



# TIGERLINK

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

## NEWS

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### JUDICIARY SAVING INDIA'S FORESTS

On 12th December 1996 a **landmark order** was passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court Justices, J.S. Verma and B.N. Kripal. The order banned the felling of trees on private and Government forest land all over the country except in accordance with proper working plans approved by the MoEF as declared in the National Forest Policy 1988. It also underlined the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 and ordered all non forest activities occurring in forest areas without the prior approval of the central Government to "cease forthwith".

This order is the most **major development** effecting India's forests since the Forest Conservation Act of 1980. "I have yet to come across such a **far-reaching** order in the world," says one lawyer, "it is **unprecedented** and its impact is bigger than my words can express". He estimates that one in five citizens of India will be affected by this radical and far reaching order and believes that it shows the deep sensitivity of the judiciary to the plight of India's forests.

One of the most immediate impacts is that large-scale **illegal mining** across the country has been **brought to a halt**. Thousands of illegal mines in forest areas in all the states have had to close. In **Rajasthan** 50,000 hectares of forest land were being illegally mined; over **1500 illegal mines** have been closed since this order, in this one state alone. In Haryana, 1300 hectares of forest land were being destroyed by illegal mines.

**Indiscriminate deforestation**, the ad hoc, arbitrary felling that was being done, has been **stopped**. The principle of scientific management adhering to forestry working plans has been restored in conformity with the National Forest Policy. Each Forestry Division is meant to work according to a sustainable working plan which has been approved by the Centre. Many had been operating without one.

Another significant part of the order is that **all the stay orders** granted by all courts have been **vacated**.

Thousands of cases exist all over the country where private companies and individuals have approached courts and obtained stay orders allowing them to continue mining/felling/operating sawmills etc. in spite of the charges against them for violating the F.C. Act. All these frivolous stays have been cancelled by this one Supreme Court order.

For seventeen years the **Hill Councils** of the North East have ignored the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, claiming that

they were not included in its auspices. This order makes it clear that they do come under it and all illegal activity has been stopped.

The **National Forest Policy of 1988 recommends** that **66% of the hill areas and 33% of the plains should be covered with forest**. Perhaps now we have a chance to reach this target.

(See legal pages for more details)

An indication of the scale of forest destruction may be seen in the following figures:

In **U.P.** there were **10,242 sawmills**. Only **4941** of these were **licensed**. The remaining 5301 of these have been closed.

In **Madhya Pradesh** over **6000 unlicensed sawmills** had been operating.

In a small state like **Tripura**, there were **86 sawmills** of which **only 33** were **licensed**.

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## Congratulations to the latest winners of the TigerLink Bagh Sevak Awards

The **TigerLink Bagh Sevak Awards** continue to be presented to the 'unsung heroes' across the country who have been recommended for their excellence in tiger conservation, above and beyond the call of duty.

- At the Golden Jubilee celebrations in Corbett National Park in December 1996, the Governor of U.P., Shri Romesh Bhandari conferred TigerLink Awards on Shri Nissar, mahout at Corbett N.P., Shri Anand Ballabh Joshi, plumber/postman in Corbett N.P., the late Shri Harpal Singh Bist, wildlife guard, Rajaji N.P. and Shri S. A certificate and cash award were presented to each.

**Shri Nissar**, a quiet and efficient worker has been instrumental over the years in apprehending various gangs of intruders to Corbett National Park. Some of these operations conducted at night would not have been possible without his courage and that of **Phulhari**, his elephant, by disregarding personal danger and crossing the raging Ramganga during the monsoon.

In 1982, **Shri Anand Ballabh Joshi** drove the boat which intercepted and apprehended poachers in a large motor launch. The courage he displayed was all the greater as these poachers were a party of senior government officials on a shooting spree inside Corbett National Park. The party comprised of a Commissioner, a District Magistrate, an S.D.M., the Superintendent of Police and S.H.O. of the District! Shri Joshi did not budge from his truthful statement in the subsequent enquiries conducted under pressure. He still continues to be on daily wages and is a great fighter for the park.

**Shri Harpal Singh Bist** was a very sincere and dedicated wildlife guard of Rajaji National Park. While on routine night patrolling on 30 January 1995, along with late **Shri Naresh Kumar Singh**, daily wage employee, in Danda beat of the Motichur Range, he challenged a large gang of wood poachers who were cutting valuable timber trees in the park. Sri Bist had a 12 bore Government gun with him but the wood poachers surrounded them in the dark and mercilessly killed both of them with saws and stones. One poacher, Mehadi was also killed by Shri Bist in the struggle. Shri Bist used to patrol his area on a bicycle almost every night with just one watcher. His loss is a great setback to the park. Both he and Shri Naresh Kumar Singh sacrificed their lives for the cause of conservation. Shri Bist's widow collected the award.

**Shri S.** has done extraordinary undercover work, exposing perpetrators of wildlife trade. He has provided invaluable information, often risking his life to do so. His efforts have been invaluable in matters pertaining to the detection of illegal trade in wild flora and fauna.

