. (Steering committee members involved in the 1993 census gave a cautious range of 2750-3750. The government chose to use the higher figure).

Thus the average yearly loss for the years between 1989 and 1993 would be between **296 and 546** tigers! In other words, one tiger lost every 29.6 hours or every 16 hours, depending on which figure you accept. These are the government's own figures!

Valmik Thapar, Member Steering Committee, Project Tiger.

*Valmik Thapar signed a report on the census of 1993 and this was forwarded to the then Minister, Shri Kamal Nath, revealing a figure of 2750 to 3750 tigers and stating that after appraising the census records, he was of the opinion that the lower figure was more accurate.

Stop Press

WWF (A.P. State Office) condones destruction of forest in Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam Tiger Reserve for a World Bank aided A.P. State Highways Project. Bittu Sahgal, member of MoEF's Infrastructure Subcommittee, in a letter to the WWF-India President, dated 5/12/96, says "I was distressed to see that at the height of the tiger crisis, one of your key WWF officials has lent the name of WWF-India to the construction of a highly destructive and ill-advised road through the very heart of one of the Deccan's finest tiger habitats."

WWF-India

In July 1996, WWF-India published their **Tiger Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (TCSAP)** with the overall goal of strengthening "the ongoing efforts for the protection of the tiger" through "new and innovative initiatives". Their strategy is to:

- "Mobilize support for tiger conservation at the political and policy making level.
- Generate grassroots support through local communities for tiger conservation.
- Develop support mechanisms.

Implementation of the strategy will be started through a two year action plan and the financial implications are estimated at **US\$ 2 million**. The plan comprises the following main activities :

1. Influence policy and decision making
2. Mobilize grassroots support in tiger range areas
3. Assist and strengthen enforcement measures
4. Generate greater awareness and mobilize public support
5. Facilitate international cooperation."

♦ Recently, concern has been expressed about WWF-India's lack of constructive role in tiger conservation, given its record over the last few years of tiger crisis. It has been said that money is being wasted on glossy publicity events and publications that seek to enhance WWF-India's profile but do little to actually advance conservation needs in the field. WWF organisation around the world have apparently raised large amounts of funds for the tiger. However even within the WWF 'family', WWF-India's credibility is said to be at a low ebb, so many of the funds are alleged to be lying unutilised.

With this background and in relation to the *Update's* statement that the Tiger Conservation Fund is "focussed primarily at the implementation of selected components of India's National Tiger Plan", the Secretary General, WWF-India was requested to provide *Tiger Link News* with more details of their tiger conservation activities, especially detailing **field actions** that have been taken. The following statements are the more relevant extracts from Mr Samar Singh's four page response:-

Between 1973 and 1993 the WWF family "provided directly to the Government of India more than one million US dollars for tiger conservation. From 1994, it was agreed to transfer such funds through WWF-India" and the "Tiger Conservation Fund" was established. "The total amount made available to the fund so far is US\$1,00,000/- only, which was received from WWF-UK in November 1995." This amount has been utilised "exclusively for the implementation of the TCSAP" (see box) which includes publication of 'The Tiger Call' and *Tiger Update*, "raising the (tiger) issue at the highest level",

including a letter from the President of WWF-India to the Prime Minister of India and a "tiger petition presented to the Minister, Environment & Forests" in July 1996, and the establishment of "tiger cells" in U.P. and Orissa.

"Since then (1973), WWF-India has been in the vanguard of the tiger cause and through its ups and downs."

"A concrete response to the current situation is the TCSAP put forward...after...wide consultations." WWF-India "welcomes collaboration and partnerships" and is creating its own "network of grassroot NGOs with a primary focus on tiger conservation" (*Tiger Update* No.4).

However, Mr Samar Singh believes that "...the NGOs should not attempt to duplicate or substitute for the work of government agencies". "...it will certainly take some time to mobilise action on all fronts and across the country. It is equally obvious that ad hoc or piecemeal measures, such as the 'guns and guards' formula put forward by some misguided activists, cannot yield substantive results in the current situation"

"The next census operation is scheduled in 1997....WWF-India is certainly preparing to get involved meaningfully."

"...additional financial assistance from within the WWF family would be forthcoming soon to support focussed work in two selected tiger reserves in India, more especially to counter poaching and illegal trade and to improve protection measures. On this basis **Corbett and Sariska Tiger Reserves** have been selected and proposals for both are currently being formulated by WWF-India."

"WWF-India stands committed...to save the tigers in India...with the support of its countrywide network..."

♦ *Tiger-Link News* would be really keen to interact and cooperate with the "countrywide network" of NGOs which WWF-India has been organising for the last two years. More information about it would be appreciated as the Tiger Link network appears not to have touched or met any of its members anywhere in India. Two years ago, WWF stated that the purpose of the NGO network "apart from monitoring the health of PAs" was to act as "the 'eyes and ears' of the people and alert the NGO community and the public of any impending threats to PAs". In the present crisis, it is strange that T-L *News* has had no information of this type from the WWF network."

As far as the *Tiger Conservation Fund* is concerned, it would be useful to know if and which NGOs and projects could be eligible for funding as T-L *News* receives many requests for financial help from small NGOs working in the field across India.

Around 100 NGOs and 500 individuals and Government officers concerned with tiger conservation participate in **TigerLink**.

Bangladesh

♦ *New Areas*

Three small, unconnected tiger reserves in the mangrove forests of Bangladesh have been expanded to cover a contiguous area of 1,297 km² adjoining the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve in India (STR), thereby creating a total protected area of 4,000km².

The westernmost of the expanded reserves, Sundarbans West (715 km²) has been proposed as a World Heritage Site by the Bangladesh Government. It adjoins the 2,585 km² STR which already has this status.

The Sundarbans mangrove forests are believed to hold a possible 400-500 tigers, the largest surviving single population in the world, thriving in this unique habitat for the species.

(*Cat News* No.25 Autumn 1996)

♦ *5 Star Tiger Trade*

Tiger claws, teeth and even tiger bones were seen on display for sale in July 1996 a five star Hotel in Dhaka.

China

♦ *Tigers & Chickens*

Chairman of the Cat Specialist Group, Peter Jackson, after a visit to China's *Feline Breeding Centre* at Hengdaohezi, in June 1996, has expressed grave concerns about China's considered **reintroduction programme**. The tigers are being publicly fed live cattle and chickens from motor vehicles, a 'training method' that would render the tigers a "*danger to people and livestock if released in the wild*". He points out that these experiences would encourage them to go for domestic livestock, would also encourage a familiarity and dependence on people and an association of food with vehicles. Jackson also drew their attention to the need of ensuring that site conditions were suitable to support a tiger population, that a very large area with adequate prey would be necessary to support a viable population and that advance studies and ground preparation in the form of seeking the agreement of local people and the local authorities were essential if such a programme were to have any chance of success. Doubts had also been expressed as to the genetic purity of some of the animals involved in the programme which could be a serious consideration especially if they were released in a proposed area near the Russian border where they could "contaminate" the Russian population.

The Hengdaohezi breeding centre had originally aroused concern when the Chinese Government mooted a plan to request CITES to give it recognition in order to be able to sell tiger products to raise money. Conservationists feared that this could provide a cover for the

continuing illegal trade in tiger bones. However the Chinese did not actually take their request to the CITES conference and the Director assured Jackson that no bones or parts had been sold, showing him large steel containers with officially-sealed locks where he said the remains of tigers that had died were stored.

(Source: *Cat News* No.25 Autumn 1996).

Nepal

♦ Until the 1960s continuous tiger habitat stretched the length of Nepal along the terai and inner terai. By 1980 however, these had been fragmented into three discrete populations separated by migration barriers. The largest, the "greater Chitwan" population centres on the Royal Chitwan National Park (RCNP) but extending east through adjoining Parsa Wildlife Reserve (PWR) in to Bara District in Nepal and south into Valmiki Tiger Reserve in India. In the 1980s it was estimated to contain 65 breeding adult tigers. The Karnali population centered on Royal Bardia National Park (RBNP) but extending east through Banke district and west through Kailali was estimated to contain 50 resident adults. The smallest, Suklaphanta population was cut off from other tiger populations in Nepal and also in India had perhaps 12-15 adults.

A tiger count in RCNP was completed by the end of 1994 indicating 37 resident adults (27 females, 10 males), indicating that the tigers of the park had weathered the poaching crisis of 1989-91 in relatively good shape (late '80s estimates had indicated 35-40 resident adults). However the situation in PWR was less encouraging. The tiger count there conducted in November/December 1995 was disappointing. In the part of the reserve north of the Churia Hills evidence of only one adult female was discovered and that too a set of very old tracks. The only other adult was one male. Evidence of poaching was discovered including the carcass of a recently poisoned leopard and a poachers cache of ammunition and other items. In the southern part there were three resident females and one sub-adult female and one male tiger. The total of 6 adults was thus half the number expected. The habitat at PWR is in good condition and with better protection tiger numbers could increase. However Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar is also vital for the long term survival of this population and cooperation between Nepal and India is urgently required.

RBNP was surveyed between October and December 1995 and 28 resident adults were counted, 18 female and 10 males. There is danger that the population is too small to be viable. The future of the Karnali tiger population may hinge on the proposal to extend the park eastward through Banke district and into the western

part of Dang-Deokhuri district along the southern base of the Churia hills, where there is still good habitat and almost no human settlement. The survey had also found that development activities and demographic changes had created a gap isolating the Kailali tigers from those in RBNP and Banke district.

(Source: Charles McDougal, Smithsonian Research Associate & Nepal Coordinator for ITNC)

◆ *NGO & Government Collaboration / Whisky for Tigers*

In continuation of the Smithsonian Institution's long term tiger monitoring project in Chitwan, known individual tigers resident in an approximately 100km² area in the western part of RCNP were monitored on a regular basis and tigers occupying adjacent parts were monitored on a less frequent *ad hoc* basis but sufficiently often to know the status of all the resident tigers in western RCNP. This project was supported by the International Trust for Tiger Conservation (ITNC) and Justerini & Brooks Ltd. (J&B whisky producers). Between 1989 and 1991 the Chitwan tiger population suffered serious losses from commercial poaching. In the western area resident females were reduced by one third, from 12 down to 8; of 7 losses only 3 were replaced. The value of tiger monitoring was thus seen as due to this project the effect of poaching and the extent of the loss was known. Also the areas most vulnerable to poaching could be determined. Thanks to timely and vigorous action on the part of the park warden and his staff, poaching was reduced and the tiger population began to recover.