- In January 1997, Valmik Thapar, member M.P. Tiger State Committee and TigerLink coordinator, visited Pench Tiger Reserve and during his visit presented TigerLink Bagh Sevak Awards to five of the tiger reserve staff for their exceptional efforts in wildlife protection and three staff members from Pench National Park, Maharashtra for their exceptional performance in 1996.

**Shri Maniram Dhurve**, forest guard of Tekadi beat in Karnajbhui range, showed exceptional courage and wisdom and was responsible for the seizure of a tiger skin, bones and

electric G.Z. wire that had been used in the electrocution of the tiger.

**Shri Narayan Prasad Tiwari**, forester in Gumtara range, showed exceptional courage in apprehending wildlife poachers.

**Shri Deepak Mishra**, at the Turin gate observed all the rules and regulations strictly during the last one year, his first posting.

**Shri Gautam Soni** was also awarded for his exceptional knowledge of the park and birds.

**Shri Shersingh** was given his award for his exceptional work in anti-poaching in and around Pench Tiger Reserve.

- **Shri B.M. Lede**, Forest Guard, North Sillari was commended for his work in controlling illegal grazing and illicit felling, for his development of new waterholes and the good rapport he developed with local villagers.

**Shri B.Z. Randive**, forest Guard, South Salama, was awarded for his excellent work in controlling illegal fishing and illegal grazing. In the latter connection he seized 107 cattle.

**Shri S.B. Parteti**, Forest Guard, East Chikhalkhari, was given the award for his exceptional work in protecting the grasslands from fire during the Summer, 1996.

- Several senior Forest Officers were present at a function on 26 January 1997 in Nagpur where TigerLink Bagh Sevak Awards were presented to Shri C.K. Patil, Shri Kishore Mishrikotkar and Shri Kishor Rithe.

**Shri C.K. Patil**, Deputy Conservator of Forests, M.P. was until very recently the Deputy Director of the Madhya Pradesh side of Pench National Park. He continues to fight the fish mafia in Pench and has played a crucial role in protecting the tiger reserve. He continues to play a significant role in fighting poaching gangs and in uncovering information on the trade in illegal wildlife parts and products.

**Shri Kishore Mishrikotkar**, Range Forest Officer, Pench N.P. Maharashtra is in charge of the anti-poaching unit of the State Government at Vidharbha. He served in Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary and Pench where his defence of the tiger and its home has won him departmental plaudits and recognition from local environmentalists. He is deeply committed to the improvement of the working conditions of forest staff. This he believes will help in protecting the tiger. He was beaten up by the fish mafia who wish to commercialise the Pench Reservoir. He is also the General Secretary of the Maharashtra Range Forest Officers RFO Union.

(Mahadurga Apartment, Jagnade Square, Nandanvan, Nagpur).

**Shri Kishor Rithe** is the founder of Nature Conservation Society, Amravati which is a student organisation fighting for the conservation of bird habitats and of Melghat Tiger Reserve. He is currently working on the creation of a corridor linking the 'tiger' forests of Maharashtra to the Satpuras in M.P. He works closely with the *Satpura Bachao Abhiyan* who have helped to link forest officers with local communities to assist in conservation and the protection of vital areas of the central Indian highlands. He was also instrumental in exposing the bird trade in Amravati district and continues to work in liaison with forest officers on anti-poaching campaigns.

(Pratishtha, Bharat Nagar, Nr. Sai Nagar, Akoli Road, Amravati 444605)



**Andhra Pradesh**

• **A.P. Highways Project**

Part of the World Bank aided A.P. State Highways Project proposal includes the widening of the Tirupati/Chandragiri/Madanapalli road and part of this road passes along the boundary of the **Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve**. The WWF-India, A.P. State Office had been invited to comment on the proposal and came out in its support in spite of noting that "the habitat on either side of the road is fairly good for wildlife" with movement of deer and leopard across the road, and in spite of it involving some cutting of trees in the sanctuary. Bittu Sahgal, member of the MoEF's Infrastructure Subcommittee estimates that "conservatively, the road...cannot possibly damage less than 1,00,000 trees along its entire length." Sahgal, also a member of the Tiger Crisis Cell and Project Tiger Steering Committee was shocked by the NGO's reaction (see T-L News vol.2 no.2 'Stop Press').

This project has now been **cleared** under mysterious circumstances. A site visit was planned and the Infrastructure Environmental Appraisal Committee recorded in its minutes that the clearance will only be considered after the site visit had been made. However, the MoEF in its wisdom preempted the site visit and issued a clearance.

The **good news** is that, despite the ill-advised WWF-India recommendation to go ahead with the roads, the project authority was forced to move the alignments away from three tiger habitats and another two sanctuaries in Andhra Pradesh. The MoEF has also asked for a (post-facto clearance) site visit to be made by a team comprising Bittu Sahgal and Mr. Lauria, a roadways expert. This team is being asked to recommend additional conditions. Further developments are awaited and we will be monitoring the progress of this project carefully.