The park warden began to employ informers in the villages adjacent to the vulnerable parts of RCNP and to pay rewards to those persons who provided information leading to the arrest of poachers and traffickers. This was very successful and in two years some 70 people were arrested and imprisoned. Originally supported almost exclusively by ITNC these activities have now been extended and WWF will be financially supporting the four new anti-poaching units suggested at a meeting with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC). Two of these units will supplement the existing two in RCNP, one will be established in PWR and one will supplement one already established in the RBNP. ITNC will continue to support the information gathering network and payment of rewards. The monitoring (see above) was done by professional tiger trackers employed by ITNC and wildlife technicians employed by the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC). The parks department, DNPWC provided staff from the parks and reserves surveyed also so that those persons could receive training.

There appears to be a highly positive and effective collaborative effort between NGOs in Nepal and the government machinery thanks largely perhaps to the dynamic and committed Director-

General, DNPWC, Dr Tirtha Maskay. During 1995 around RCNP and PWR there were nine seizures of tiger bones and skins, most of the former constituting complete skeletons. Not all these represented tigers poached in Nepal. Some were from India being smuggled through Nepal. 25 poachers/traffickers were arrested and imprisoned. This is the highest number of seizures and arrests since the poaching crisis began. Rs.2,92,000 was paid out in 1995 for rewards.

(Source: Charles McDougal's report to *Care for the Rare*. J&B. January 1996)

Russia

◆ *Tigers Poached*

Interfax news agency reported six more Siberian tigers killed by poachers in June near the town of Laukha on the Bikin river near the Chinese border. It said that local wildlife officials think only about 200 tigers are left in Russia's Maritime Territory.

(Associated Press)

◆ *Saving the Siberian Tiger*

The **Siberian Tiger Project**, created by the Hornocker Wildlife Institute, is currently monitoring 9 radio-collared tigers in the Sikkote-Alin Reserve. It has been nurturing programmes in conservation planning and environmental education and as "*making a difference, where many thought it could not be done*". "*With solid information known about its ecological requirements, little private land ownership to confuse land-use planning, few people within its range, the will of the Russian people and the force of world attention on its side, the greatest of the great cats will continue to stalk the snowy Russian Far East.*" (as Howard Quigley of the Hornocker Wildlife Institute reports)

◆ *Tiger Protection*

Tusk Force and the Global Security Network are continuing their **Amur (Siberian) tiger protection programme in the Russian Far East** in conjunction with the Russian and US authorities hoping to 1) secure the conservation status of the Amur tiger by the year 2000 2) develop a financially sustainable programme of tiger protection and wildlife education and 3) provide a blueprint for tiger conservation programmes in other range states. Their budget to run the programme with three fully equipped anti-poaching teams is put at approximately US\$492,000 for two years.

United Kingdom

♦ *MPs Take a Stand for the Tiger*

The **Environmental Investigation Agency's** report and new campaign (see 'publications' page) has had one early result. In an unprecedented move the **British Parliament** passed a motion stating that "*this house believes that the plight of the Royal Bengal tiger requires immediate action to prevent its decline and possible extinction in the wild. It calls upon the Prime Minister of India to give the protection of the tiger the highest priority and asks him to implement the recommendations of his Government expert committee before it is too late.*"

♦ *Education against using wildlife products*

Tusk Force in partnership with the **Global Survival Network (GSN)** have developed a unique co-operative programme between western and Asian conservation and education experts. The **Asian Conservation Awareness Programme (ACAP)** is designed to pool resources and expertise and to draw support from private foundations, companies and individuals to provide a multi-million pound campaign at a fraction of the cost. ACAP focuses on the consumption of rhino, tiger and bear body parts in traditional Chinese medicine and exotic foods and the use of elephant ivory and marine turtleshell as luxury items. The programme was launched in Taiwan in November 1996 and from there will be rolled out across Asia and Asian communities worldwide. ACAP are using T.V., cinema, press advertisements, education brochures and videos with curriculum linked worksheets for use in schools to get their message across in relevant Asian languages.

For further information contact: Tusk Force, 4 Spencer Court, 140-142 Wandsworth High Street, London SW18 4JJ, UK.

Vietnam

♦ *Wildlife Trade*

In blatant violation of domestic law, tiger skins, clouded leopard and sun bear skins were on open display for sale in Hai Liah village, Tinh Gia district on Highway 1.

Conferences

♦ *Species Survival Commission Meeting in Canada*

The Species Survival Commission meeting took place in Montreal in October 1996. The chairman of various specialist groups presented papers on the activities of their respective groups. Mr. Peter Jackson, Chairman of the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group gave an illustrated talk on the plight of the tiger. He also expressed

his concern about an experiment taking place in China where captive bred tigers have been released into an area of 100 km². These tigers are being fed by releasing cattle into the area in the presence of tourists (see 'China' p.20).

♦ *WCS Regional Meet*

The topic of instilling good science into tiger conservation efforts now underway in Asia will figure prominently in the forthcoming **Asia Regional meet of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)** to be held in Bangalore and Mysore from **9th to 17th December 1996**. Dr. Ullas Karanth will host the meeting and allied field visits, during which results of the WCS tiger surveys and conservation projects in India, China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and Sumatra will be reviewed. A session on tiger survey methods will also feature as a part of the meeting. WCS scientists George Schaller, John Robinson, Alan Rabinowitz, Joshua Ginsberg, Elizabeth Bennet, Tony Lyman, Tim O'Brien and Margaret Kinnard are among the participants.

♦ *Tiger Talk*

In **February 1997** the Zoological Society of London is holding an **International Tiger Conference** in London, supported by Esso UK, and several TigerLink participants will be presenting papers and taking part. The symposium will consist of three sessions "The tiger in its habitat", "The tiger - a landscape species living in a changing and fragmented land" and "Approaches to tiger conservation". The proceedings will be published as a multi-author book.

♦ *Carnivores & Man*

Japan hosted the 2nd International Symposium on "**Co-existence of Large Carnivores with Man**", 19th to 23rd November 1996. 200-250 participants were expected to attend from 35-40 nations.

Stop Press

♦ *New wildlife trade laws for Europe*

In the face of criticism from conservation organisations that the newly relaxed border controls of the European Union (EU) had increased the smuggling of wildlife articles, the EU has brought in new laws that they say are "*some of the world's toughest*". These include: limited entry points, mandatory penalties for offenders and an increase in wildlife officers. However the success will depend on the EU member states' willingness to implement them and at present member countries have vastly differing controls. At present Greece, for example, has no legislation.

(BBC World Service News item 10/12/96)

Arunachal Pradesh

♦ In July 1996 the Director General of Border Roads seized 270kgs of ivory, one tiger skin and four leopard skins at Bomdila in Arunachal Pradesh. The contraband articles were concealed in a truck belonging to CPWD. According to the WPSI the current seizure indicates that the North East is becoming a major route for smuggling of wildlife articles to East Asian countries, including China and of special concern is the amount of ivory that appears to be going via this route. (WPSI Press Release)

Assam

♦ The Forest Minister, Nagen Sarma visited **Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary** with some NGOs. On this visit they came across a rhino carcass with the horn removed which had eluded the detection of the forest staff for 48 hours.

Madhya Pradesh

♦ *Tip of the Iceberg?*
Madhya Pradesh Police Tiger Cell continues its crackdown on wildlife poachers and traders. The success of their work may be seen in their 1995 seizure figures but they make disquieting reading.

Tiger - 8 skins, 6 skeletons, 16 nails, 19kg. bones

Leopard - 62 skins, 2 skeletons, 21.5 bones

Deer - 82 skins, 17 carcasses, 859 antlers and 246.5kg meat

The total cases for **Pench Tiger Reserve**, including Chhindwara and Seoni, in 1995 were 35 cases registered and 54 poachers arrested.

Maharashtra

♦ Kishor Rithe of the **Nature Conservation Society**, Amravati reports, "Recently we found two poaching cases in Melghat (one

of tiger & another of panther). We made a complaint to CF & DCF, the four men were arrested. Also we arrested some people (with the help of Forest dept.) who were involved in bird, hair trading (partridges, green pigeons, rain quails). We are repeatedly visiting to different markets in our district since last two years; we got a great success in controlling wild animal/bird trade."

He invites "TigerLink team in Vidarbha region to visit the Melghat tiger project, Mahendri proposed sanctuary and Pench N.P. to solve or find out some solutions to the immediate problems facing them."

Tamil Nadu

♦ In July 1996 Wildlife Department officials, raiding Saidapet and Triplicane colonies in Chennai, recovered a massive haul of wildlife articles. 28 bags were seized by officials and the animal parts were hidden under beads and necklaces packed at the top of the bags. It is reported that 150 jackal heads, 140 jackal tails, 3 slender loris skins, 7 spotted deer skins and skins of monitor lizards, hedgehogs, pangolins and crocodiles were found. Five people have been arrested in this connection. Officials said that the Narikoravas, in whose possession the bags were found, were apparently ready to take the banned items to Malaysia for sale. Demand in the Far East for the claws of wild cats, particularly tigers, had apparently prompted the culprits to affix 'fake claws' to the paws of the jackals to be palmed off as real ones.

(The Hindu. 13 July 1996)

Uttar Pradesh

♦ The Office of the Field Director, Corbett Tiger Reserve issued a press release on 30 July 1996 with the following information:

"**Operation Monsoon** was first initiated in 1994 to maintain and strengthen the security of **Corbett Tiger Reserve** during the sensitive monsoon period. On 10th July 11 people were caught in the Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary while trying to extract minerals from the Sonanadi river. A sum of Rs.20,000 was recovered from them by way of compensation. On 11th July a freshly shot chital was recovered from a farm near Mathicangar, just outside the reserve. The gun and tractor used for committing the offence were seized and 'a penalty of Rs.95,000 was imposed, which is a sort of record.'" On 25th July a routine motorboat patrol on the Ramganga reservoir in the Sonanadi Sanctuary was fired at by poachers. Dharmanand Dhyani, the Forester leading the poaching patrol retaliated and shot one poacher injuring his elbow. Two poachers were caught and country made guns, explosives and ammunition seized.

On **28th July** 1996, Corbett Tiger Reserve authorities scored another success in their 'Operation Monsoon' war against poachers. With the assistance of the WPSI, a trap was laid and Deen Dayal Belwal, a 'well-known poacher and wildlife smuggler', and one of his associates, Bhagat Singh Negi, resident of Dhela, were caught in possession of a tiger skin and 12kgs of tiger bones. The skin had a bullet hole at the shoulder and Deen Dayal Belwal confessed to having shot the animal himself in the vicinity of the National Park. Another associate, Zaheed Hussain, a resident of Sawaldeo escaped from the ambush.

Later information from WPSI reveals that four days after his escape, Hussain gave himself up to the authorities. The Field Director of Corbett Tiger Reserve, Mr Gautum, and his dedicated team are

now following up the enormous amount of information revealed during the operation. Belwal and his gang offered (but did not show) 3 tiger skeletons and up to 7 tiger skins. The WPSI investigators refused to give them a cash advance and since the traders did not have the funds to pay off their various suppliers a smaller "deal" was struck involving one tiger skeleton and one large tiger skin.

As Belwal and Negi come from influential families, this seizure and arrest has also had an impact in areas well away from Corbett Tiger Reserve.

WPSI has supported the prosecution of this case with a separate petition.

◆ *Trans-border poaching*

Dr. Asad R. Rahmani, Centre of Wildlife & Ornithology, AMU, reports serious "poaching problems in *Dudwa* (by Nepali poachers), and in *Lagga-Bagga* area which adjoins *SuklaPhanta*. *Suhelwa* sanctuary in Gonda district of U.P. adjoins Nepal. It has tremendous problems of poaching. *Katerniaghat* sanctuary also have poaching by Nepali army men who have been settled at the border."

◆ *WPSI's Seizure records in brief*

25 May 1996: 2 tiger skins, seized, 1 person arrested in Bahadurpura near Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh).

27 May 1996: 1 tiger skin, 20 claws seized at Jabalpur railway station by M.P. Tiger Cell and Police. 2 people arrested.

End May 1996: 1 tiger found dead in Jarida Forest Area, Maharashtra. The tiger's skin, teeth and claws were reportedly missing. We are investigating to get further details.

4 June 1996: 1 leopard skin, seized, 1 person arrested in Talcher by the Angul Forest Division, Orissa.

Poaching Statistics

The **Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI)** continues to collect data about tiger seizures and poaching cases both past and present. From the information collected they have found the number of tigers poached during 1994 and 1995 to be significantly higher than they previously recorded and have therefore updated their figures. As noted earlier, the information is still fragmentary and represents only a fraction of the actual tiger poaching activity.

WPSI's Tiger Poaching Statistics represent a minimum of 93 tigers known to have been killed by poachers in 1994, 115 killed in 1995 and 37 killed in 1996.

WPSI investigations indicate that the lower figure for 1996 is partly due to poachers destroying tiger skins so that they can continue to indulge in the more lucrative tiger bone trade undetected. Also, it is their experience from previous years that the bulk of the poaching information is received at the latter part of the year.

Copies of the updated '**Tiger Poaching Statistics of India - January 1994 to September 1996**', can be obtained from the WPSI, Thapar House, 124 Janpath, New Delhi - 110 001; Ph: (011) 332 0573; Fax: (011) 332 7729.

20 June 1996: 1 leopard skin, seized, 1 person arrested in Raigada District, Orissa.

End June 1996: The M.P. Forest Department and Police seized 2 tiger skins, 3 chital skins and arrested 12 people in Sijhora near Kanha Tiger Reserve.

End June 1996: 1 tiger found dead inside Sanjay National Park (M.P./ Bihar border) it is suspected that the tiger was poached. (Tiger Link).

15 July 1996: the office of the Director General Border Roads seized 1 tiger skin, 4 leopard skins and 270 kgs of ivory and arrested 1 person.

Mid July 1996: 2 tigers found dead in the Theni Forest Division (North Kerala/Tamil Nadu border). They had been poisoned on a sambar carcass.

28 July 1996: 1 tiger skin and 1 tiger skeleton seized at Ramnagar near Corbett Tiger Reserve. 3 persons arrested by the park authorities.

End July 1996: 1 tiger found dead in Melghat Tiger Reserve,

Maharashtra. It is believed that the tiger was poached.

19 August 1996: 1 leopard skin, 1 wild dog skin, 3 chital antlers seized, 3 people arrested in Ambedkar Nagar, Bihar.

End August 1996: 2 tigers, 2 elephant calves allegedly killed by tribal poachers with poisoned arrows in Palamau Tiger Reserve (Bihar).

9 September 1996: the police arrested 2 people and seized 1 leopard skin in Rishikesh, U.P.

End September 1996: 1 tiger skin seized at Kalagarh near Corbett Tiger Reserve by the U.P. Forest Department, this seizure was a follow up to the 28 July seizure at Ramnagar.

17 September 1996: The Forest and Wildlife Department seized 2 leopard skins and arrested 1 person in Delhi.

27 September 1996: 1 tiger found dead in Hemnagar, Sunderbans Tiger Reserve, West Bengal (unconfirmed poaching case).

26 October 1996: 1 leopard, 2 leopard cubs found poisoned in Dangs District, Gujarat.

1 November 1996: the office of the Deputy Director, Wildlife, Northern Region arrested 1 person and seized 1 leopard skin, 2 jungle cat skins in Delhi.

3 November 1996: the Police Department arrested 1 person and seized 1 leopard skin in Indore, M.P.

8 November 1996: the DCF along with WPSI, Delhi seized 10 shahtoosh shawls and arrested 1 person from the shop of Kazi Mohammed and Sons at a five star hotel in New Delhi.

12 November 1996: the Department of Wildlife seized 12 shahtoosh shawls at Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi. The shawls were being exported to London.

♦ **TRAFFIC news**

TRAFFIC-India, part of WWF-India, has undertaken a public awareness campaign - "*Don't buy Trouble*" - in a bid to check trading in wildlife. The campaign is targeting tourists and TRAFFIC has appealed to the airlines to mention in their disembarkation cards and inflight magazines that wildlife trade is illegal and punishable with imprisonment. Travel agents are asked to incorporate the message in their guide books and leaflets and it is planned to put up hoardings at airports, railway and bus stations. TRAFFIC-India is also initiating training programmes for non-wildlife enforcement staff and NGO personnel involved in monitoring the trade. The organisation is also planning a **regional meeting** of South Asian countries to deliberate on the **transboundary issues**, including control of smuggling of tiger parts across the common borders.

(Source : *Tiger Update* Vol.1 No.4)

♦ **Wildlife trade workshop**

Dr. S.P. Goyal of the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun reports: To

strengthen the overall conservation of natural resources, the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** recognised a need for a forum of various enforcement agencies to discuss the issues and ways to curb illegal wildlife trade in India. The first such forum was held at the WII in November 1995 and based on the participants responses and needs it was decided to make this an annual feature. Thus, the second **workshop** in the series was held on **26-28 November 1996**. This was attended by 28 participants and resource persons from Government and NGOs including the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Science, the Delhi Police, Central Forensic Science Lab, the National Academy of Customs, Excise and Narcotics, I.T.B.P., CBI, Botanical Survey of India, WPSI, MoEF, LAW-E, I.G. National Forest Academy, Central Zoo Authority, SACON and State Forest Officers. During the Workshop discussions covered various relevant issues regarding ways to curb the illegal wildlife trade, anti-poaching measures, the role of CITES and the contributions of different enforcement agencies and wildlife trade and forensic techniques. In addition, participants had the chance to see exhibits prepared by the WII for identifying wildlife products and parts with especial reference to tiger claw and bone. Participants felt a need to involve officers from the judiciary in such a forum and to have orientation programmes at the National Academy for probationers of customs and the CBI.

♦ **Conservation Comprehension?**

The General Officer Commanding in Madhya Pradesh heard that '*a large number of tiger, leopard skins and wild animal heads*' were available with the Wildlife Depart-

ment of the State, having been confiscated from poachers. He has therefore requested the Chief Minister and Forest Officials, on behalf of the 36 Infantry Division, to kindly allot some of these to use for display in various messes and Bands. Their '*requirement is for five tiger/leopard skins and ten animal heads*'. He assures Mr Digvijay Singh that they will be properly cared for and '*suitably displayed in our institutions*'. It would seem that the army's conservation education is incomplete; any volunteers to communicate with Maj. Gen. I.J. Bora, Headquarters, 36 Infantry Division, c/o 56 A P O

♦ **Jailed**

Two **German smugglers** became the first men to be tried and convicted in a western court for attempting to sell the skin of a Siberian tiger. One brother was sentenced to **eight months in jail** and the other to **one year**. This is the first time that a jail term has been enforced so it "*marks an important milestone in the battle to save one of the world's most endangered species*". The two were apparently arrested at a motorway cafe outside Bonn. When Police searched their flat they found a tiger head in the deep freeze, a polar bear skin and several other rare furs.

(Source: *The Times*, London 10/2/96)

♦ A wildlife dealer, **Nicolaas Peters** was **jailed for two years in the U.K.** for fraudulently exporting and importing wildlife species that are protected under CITES. For five years Peters had systematically engaged in the smuggling of animals threatened with extinction and a raid on his home led to the largest seizure of exotic specimens in Britain. Amongst the more than 500 items was the skull of a Siberian tiger.

(Source: *The Times*, London 10/5/96)

Anti-poaching and Wildlife Trade

♦ *Shahtoosh & the Tiger Bone Trade*

Shahtoosh shawls are a traditional and legendary product. These expensive shawls are in great demand among wealthy Indians. In recent times there has also been an increase in international demand for these shawls. Lamentably they are now much prized in the fashion industry in Europe.

Few people are aware that shahtoosh is the down wool of the endangered Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsoni*,) locally known as *Chiru*, which is found in Tibet and parts of north-west Ladakh. The species is listed in Appendix I of CITES and Schedule I of India's Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972 (WPA). All commercial trade of the species and its parts is therefore banned.

There are many myths about the source of shahtoosh. Some traders claim that the wool is harvested from the Ibex (a species also listed as in Appendix I of CITES and Schedule I of WPA). Others admit that the wool comes from the Tibetan antelope but state that it is painstakingly collected from rocks and thorny bushes. This is totally untrue. Investigations have conclusively proven that the animal is in fact killed to obtain the few grams of precious down wool. The raw shahtoosh is then smuggled by Tibetan nomads across mountain passes into India and Nepal, the final destination being Kashmir where the wool is woven into shawls.

There is a **crucial connection between shahtoosh and the tiger bone trade**. Shahtoosh is the primary

bartering product for tiger bones from India, which in turn are smuggled into China to be used in traditional medicine. Thus the shahtoosh trade is directly fuelling tiger poaching in India. The illegal trade in both products is highly profitable. WPSI investigations have revealed that shahtoosh shawls are readily available in shops in five star hotels and Kashmiri handicraft outlets throughout Delhi, Mumbai and Calcutta. It is essential, not only for the Tibetan antelope but for the very survival of the tiger in India, that we all urgently make consumers aware that by purchasing a shahtoosh shawl they are aiding abetting in the extinction of both these species. If we are to succeed in saving the tiger in India we must urgently address the problem of the shahtoosh trade both at the border passes and in retail shops of major cities throughout India. Pressure must be brought on our politicians to give this matter the highest priority. The trade in shahtoosh shawls needs to be urgently banned in the State of Jammu & Kashmir, where currently it is still legal. Apart from assisting enforcement authorities to seize shahtoosh shawls, WPSI has filed a petition in the Supreme Court of India on this subject.

Tiger Link members are urged to keep a look out for shops selling shahtoosh and inform WPSI on Tel. No. 3320573 so that action against these offenders can be taken. Please remember that every shahtoosh shawl has the blood of the tiger on it.

Wildlife Protection Society of India

Status of the World's Tigers 1996

Bengal (Indian) Tiger <i>Panthera tigris tigris</i> (Linnaeus 1758)	3,030 - 4,735
Caspian (Hyrcanian/Turan) Tiger <i>P.t.villiger</i> (Illiger 1815)	EXTINCT 1970s
Siberian (Amur/Manchurian) Tiger <i>P.t.altaica</i> (Temminck 1844)	162 - 230
Javan Tiger <i>P.t.sondaica</i> (Temminck 1844)	EXTINCT 1980s
South China (Amoy) Tiger <i>P.t.amoyensis</i> (Hilzheimer 1905)	20 - 30
Bali Tiger <i>P.t.balica</i> (Schwarz 1912)	EXTINCT 1940s
Sumatran Tiger <i>P.t.sumatrae</i> (Pocock 1929)	400 - 500
Indo-Chinese Tiger <i>P.t.corbetti</i> (Mazák 1968)	1,180 - 1,790
Rounded Total :	4,800 - 7,300

Table compiled by Peter Jackson, Chairman Cat Specialist Group, SSC, The World Conservation Union (IUCN) from reports by specialists in tiger range countries. Most estimates are educated guesses. (*Cat News* No.25 Autumn 1996)

Assam

♦ *Court order against sawmills*

In spite of the AGP Government's announced total ban on the felling of trees in the State, it appears that the ground reality is proving quite different. The office bearers of Gaon Panchayat, DFO of Rangiya and Goalpara divisions, without the knowledge of or required permit from the concerned Deputy Commissioners, apparently issued licenses for opening new saw mills. Interested parties are alleged to have already started damaging forests. In view of this a new NGO, *Aranyak Gosthi*, an organisation of Barpeta under the banner of AASU, filed a **Public Interest Litigation petition** to restrain the Chief Conservator of Forests from issuing any license for shifting, transferring or setting up of saw mills in the Barpeta District. The High Court passed an order to this effect on 24th October 1996. (see letters, Ganesh Das) *Aranyak Gosthi* had approached the court only after submitting a memorandum to the State Government through the DC, Barpeta which was ignored by them. The memorandum pointed out that there are nearly 25 big and small saw mills in the district of Barpeta. There should not be more than seven saw mills in a district but the previous government issued permission to many mills so as to completely ruin **Manas Tiger Reserve**. Some sawmill owners and timber businessmen from neighbouring states are said to be trying hard to shift their mills to the Barpeta district.

(Source: *Assam Tribune* 1/11/96)

Madhya Pradesh

♦ *Pench's Fishy Permits*

A petition has been filed by counsel, Raj Panjwani for the Animal and Environmental Legal Defence Fund challenging the Union and State Governments' decision to allow fishing in the Pench National Park. On 1st November the **Supreme Court** bench accepted the petition's contentions and **issued a stay** pending a detailed hearing on the main plea to quash the decision. Fishing has thus been stopped pending the main hearing. The State Government has been given 30 days in which to file a reply to the notices issued some weeks before, as their initial explanation did not seem sound to the three judge bench. The judges, Chief Justice A.M. Ahmadi and Justices Sujata Manohar and K.S. Paripoornan, said that the mass issue of permits was all the more intriguing as it came in the wake of a letter from the Field Director of Pench formally requesting the state government to delay no further in issuing final notification for National Park status. The order to allow fishing had also been given in spite of much expert opinion to the contrary,

including a letter from the Government of Maharashtra, in which state a part of Pench falls, indicating their opposition to the move. The official position is that fishing permits have only been issued to families with customary fishing rights. The petitioners ask how can there be 'customary rights' in a reservoir hardly 10 years old. The petitioners contend that the state's decision has more to do with the election that was being contested at the time. The park falls in the Seoni and Chhindwara districts and falls in the constituency of the former Union Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr Kamal Nath.

Some background

It seems that this whole fishy episode was begun by the Central Government in July 1992 when S.S. Hosurkar, Joint Secretary Government of India, sent a message to the State Government raising the question of allowing fishing in Pench. At this time the State Govt. was in favour of stopping fishing and acting accordingly. "*But the state was compelled to change this stand due to GOI's instruction,*" wrote the Addl. Secretary (Forest) to the Ministry on 18/9/96. The Chief Wildlife Warden in a letter dated 14/8/96 to the Joint Director, Project Tiger had also laid the blame at the Ministry's door: "*Mr. S.C. Dey Addl. I.G.F. (WL), who is also Director Wildlife Preservation under the Act, ... had already argued in favour of fishing in Pench National Park as the 'Totladoh Reservoir' is not an 'in situ lake'.*" The reference is to a letter of Mr Dey's, dated 17th January 1995 addressed to Shri B.S. Baswan, Pr. Secretary (Forests) M.P., in which he instructs the state to '*explore*' fishing in Pench and suggests it may be done under section 35(6) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act. However, a year later, in July 1996 Mr Dey writes to the Pr. Secretary (Forests), now Shri K.T. Chacko, "*I understand a large part of Pench Tiger Reserve is a reserved forest, and in a reserved forest no right of any individual can exist unless the same is recorded at the time of the reservation process*". He continues, "*The demand for fishing in Pench is mostly coming after the Pench dam was constructed, maybe about 10 or 15 years back. I am sure that such demands cannot be age old as the reservoir was not in existence earlier. So even if the final notification of the National Park is ending the control of rights can easily be made....*". While all this confusion and politicking abounds, Pench suffers. We must now look to the court to save the scene!

♦ *Clearance Withdrawn*

It is believed that after the site inspection report of the River Valley Projects (RVP) sub-committee which went to **Madhav National Park**, MoEF has withdrawn

clearance for all forest land in the National Park. MoEF has also asked for an enquiry as to how this land was originally cleared. At the same time the RVP committee is contemplating legal action against the project proponents of the Sindh Phase II Project which had also violated environment norms.

Nilgiri Forests - Case Update

◆ *Help Required!*

T-L NEWS vol 2 no1 reported on the case brought by a member of the *Nilambur Kovilakom* against the cutting of forests on land in the Gudalur taluk of the Nilgiris District. The State has admitted to the fall in forest cover and filed an affidavit to the effect that it does not have the means to protect vast forest areas. Apart from the order preventing any further cutting of trees in the area, the **Supreme Court** has also now directed issuance of notices to all States and Union territories to state the steps taken for increasing forest cover. It seems that the Court is taking up the whole issue of forest protection and may issue **guidelines for future Forest Policy**. This has thus become a case of crucial importance for all the country's forest land.

A large number of interveners have impleaded themselves representing timber contractors, tea and coffee planters, paper and other industry people and resettled tribals. Most of these have a strong vested interest in the timber or other forest produce. It is essential therefore that the other side, giving the wildlife and habitat conservation angle, is also strongly presented. **Anyone aware of any violation in their state or area which contravenes the Forest Conservation or Wildlife (Protection) Acts where habitat and forest are under threat from mining, regularization of large scale encroachment by wrongly showing pre1980 occupation or other conversion of forest land use, should consider filing an intervention application.** This application must be supported by some substantive evidence to present to the court, photographic, documentary, etc. TigerLink has requested LAW-E members to assist by helping to draft and file your applications. So **act now to save forest land** - collect and document the required evidence!

Wildlife Trade and Court Cases

◆ A recent WPSI study of ongoing court cases revealed the startling fact that **in the last ten years or so, not a single wildlife trader accused of a tiger related offence has been convicted anywhere in India.**

WPSI came across just three cases where lower level poachers (as distinct from traders) had indeed gone to jail, but mostly because they were poor and could not afford lawyers. Lengthy court proceedings were going on in the other cases, the accused persons were out on bail, and in many cases back in the trade.

The situation in rhino horn related cases was even more dismal. Not a single case of conviction could be traced in the last ten years. In ivory cases, just two convictions were located. The study covered six states in some detail. Telephone enquiries in several other states revealed a similar situation.

The one year mandatory jail sentence for offences against schedule I species prescribed in the WPA is not creating a deterrent due to very slow and convoluted court procedures. In many cases the charge sheets were poorly prepared. Lack of training of prosecuting officers was discovered to be commonplace. None of the states had taken any steps to establish legal cells or special courts to expedite justice. This was one of the recommendations of Subramanian Committee appointed by the government in 1994 to find solutions for control of wildlife crimes.

In some instances, an NGO intervention petition can hasten the legal process. With a small grant from Cat Specialist Group IUCN/SSC, WPSI began filing intervention petitions in 1995. Three cases against wildlife traders accused of tiger related crimes are being perused in Calcutta. One case was filed in the district court in Nainital and later in the Allahabad High Court opposing bail of poachers operating in forests outside Corbett Tiger Reserve. Petitions have also been filed in two ivory related cases in Uttar Pradesh. WPSI is a co-petitioner in a public-interest-litigation filed in October 1996, in the Supreme Court of India asking for integrity of elephant corridors. If protected, the corridors will benefit all wildlife including the tiger. Intervention petitions are also pending in two leopard poaching court cases in Haridwar in U.P where a major wildlife trader of Northern India is among the accused. Other court cases are planned. A group of lawyers committed to wildlife conservation are pleading these cases. When more resources are available, WPSI will attempt to support the prosecution in every tiger related court case in India.

All TigerLink members are requested to inform WPSI (Thapar House, 124 Janpath, New Delhi 110 001; Ph: (011) 3320573; Fax: (011) 3327729) of each and every tiger related seizure and arrest, and also details of significant tiger related court cases pending in various courts where a WPSI lawyer could assist in securing effective punishment.

Wildlife Protection Society of India

Elephants for Biodiversity

♦ A writ petition has been filed, in October 1996, in the Supreme Court of India by A. Rangarajan of the Tamil Nadu Green Movement, the Wildlife Protection Society of India, New Delhi and the Association for the Protection of Environment & Endangered Species, Meghalaya regarding the **fragmentation of habitat and destruction of corridors** which is severely **threatening** the survival of the Asian elephant and leading to increased man-elephant conflicts. The petitioners request that the Government of India and relevant State Governments be directed to take immediate steps to redress the situation by implementing the listed Project Elephant measures, acquire by sale or lease crucial corridor areas, appoint a committee to re-assess the corridor status and suggest ways and means to reduce conflict and to stop construction of projects in elephant corridors which presently threaten to aggravate an already serious situation. These include the **Pykara hydel power project** in Ooty district of Tamil Nadu, the enlarging and paving of the existing **canal** between **Masinagudi and Moyar** village which provides is presently negotiable by elephants and provides the only corridor between the Western and Eastern Ghats elephant populations, the **ACC cement plant** near **Balpakram** National Park in Meghalaya (see States News), the coal and limestone **mining in the Garo Hills** of Meghalaya and the **Sterling Resort Group of Hotel's** 60 room hotel in a critical elephant corridor near **Kalhadhungi** in U.P.

The petitioners state that by protecting the elephant and its habitat, the entire biodiversity (including of course the tiger which also shares its habitats) will be saved. It also argues that these measures are essential to help reduce the man-elephant conflict which is taking an increasingly heavy toll on the life and property of the poor rural communities.

Groups and individuals with relevant information and details on this subject should please contact **LAW-E** at H-53 D Saket, New Delhi 110 017.

Wildlife (Protection) Act Committee

♦ The **Committee** set up by the MoEF to recommend amendments to the **Wildlife (Protection) Act** continued its deliberations and started actual redrafting.

NGOs and individuals continue to submit their **comments** and suggestions.

The **Van Vidheyak Samiksha Samanvay** (VVSS), Maharashtra have collated ideas from several people and NGOs and written a complete redraft for discussion. Copies are available from Sharad Kulkarni and Ajay Dolke, VVSS, c/o Anubhav Shiksha Samanvay, 1B Kaul Bldg., Gurunanak Nagar, Shankarshet Road, Pune 411 042.

Ashish Kothari, on behalf of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IAPA) Joint Protected Area Management (JPAM) team, submitted a revised version of the Act's chapter on PAs. Their suggestions include: expansion of the categories of protected (re-named 'conservation') areas to include four new ones: Strict Nature Reserves, Resource Reserves, Community Reserves and Biosphere Reserves as well as a one-time national review of existing protected areas to recategorise them and to constitute appropriate committees for their management. Copies available from A.K., IAPA, Indraprastha Estate, New Delhi 110002. Email: akothari@unv.ernet.in.

Sanjay Upadhyay, a Delhi based lawyer has also sent in some suggestions including the need to define 'right' and 'rights' within the act itself, that provision should be made to ensure public consultation before an area is declare a NP or Sanctuary and that penal provisions should be more stringent and all wildlife related offences made non-bailable. For further information on the committee's progress contact: Kishore Rao, Dy. Insp.Gen. (Wildlife), MoEF, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi 110 003. 011 436 0957

(Source: JPAM Update No.11)

Legal Group

♦ **The Public Interest Legal Support and Research Centre (PILSARC)** was set up in 1987 to "provide legal advice, litigation and research support to activists and social action groups in India. PILSARC is a national public interest law firm and research centre that provides coordinated institutional legal support in the many areas in which the justice concerns of activists get enmeshed in the 'law'." Further information and details available from: C-569 New Friends Colony, New Delhi 110 065. Tel: 6822525. Fax: 6927813. Email: pilf@pilsarc.unv.ernet.in

Wildlife Conservation Society - study update

Sample survey of tiger-prey communities using transect methods and camera traps.

Dr Ullas Karanth has resumed his survey after the monsoon break and the current field site is **Namdapha Tiger Reserve** in Arunachal Pradesh. Research assistants, N. Samba Kumar and Imran Khan, have set up base in Deban and commenced work. During his recent field trip to Namdapha, Dr Karanth observed tiger signs and prey signs besides an abundance of other wildlife such as gibbons and Malayan giant squirrels. The Forest department of A.P. and the Field Director, Mr Nayak and other officials have been very helpful to the research work. The field work

is expected to continue until April 1997.

The earlier field work in Pench, Kanha and Kaziranga has yielded valuable quantitative field data on tiger and prey densities. These data are now under analysis and expected to be submitted to scientific publications in the next few months.

Dr. K. Ullas Karanth, Associate Research Ecologist, Wildlife Conservation Society (India Program), 403 Seebo Apartments, 26-2 Aga Abbas Ali Road, Bangalore 560 042.

Field Research Assistants Wanted

♦ Dr. Karanth is still looking for field research assistants - young people who have a keen interest in wildlife and who like to work in remote wildlife areas and preferably have had some experience in doing so. Applicants must have a science degree, preferably, though not necessarily, in biological sciences; possess a

valid driving licence; be physically fit and single with no family problems needing their attention and should be willing to work anywhere. Excellent remuneration will be paid for suitable candidates. Please apply with full biodata to Dr. Karanth at the above address.

Identifying Individual Tigers from Their Stripes

Dr. K. Ullas Karanth, Associate Research Ecologist, W.C.S. (India Program)

S. P. Goyal and A. J. T. Johnsingh (*Tiger Link News* 2: 1, June 1996) have urged caution while using camera trap photos to identify individual tigers. Identification of individual animals based on differences in visible characteristics has been applied by scientists on a variety of animals ranging from monkeys (facial marks), manatees (scars), lions (scars and whisker patterns). Tigers are even more easily identified using differences in stripe patterns. Cumulatively, Hundreds of tiger photos which show clearly discernable stripe differences have been generated by scientists (C. McDougal in Nepal, Ron Tilson and Mike Griffith in Indonesia and myself in Nagarahole, Pench, Kanha and Kaziranga reserves of India) and naturalist photographers (V. Thapar, F. S. Rathore and Anup Shah in Ranthambore; Belinda Wright in Kanha; Nand Rana and Hashim Tyabji in Bandhavgarh). It must be noted that categorical identifications are possible only if comparisons are made using clear, well focused, well lit photos obtained from the same perspective. I have found that setting the TRAILMASTER camera traps laterally at 350 cm from the path with the electronic beam set 45 cm above the ground provides the most useful perspective for tiger identifications. The identifications must be based not just on the shape

of one or two stripes, but comparing shapes and relative position of several stripes with reference each other, on the flanks, shoulder, outer and inner limbs of the tiger. The distortions in perspective are maximum on the head because of its round shape, and I am surprised that Goyal and Johnsingh even used these for comparisons.

Under field conditions, due to various reasons, including intractable differences in camera perspectives mentioned by Goyal and Johnsingh and poor lighting, a proportion of pictures obtained will be unusable. They have to be ruthlessly discarded! Other errors in identification of individual tigers could arise from sloppy field work and record keeping (data form errors, misidentification of film rolls, reverse printing of negatives etc.)

Therefore, I agree with Goyal and Johnsingh that one has to be "cautious" in using camera trap photos of tigers. This admonition is valid for collection of any scientific data or for that matter while crossing the street! The sample size of six pictures used by the authors of this note, and their preference not to publish their findings in any peer reviewed journal do not suggest an abundance of scientific caution on their own part.

Panna Research Project - update

Ecology of tiger : to enable a realistic projection of the requirements needed to maintain a viable population of tigers in India.

Radio-tracking of the collared male began from 5th May and up to July had been tracked for 45 days, out of which locations were obtained for 33 days. The home range size is estimated to be around 115km² with a 'core' area of 53km² where 90% of the locations were. During the tracking period the male was found on five kills, three of them were of cattle. After the monsoon break, radio-tracking of this tiger is continuing by the project researcher, Neel Gogate.

The collared female was estimated to be an 18-20 month old dispersing sub-adult, who was in the process of leaving her natal area and establishing her territory. This is the most crucial and vulnerable period for a dispersing individual. Initially the female remained close to the area in which she was radio-collared, Badgadi, and later moved to a deep gorge near Jhalariya 5-6km away. Subsequently she was found using this area most of the time although once she was located 7-8km from there and twice, despite all attempts, she could not be located for several days. Once no contact was made for 11 days and on the 12th day she was back in the gorge area. It is speculated that during these periods she was exploring an area on the other side of the river, outside the receiver's range, in her process of finding a suitable area. In total, up to the monsoon, she was tracked for 39 days out of which 23 locations were obtained. Her home range size was estimated at 31km² with 90% of the locations being inside an area of 9.8km². Sadly in September, after

another period when she could not be located, her remains were found near the village of Gangau but due to heavy rains they were too heavily decomposed to ascertain cause of death.

Radio-tracking of the male and other study work is continuing and it is planned to radio-collar more tigers this winter.

Abi Tamin F. Vanak, M.Sc., student at the W.I.I. will be joining the project for his dissertation work. His subject is "*Movement patterns of radio-collared tiger(s) in Panna N.P.*" and it has four main objectives:- i) to determine the distribution of large ungulate species within the home range of a collared tiger, ii) to determine the relationship between the distribution of prey species and movement of the collared tiger, iii) to determine the relationship between prey distribution and kill distribution and iv) to determine the significance of habitat parameters on tiger movement and predation.

Dr. R.S. Chundawat, Principal Investigator, Wildlife Institute of India, Box 18, Dehra Dun 248001

Abi requires **camera equipment** to document activities related to his study. His preference is for 24-70mm and 70-300mm zoom lenses and a motordriven, autofocus body. Anyone who can lend, donate, or sell this or similar equipment should please contact him at the W.I.I.

♦ Dr. K. Ullas Karanth and Dr Melvin Sunquist's project "*Ecology and management of large carnivores*" was carried out in Nagarhole National Park from November 1989 to March 1995. The project aimed at understanding predatory ecology and social organization of tiger, leopard and dhole. The final technical report has now been published and submitted to the Government.

♦ As one of its collaborative research projects on various aspects of wildlife and biodiversity conservation in the state, the **Wildlife Wing of the Forest Department of West Bengal** in conjunction with the Forest

Development Corporation and Nature Environment and Wildlife Society of Calcutta has done a survey of the flora and fauna of **Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary** and produced the results in a colour **booklet** along with over 120 colour photographs. This sanctuary covers the lower catchment area of the Mahananda river, in the district of Darjeeling.

♦ The **Sankhala fellowship** for 1995 was awarded to C. Lachungpa, DFO (Wildlife) in Sikkim for a study on Himalayan Tahr in and around the Kangchendzonga National Park to recommend measures for its conservation.

♦ *Tiger rice*

Recent work done by a Calcutta-based research team headed by B.L. Brahmachary has discovered that the pheromonal fluid that is sprayed by tigers as part of their strategy to attract mates has something called 2AP or 2-acetyl-1-pyrroline - the same chemical that gives basmati its fragrance. Beware eating Basmati in tiger areas!

(Source: *India Today* 30/9/96)

♦ The **Wildlife Institute of India** held Their Annual Research Seminar in September 1996. As ever it presented an interesting round-up of the Institutes's research projects several of which are continuing in tiger areas, eg. Melghat, Panna, Rajaji, Tadoba-Andhari, Sariska and Palamau. The latter tiger reserve comes into a "study of the wild animal damage problems in and around PAs and managed forests in India". Researcher, K.S. Rajpurohit found that the problem of **cattle predation** by tiger and leopard is severe in **Palamau T.R.** where between 241 and 295 cattle were lifted annually between April 1989 to March 1994. T-L *News* is still awaiting specific reports at time of going to press.

Need for Research

*Ajith Kumar, Salim Ali Centre for
Ornithology & Natural History, Coimbatore*

An issue I would like the TigerLink to take up is that of wildlife research, or the lack of it. India has more species of most taxa than North America and Europe put together. Yet how many mammalian, herpetofaunal and invertebrate ecologists do we have? It is saddening to note that no attempt is being made to systematically promote a cadre of professional wildlife researchers spread throughout the country, through training and sustained research funding. In fact many feel that there is an increasing resistance to research in forested areas in the form of delayed, restricted and arbitrary funding, delayed (often indefinitely) granting of permissions, arbitrary restrictions on the movement of researchers once a permission is given etc. This bureaucratic stranglehold has actually been suffocating wildlife research for quite some time. Compare this with the advances made by us in agriculture and science and technology!

The result is that even after 25 years of Project Tiger we still do not have working knowledge of the monitoring methods, ecology, trade and socio-economic issues that are necessary for management of the tiger and its habitat in India. If this is true of Project Tiger, it is more so for the rest of our wildlife.

The Whitley Award for Animal Conservation

The Whitley award is an annual prize of up to £15,000 established by the Whitley Animal Protection Trust and the Royal Geographic Society given to the best animal conservation project submitted. It is intended that the amount should cover the major costs of the winning project, enabling it to proceed without having to wait to secure other funds. The Award supports multi-disciplinary teams rather than individuals, so that one-person ventures are rarely eligible. The applicant may be from any nation and must be over 25. Multi-national teams of any age group are encouraged. Details and applications forms are available from: The Whitley Award, Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR, U.K. Closing date is 10 January 1997.

Nepal

♦ *Tiger Counting—Methodology*

"Residents were identified by differentiating features of their pug marks. The technique relies on finding the clear impressions made by all four of the tiger's feet. This is critical because the distinguishing features facilitating identification may occur on any of the four feet and are more liable to be found on fore feet than on rear feet since the former are more subject to injuries which may result in permanent deformity. This technique is completely different from that used for census in India. There only the impressions of the rear feet are recorded. Moreover an Indian census uses a large number of persons, with varying levels of expertise, over a short period. In Nepal a very few highly skilled persons with long experience carry out the survey over a relatively long period. The tracks of each resident tigers' four feet are traced onto plastic sheets or photographed. Photographs are better because they indicate the nature of the substrate."

(Source: Charles McDougal, Smithsonian Research Associate.)

Sumatra

♦ *Tiger Study*

A four year study began in June 1995 designed to develop information about the distribution, status and ecology of wild tigers in Sumatra. It hopes "to develop a cost-effective field censusing system for tigers living in lowland rain forest habitat, using ground-based census counts, remote camera census and radio-telemetry that can be modified and used as a model for long-term population monitoring in Way

Kambas N.P. and other tiger protected areas in Sumatra". It also hopes "to establish a community-based conservation education programme to decrease tension in human-tiger interactions and to show how to share forest resources equitably."

"The **Sumatran tiger** *Panthera tigris sumatrae* is critically threatened with only about 400 living in five national parks and two game reserves on the island, and another 100 in unprotected areas likely to be converted to agriculture." "Tigers are being poisoned by villages at the forest edges and poaching occurs at unknown levels. Forest loss or disturbance has further fragmented the tiger populations."

An area near the Way Kanan Resort of Way Kambas National Park has been chosen as the tiger intensive monitoring area (TIMA). 97 photographs have been taken of tigers and 12 tiger individuals identified with the possibility of an additional two individuals for which the photographic record is, as yet, incomplete (one side only). They are five tigers for which only one photograph has been obtained.

Ronald Tilson, Conservation Director, Minnesota Zoo, Apple Valley MN 55124

Thailand

♦ Tiger Survey

Eleven wildlife sanctuaries and 21 national parks were investigated for this study. In all areas surveyed, it was commonly believed that tigers were not as abundant as in the past, and that they were now restricted to the more pristine and undisturbed core areas. Reservoirs, large settlements inside protected areas and the loss and degradation of forest were some of the main threats affecting tigers' essential needs and thus their relative abundance. Poaching, occasionally for individual tigers, but primarily for large cervids is equally insidious.

The work indicated resident tiger densities of 1/100 km² in an area of middle elevation mixed deciduous and dipterocarp forest with seasonal water sources and sparse, patchy distributions of large prey. In the lowland river valley of the same protected forest, with year round water availability and a substantial large prey biomass, tiger densities were higher. Resident tiger presence was found in 9 of the sanctuaries and 11 of the

national parks surveyed. A total of 143 tigers was estimated for these areas based on 1/100 km² density with reductions for the number and kinds of threats present in the area. This model yielded an estimate of 259 for the country although there are several sources of error in such an estimate.

Thailand's best remaining forest areas have only been legally protected in the last 20 years but a **large number of protected areas does not guarantee the future survival of the tiger**. Despite a good system of nature reserves in tiger habitat on Java and Bali in the mid 1930's and 1940's, the tiger still went extinct in the late 1970s. (Seidensticker, 1987) In Thailand many of the smaller, isolated protected areas already no longer contain tigers. Even the larger forested areas in Thailand which contain tigers are becoming increasingly encroached upon, fragmented and insularized by roads, dams, and human settlement. Some of these trends could be reversed by simply designing new or existing reserves such that corridors or connections are created between good forest areas that allow for occasional inter-refuge migrations.

(Excerpts from *Estimating the Current Abundance of the Indo-Chinese Tiger Panthera tigris corbetti in Thailand* by Alan Rabinowitz, Wildlife Conservation International, New York Zoological Society.)

♦ New Research NGO

The newly founded **Centre for Ecological Research and Conservation, Mysore** aims to provide a strong biological basis for conservation strategies relating to India's native species and natural habits.

It will primarily focus on detailed field-ecological studies, and status-surveys of poorly known species and habitats. Other important activities will involve dissemination of research findings in professional and popular fora; training and involvement of amateur naturalists, forest staff, and local people in conservation-monitoring programmes; and widening scope and increasing effectiveness of site-specific conservation measures by close liaison with other NGOs involved in related work. CERC presently consists of a core group of trained wildlife biologists, advised by respected professionals in the field of nature conservation. Further details may be requested from: CERC, 3076/5, 4th Crossing, Gokulam Park, Mysore 570 002.

The Political Wilderness - India's Tiger Crisis

On 22nd October 1996, the **Environmental Investigation agency (EIA)** launched a major new campaign to save the tiger with the release of a report "*The Political Wilderness - India's Tiger Crisis*". This document covers most of the issues concerning tiger conservation in India today, from poaching and international trade, to Project Tiger and protection in the field, to the effect of economic liberalisation on the environment and the serious lack of political will that surrounds the severe crisis of India's national animal. The EIA report details several case histories, eg. Manas and Kaziranga, to highlight specific problems in the field, it looks at various 'development' projects which are effecting National Parks and Sanctuaries around the country from Meghalaya and the north-east to the Western Ghats and Karnataka. EIA liaised with many tiger experts, individuals and NGOs in India and toured the country themselves seeing and hearing first hand many of the field problems. They went undercover in Calcutta to assess the ease with which tiger parts could be found and discovered just how easy it was. Their operation resulted in a seizure of three leopard skins by the authorities. EIA's **conclusions**, echoing many TL participants views, were:

The Indian tiger is under serious threat of extinction in the wild within the next few years, a fate echoed by the threat to the forests and all the fauna & flora living in them.

The GOI has failed to deal with this threat over the last few years even when the evidence of poaching, amounting to at least one tiger poached every day, was revealed.

State Governments have largely failed to respond to the tiger crisis.

The tiger and its habitat is threatened by poaching for bones and skin, by industrial development, hostility from local communities and the activities of the timber mafia.

Wildlife trade in India is out of control. The enforcement authorities, apart from a tiny minority, are com-

pletely failing to enforce the WPA, EPA and FCA.

The highly endangered Tibetan antelope is being driven towards extinction because of India's illegal consumption of the species in the form of its underwool, *shahtoosh*. This trade is linked to the illegal trade in tigers.

Field staff are being killed in their courageous efforts to protect tigers and other wildlife. They receive little support and, starved of funds, often live in appalling conditions.

The report lists seven **recommendations**:

- The Indian P.M. must re-convene the Indian Board for Wildlife under his chairmanship and draw up an emergency plan to tackle the imminent demise of the tiger and its habitat.
- The Planning Commission must look seriously at increasing the budget allowance for wildlife and forest protection in the IXth 5 year plan as proposed by the MOEF.
- The recommendations of the various Indian expert committees must be prioritised and implemented.
- The international community must encourage the GOI to create renewed political will to save the tiger.
- The international community must do everything in its power to close illegal markets for tiger and other wildlife parts from India.
- Consuming nations must redouble their efforts to clamp down on illegal consumption of tiger parts within their own countries.
- If the Indian P.M. draws up an emergency plan to save the tiger, the international community must provide financial support to ensure its success.

Copies of the report available from EIA, 15 Bowling Green Lane, London EC1R 0BD. Fax: 0171-490 0436. Email: daniel@gn.apc.org

♦ **Helping Hand**, researched compiled and edited by **Camellia Satya**. A directory of animal welfare organisations in India published by **Kindness to Animals and Respect for Environment (KARE)**. "*A very useful ready reckoner for people interested in making the lives of animals better*"

Rs 50 (+ Rs 10 for outstation cheques + Rs 20 for postage) from KARE, M-39, Main Market, Greater Kailash I, New Delhi 110 048.

♦ **Sanctuary Magazine** Vol. XVI.No.5 1996 is an issue devoted largely to the tiger and its present crisis. The cover story, **Tiger 2000**, is by Bittu Sahgal and Valmik Thapar, both members of the Tiger Crisis Cell, Project Tiger Steering Committee and TigerLink participants. Other articles cover Kamlang Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh, Ranthambore, Palamau T.R. and violations in Madhya Pradesh.

The Big Cat Cover Up—*the truth behind the Indian tiger crisis*

Launched in September 1996 with well-orchestrated PR, a 66 page report, **The Big Cat Cover Up** by Michael Day of **Tiger Trust** claims to “*present the truth behind the Indian tiger crisis*”. Although Tiger Trust say they “*put themselves at considerable personal risk to collect this dossier of information*”, in fact there is very little information which has not been previously published. However it does cover some of the serious issues concerning the tiger crisis that have been recognised and raised by individuals, NGOs and even some government officials in India since 1993/94. Issues and information that have been raised at the Tiger Symposium, Tiger Forum, TigerLink and Bagh Bachao meetings, raised in committees and other Government fora, through newspapers and journals, nationally and internationally.

Its main emphasis is on poaching and the lack of “*co-ordinated anti-poaching programme in operation*”. The report criticises Project Tiger for allowing India’s tiger reserves to fall into “*abject disrepair*”. It also criticises NGOs for “*becoming more part of the problem*”. Specifically WWF, especially WWF-India are singled out, criticised for “*weasel marketing*” and for pursuing policies that “*are doing little to help the tiger*” in their reluctance to “*tackle the tiger-poaching epidemic head-on*”.

Day puts forward his recommendations for immediate action - anti-poaching in Project Tiger Reserves involving “*Rapid-response, Intercept and Stand-by teams*” provided with state of the art equipment such as thermal imagers, as well as jeeps, radios, rifles, knives, binoculars etc.

The Tiger Trust, Chevington, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP29 5RG, UK

♦ **Russia’s Final Roar** - *Criminal threats to the Siberian tiger and local communities: an inside look at a new fight for survival* by the **Investigative Network** for the Siberian tiger support coalition. The report says “*Russia’s Siberian tiger is showing signs of a possible recovery. Following four straight years of intensive poaching, which halved Russia’s tiger population and led many observers to predict its extinction in the wild, recent investigations indicate that illegal tiger hunting and trading in the Russian Far East has declined considerably. Observers attribute this reprieve to new anti-poaching efforts, community outreach programs, and habitat protection schemes. Funded largely by foreign money, these efforts may lead to the most successful achievement in the history of endangered species protection. Moreover, they represent a new approach to addressing threats to wildlife and human populations simultaneously through a series of biodiversity and community development programs. These programs are now backed by a new Russian Government Tiger Decree.*” However, the report warns that the battle is far from won. Nevertheless, the plight of the Siberian tiger has come to symbolize the critical inter-relationship between wildlife and human welfare in the region, both so disastrously effected by the poaching epidemic and the un-licensed logging. The report describes the various threats to the region, outlines future prospects for the tiger there, provides recommendations both for Russia and the international community and lists the various organisations and agen-

cies involved in the Siberian Tiger Support Coalition through whom help may be sent. **Investigative Network** is a division of Global Security Network, P.O. Box 73214, T Street Station, Washington D.C. 20009.

♦ **Canada’s Role in the Tiger Trade - Recommendations for a Tiger Safe Nation** by **Nathalie Chalifour**, May 1996. This report provides a strong reminder that the fate of Asia’s tigers can also lie with individuals half the world away! The WWF Canada publication presents the background to the present tiger crisis, highlighting the poaching crisis and Canada’s role in it. The report examines the tiger in traditional Chinese medicine and the international traffic in tiger parts. It outlines Canada’s legislation and enforcement, looks at the responsibilities and loopholes in this and puts forward various recommendations for halting a seemingly still flourishing trade, eg. “*Between November 1994 and March 1996, over 24,000 tiger bone pieces, medicines and claw and tooth pendants were seized by Canadian authorities at the border.*” Canada has been identified by TRAFFIC as a key market for tiger-based medicines and this report appears to confirm this. “*Tigers will only survive if this demand for tiger parts is curbed*” and Chalifour calls on Canadian citizens to act now to make Canada a “*tiger safe nation*”. WWF praises the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act (WAPPRIITA) but strongly criticises delays in preparing the regulations necessary for it to come into force.

WWF-Canada, 90 Eglinton Av.E, Suite 504, Toronto, Ontario, M4P 2Z7.

Publications & Media

♦ *Tiger in Crises* by Billy Arjan Singh, a publication of the **Tiger Haven Wildlife Trust (THWT)**, draws attention to the serious crisis faced by the tiger in the sub-continent and particularly in **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve** due primarily to the serious increase in wildlife poaching. Arjan Singh argues that executive failure has depressed wildlife numbers to the point of no return, more than a lack of political will. THWT was set up in late 1994 in response to the Dudhwa Field Director's assertion that there was a virtual absence of wildlife crime in the Park. Since then this NGO, with the assistance of the Police Department, has been actively engaged in the seizure of skins and bones. (see previous *TigerLink News*) Arjan Singh emphasises the additional problem created by the extensive and unmanned border between India and Nepal which works in favour of poachers and wildlife traders from both countries. He notes that only an Indo-Nepal protocol between Governments can take action but points out that implementation must function with cooperation from the Police, Forest Department, Customs & Excise etc. and coordinated by the Ministry of Environment & Forests. He states that NGOs such as THWT

(a registered charity) could "function as warheads to alert Government Agencies for follow up action in the apprehension and conviction of poachers, skin and bone trader and illegal traffickers." The publication also contains an appeal for funds. THWT, Tiger Haven, Palia Kalan, Dist. Kheri, U.P.

♦ *A Tiger's Tale - the Indian tiger's struggle for survival in the wild* by **Anup & Manoj Shah**. A beautifully produced book with stunning photographs of tigers in Ranthambhore. Fountain Press 1996 144 pp.

♦ *The Leopard in India - A Natural History* by **J.C. Daniel**, 1996. Natraj Publishers, Dehra Dun, 228 pp. A fascinating collation of all available information from the early issues of the BNHS in sequence and with commentary by an ex-Curator/Director of the BNHS.

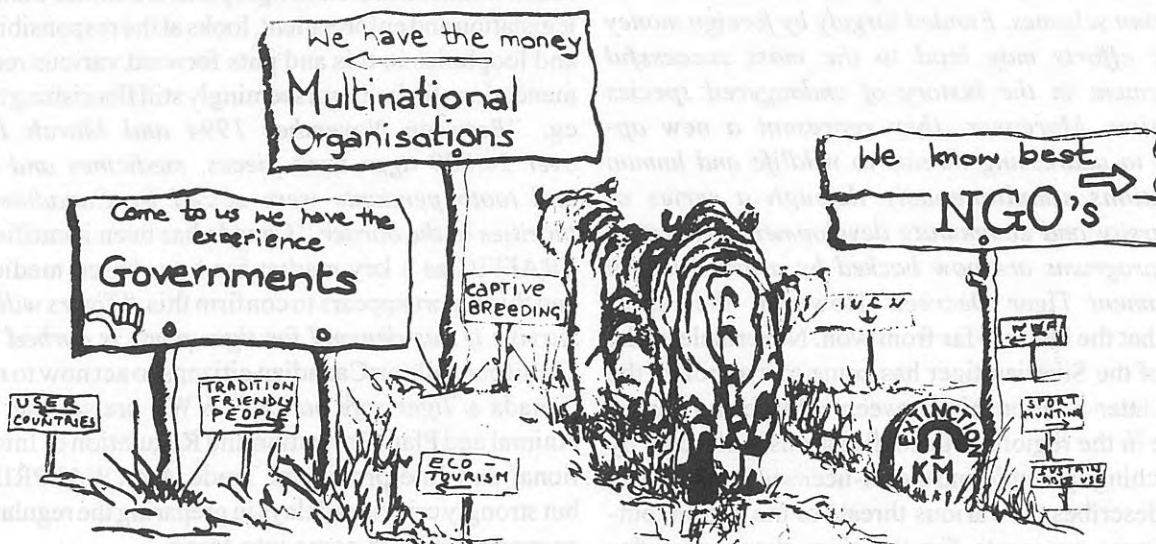
♦ *Animal Laws of India*, edited by **Maneka Gandhi, Ozair Husain & Raj Panjwani**. Central and state laws pertaining to animals with judgments and advice on how to file FIRs, what actions you can take etc. Universal Law Publishing Co. 1996 603 pp. Rs.425/-

♦ *The Exploitation of Mammal Populations* edited by **Victoria J. Taylor and Nigel Dunston**. London, Chapman & Hall 1996 pp.415 This book presents a selection of papers presented at a conference organised in London by the Universities' Federation for Animal Welfare and the Mammalian Society. It includes contributions from an international array of wildlife biologists, ecologists and conservationists.

♦ A BBC film unit shooting for the new serial, "*In the Land of the tiger*", have filmed two jackals chasing a sloth bear and biting its bottom! The bear ran away. They also have some extraordinary footage of tiger and buffalo interaction.

♦ **BBC's Tiger Crisis film** is being updated and will be aired again on television in the new year, 1997.

♦ The **National Geographic Society** have requested extension until June 1997 of the "generous cooperation and permission" accorded by the PCCF, Madhya Pradesh to their photographer Mr Michael Nichols. This is to enable him to photograph the tigress, Sita, and her '96 born cubs until they grow to 18 months old.



TIGER LINK—Unite to Save the Tiger, Sketch by Dr Goverdhan Singh Rathore

A Plea for Sariska

Shomita Mukherjee, Research Scholar,
W.I.I. Dehra Dun

Although heavily disturbed, Sariska Tiger Reserve has a very impressive list of wildlife, especially cats. Apart from the tiger, leopard, caracal, jungle cat and rusty spotted cat are all found there. Other carnivores are jackal, hyaena, small Indian civet, palm civet, common mongoose and ruddy mongoose. With 11 species of carnivores, the reserve is obviously also rich in prey species. Historically too the area is of importance and it has immense tourist potential. Unfortunately, to date, Sariska has been largely neglected by conservationists who have almost given it up as a lost battle, despite the many short and long term research activities which have been conducted in the park.

The problems faced by the reserve are similar to those experienced in many PAs in India including villages located inside, poaching - especially of ungulates, grazing and mining activities. Most of these issues can be tackled by relocating villages and by the strict monitoring of waterholes where most of the poaching takes place. Relocation of villages is a complicated issue but it has been done in the past in this Reserve which proves that if there is a will (political and of the other administrative departments in the state and district) it can be done. Most of these problems have been discussed in great detail for many years with no action actually taking place and the longer the delay, the worse the situation becomes.

For instance, there are NGOs that work in the name of conservation at cross purposes with the Forest Department, building check dams and waterbodies for the villages inside the core area (National Park) which includes the main 30 km² 'tourism zone'. Such ecodevelopment if at all should be carried out outside and not inside the N.P.s. Many of these remote and small waterbodies were seen to have hides built around for the purpose of poaching. The Forest Department is not wholly to blame for this as they lack manpower and equipment. Most chowkies have at the most 4 to 5 guards equipped only with *lathis* and (more impressively) wireless sets but it is pointless if there are no good vehicles to reach the remote areas on time to support the guards there in case of emergency. This is not mere speculation but has happened on several occasions during my stay in Sariska. Emergencies are not just poaching incidents but also fire fighting, where the paucity of vehicles and staff are always felt.

It is time organisations providing funds for conservation also had a look at Sariska. The area does have potential to come up just as well as any other 'good tiger reserve' provided actions are quick. Leaving such areas for 'later' is as good as giving up totally which would surely be unfortunate.

Lack of Awareness—An Unseen Threat

Prachi Mehta, SRF, W.I.I., Dehra Dun

On 1st November, the discussion forum at the Wildlife Institute of India held a hot and stimulating debate on the problems of conservation and particularly the crisis facing the tiger. Subject matter covered a range of issues including problems of poaching, ill equipped forest departments, poorly enforced law and habitat law. If I say all these are basically administrative snags, I am not meaning to pass the buck to the concerned departments but merely stating the facts. These faults of the system are too well known and do not need to be reiterated here. I want to discuss what I feel is a bigger social snag - lack of awareness at all levels from the layman to those who wield power.

I feel that the level of awareness in our country regarding conservation is confined to a very narrow section. Learning begins at home. A 9 year old mind can grasp up to 14 languages, so why not wildlife and conservation also? Catch them young.

In service people perceive wildlife poaching as a penalty posting. This has to change. There are many instances where a single committed officer has won against all odds and worked for the cause relentlessly. They have inspired their field staff and created a very dedicated team together. Such officers are known to be setting a culture of conservation in their field area and these are the relatively safer areas till date. If this kind of commitment becomes more common then we do have some hope. This too comes with awareness.

Till today no poacher or dealer has been adequately convicted for the crime he has committed. It certainly is demoralizing.

In a country where elephant killers were given most severe punishments during the Mauryan dynasty, poaching should be considered a preplanned cold-blooded crime. We have a very strong case but sadly very few advocates for conservation.

TigerLink serves as a common meeting ground for interested individuals. We must write, speak and meet more often and work for the cause together each in our own capacity sincerely.

Remember we have predicted only four more years for tigers.

Extracts from Your Communications

"At this critical time, the tiger needs rapid field action with all organisations focusing on their priorities rather than relying any more on the government to implement the kind of actions and improvements to wildlife protection recommended by the wildlife experts. Criticising the Indian government will serve no real purpose."

Open Forum

The major thrust in field action has to be directed at the forest guard, who daily endangers his life in the forests of India. Improving conditions for these men and providing appropriate additional equipment is the urgency. Protecting the buffer zones in cooperation with local communities is still the long term solution, but the continued tiger poaching requires action now." 11/96

Peter Lawton, Director, Global Tiger Patrol, 96, Sector 17, Gurgaon 1220 001, Haryana.

"In terms of supporting forest guards, what can be done specifically?Are there different projects an organization (or funding organization) could take on, depending on the level of commitment they can provide?....is there a role for US organizations other than supplying jeeps, uniforms and weapons? Are there other ways in which US groups could help protect preserves?" 26/6/96

Greg Smith, 226 San Carlos #1, San Francisco, Ca 94110, USA. Fax: 33-415-255-298 Email: Greg_Smith@SFBayGuardian.com

"The only way is that all really concerned, maybe an NGO, maybe the people, maybe officials should join hands and bring about a combined consolidated movement to make the political governments realise that it is necessary for them to save the natural resources....NGOs should try to develop a communication media with new IFS officers....I wish that all the NGOs should make and develop a combined front to bring about a movement from the people only. People living around the forest....are the people who can stop poaching and smuggling of wildlife products, if we are able to motivate them. I feel that

they are equally concerned about what is happening to wildlife and their habitat but they are not able to do anything." 14/11/96

Kabir Ahmad, SDO Forests, President, SATYA, Pilibhit, U.P.

"We would be glad if you could give us an idea of how we could, sitting in Mumbai, contribute to the rescue of the tiger in India. We would also be glad to know what role Mumbai plays in illegal trade in tigers and other wildlife." 23/7/96

Susi Wiesinger, Hon.Sec., AHIMSA, c/o W.R. Stoessel & Co., Maker Bhavan No.1 2nd Floor, 1 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020 Tel: 5773549 Fax: 2624551. AHIMSA is an animal rights activist group concerned with ill treatment and exploitation of animals.

"(TigerLink NEWS) is individual and spirited.... There is something special about the T-L/Bagh Sevak Awards in the way they recognise the value of the 'troops in the front line'; their courage and persistence in the face of not only poachers but the stealthy working behind their backs. In the end, it all depends on what we do in our respective ways. These winners have done so much...."

Of course, we have not overlooked India in supporting the Siberian Tiger work! For the past two years we have been supporting Bibhab Talukdar of Aaranyak Nature Club on tiger and rhino monitoring...."

Dad has just completed another stunning large canvas of tigers - with which we hope to raise further funds." 10/7/96

Melanie Shepherd, Director, The David Shepherd Conservation Foundation, PO Box 123, Godalming Surrey GU8 4JS, UK. Tel: 01483 208576 Fax: 01483 208253

"Congratulations to all concerned. It is a valuable round-up of tiger info." 9/7/96

Peter Jackson, Chairman, Cat Specialist Group, IUCN World Conservation Union, 1172 Bougy, Switzerland.

"(T-L N) gives me useful information about your projects and other projects working throughout world to save such a magnificent creature tiger...."

I would like to help you in your projects if you think you need a working person you can write to me and I will be happy to help you." 3/7/96

Mayank Awasthi, 105/271 Shree Nagar, Kanpur 208001, U.P.

"TigerLink is wonderful. I read from first to the last page."

I am very happy to know the Mr K.M. Chinnappa has won TigerLink Award. I would like to personally congratulate him....in future include the addresses of the awardees, so that people like me can write to them."

I think we all should encourage the demoralized foresters. We should tell them that there are many people who appreciate their (unrewarding) work. I regularly write to forest guards and other lower-rank foresters."

You are doing a wonderful service by awarding them." 24/6/96
Asad R. Rahmani, Centre of Wildlife & Ornithology, AMU, Aligarh 202 002

"TigerLink is here - and terrific. I'm still digesting all its news.I've been to see the people who oversee the Exxon "Save the Tiger" fund. They are eager to fund Indian projects in the field." 1/7/96

Geoffrey C. Ward, wildlife writer, 290 West End Avenue (17-C), New York, NY 10023 Fax: 212 724 7834

"I am glad you have brought out this journal since it has exceedingly valuable information. I am also happy that you have honoured Shri. K.M. Chinnappa. He is very worthy of it." 22/6/96

M.S. Swaminathan, chairman M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, 3rd Cross St., Taramani Institutional Area, Chennai 600 113. Fax: 2351319 Email: mssrf.madras@sm8.sprintprg.sprint.com

"It has useful information for all concerned individuals and organisations." 24/6/96

Samar Singh, Secretary General, WWF-India, 172-B Lodhi Estate, New Delhi 110 003. Tel: 4627586/4616532/4693744 Fax: 4626837

"This is the kind of publication that opens the flood-gates of our fountain head within for ideas.

....it has been our dream scheme to institute such awards for the real custodians of our eco-system but could not do it for paucity of funds. And thus having seen your action on this count, we are reasonably most over-joyed.

Could you enquire with any of the INTERNET Service Bureau in Capital if there is any ENVIRO-WILDLIFE Info channel wherein you might consider putting an insertion of award news for the conservationists across the world." 11/7/96

Raja Chatterjee, Sec. The Jungles, 78, Brahma Samaj Rd., Behala, Calcutta 700 034

"One would think that the tiger in India would have been saved fifty times over given the quality of this excellent networking exercise. The greatest benefit from this effort will be to boost the morale of the tiger workers in the far flung reaches of our blessed land.

I get a lot of tiger related calls here and these include people

who would like to contribute to tiger conservation in India.. One that came today was from Gail Laviola, who was presented with a tiger cub by her fiancé! She would like to make a donation and had read Billy Arjan Singh's latest booklet referred to on page 28." 8/7/96

Thomas Mathew, Director, East & South Asia, WWF-US, 1250 Twenty-fourth St., NW Washington DC 20037-1175, USA

"We are continuing our appeals for tiger conservation, the next one being on World Animal day - October 4th - in association with Australian zoos and a commercial pet food company. At the request of the company and the Australian zoos, this will of necessity focus on Sumatran tigers.

....(we) will endeavour to see Indian tigers on our agenda some time in the future." 12/8/96

WWF-Australia, GPO Box 528, Sydney NSW 2001 Fax: (02) 299 6656/299 6580

"I am interested in Manas Tiger Reserve. I shall give all help to TigerLink activities in Assam." 9/8/96

Mr. Dhittiman Das, College Road, Barpeta, Assam 781301

"We found it very informative and useful for our purpose.

We belong to a district which is famous and rich resort for wildlife especially the tiger. But the status of wildlife in our district is alarming and further deteriorating.

So we hope we can share our experience with concerned people of India through the TigerLink." 6/7/96

Kaushik Mallik, Gen.Sec., Society for Environment & Social Awareness, Belwatikar, Daltonganj-822101, Bihar

"It is a good newsletter with lots of information. Kindly include my name on the mailing list so that I can receive the letter regularly."

Dr. A.B. Shrivastav, Wildlife Health Coordinator, Associate Professor (Pathology), College of Vet.Science & A.H., Jabalpur 482001, M.P. Fax: 761-342888

"Taking the All Assam Students Union unit of Barpeta District in confidence, I have formed "Aranyak Gosthi" (an NGO) and approached the Courts. The first step has been successful. (see 'Legal', Assam) "Aranyak Gosthi" is now thinking of approaching the High Court with the case of encroachment in Panbari in Manas. There is a problem with finance. If TigerLink can help in this type of efforts, then the "Aranyak Gosthi" may possibly be extended all over the state." (translated from Assamese) 6/11/96

Ganesh Das, Barpeta Vidyapith, Barpeta 781 301, Assam

"I was thrilled to read the TigerLink NEWS and very glad to know of what T-L is doing to enthuse the lower rungs of the Forest Department to get on with their task of protecting the tiger and its habitat. I am also very glad that critical area specific issues in conservation are being highlighted. The reports on review of Project Tiger made interesting reading. Similarly, titbits, such as central and state funding for wildlife were also interesting....

I would like to see T-L taking on a few major issues in conservation and carrying it through until something is achieved. 23/7/96

Ajith Kumar, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology & Natural History, Kalampalayam P.O., Coimbatore 641010

We suggested in the last *NEWS* that a six month interval might be more appropriate—human and financial resources also being what they are. No dissenting comments were received so here is the follow-on to the June issue. Please keep the information flowing.

TIGER LINK DIRECTORY

TigerLink is planning to produce a **directory** of all participants. Please check that the newsletter is addressed to you correctly and notify us immediately of any changes required and of phone/fax/email numbers. New participants who wish to be part of the network should please send their details along with some information as to who they are and why they wish to be part of the link.

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Tiger Link News is for private circulation, only to Tiger Link Participants. It records worldwide tiger news and information, much 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.

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