Source: Letter/report of Mr. R.K. Rao 22/8/96; Email from Bittu Sahgal 17/5/97

**Assam**

• **UNESCO funds for Manas**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is donating Rs.72,00,000 as emergency aid to Manas National Park, a World Heritage site which is still considered to be in peril due to the Bodo agitations. The financial assistance will be given over a five year period from June 1997.

• **Rhino poaching**

After a six month period of no poaching, the situation in **Kaziranga National Park** has deteriorated and in the last couple of months **5 rhinos** have been **poached**. It seems that with the army crackdown in Assam, the carrying of arms has become too risky and poachers are reverting to the traditional pit method. 25-30 pits have been found in the eastern and central ranges of the park. Furthermore in an encounter last month between poachers and park staff, a known pit-digging expert was killed. In **Orang Sanctuary** two rhinos were poached in April. It seems that the traders are putting a lot of pressure—and money—into rhino poaching. Could this resurgence be connected with South Africa's attempts to reopen trade for their southern white rhino populations?

• **Kaziranga funds**

It appears that **Kaziranga's budget** for this financial year has been **reduced even further**. However a little good news is that, from money received for flood damage, it has been possible to repair some bridges and fill up raised ground, repairing old platforms, thereby providing sanctuary areas for the wildlife in times of high flood.

• **Equipment for Kaziranga**

At the launch of the **Environmental Investigation Agency's** (EIA) tiger campaign in India, the British *Daily Telegraph Magazine* ran a large spread on the problems faced by **Kaziranga National Park**. The EIA set up "**The Kaziranga Fund**" by adding a few lines to this article guaranteeing to spend 100% of all money given on the park. The response was good and, in consult-

ation with the Field Director and Range Officers of Kaziranga and local experts, EIA has provided the following items to the park:

- a Maruti **ambulance** for the park staff and local communities;
- boots, jumpers, **full uniform**, insect repellent, antiseptic cream and **mosquito nets** for all the 600 staff at the park;
- two fibreglass **speed boats** for anti-poaching patrols in the Brahmaputra River.

EIA report that even after this, some little money remains which will probably be spent on night-vision binoculars.

• **Orang veterinary camp**

The **Refinery Employees Trekker's Guild**, an NGO established in 1990, organised a free veterinary vaccination cum treatment camp in the periphery villages of the Orang Wildlife Sanctuary on 8-9 February 1997 for the 2nd consecutive year. A total of 750 cattle were covered in four villages. H.S. and B.Q. vaccinations were inoculated besides free distribution of medicines for common ailments worth Rs.3000/. Shri Moloy Boruah, general secretary of the guild also addressed a gathering at 'camp no.3' in the sanctuary on various aspects of nature conservation. The camp was part of an environment awareness campaign that the guild is organizing in four protected areas of Assam—**Orang, Kaziranga, Manas and Chakrasila**.

R.E.T. Guild, Noonmati, Guwahati 781 020

• **Nature's Beckon**, an environmental activist group in north-east India have also undertaken various education and awareness projects around **Manas, Chakrasila and Dibru Saikhowa** and the Nambur, Jokai and Jaipur Reserve Forests. Villagers are being persuaded to prevent poaching of tiger and the destruction of their habitat. Participatory meetings have been held to work out ways to conserve the tiger and village committees formed for continuous vigilance and education. Posters in the local language have been displayed in markets, bus stops and other busy areas where

villagers throng. Beautiful folders with pictures of the tiger and information about it and the absolute need for its conservation have been printed in the local language and distributed among students and the educated people of the villages. The organisation has prepared a brief **status report on the Manas National Park** and organized awareness campaigns in the fringe villages of **Kaziranga National Park**.

Source: Nature's Beckon News, ed. J.M.Datta. Ward No.1 Dhubri 783 301, Assam.

### • **Pobitara problems**

Aaranyak Nature Club (ANC) reports that as part of protection measures, the **Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary Range Officer** initiated action against encroachers on sanctuary land. In retaliation, charges were laid against him, severely demoralising the staff. ANC challenged the warrant in the High Court and secured its suspension.

Source: *Wildlife Matters* issue 10, magazine of the David Shepherd Conservation Foundation, U.K.

## Bihar

### • **Palamau assessed**

At the suggestion of the Director, Project Tiger and on the recommendation of the Tiger Crisis Cell and Project Tiger Steering Committee, the Ministry of Environment & Forests sent a team to Bihar and the **Palamau Tiger Reserve** in April 1997 to assess the situation. Some of their **findings** were:

— The **Chief Secretary, Bihar** was **not acquainted with the crisis** being faced by the tiger reserves.

— Due to the **presence of insurgents** within the park, the local **police have advised the field staff not to enter the park, especially at night, without police escort**. Unfortunately, due to the severely stretched resources of the police, **escorts are rarely available** when needed. The Director General Police, Bihar, categorically stated that a special strike force under the direct charge of the Field Directors, with competent police force is only possible if the Govt. of India bears

the expenditure directly through the Home Ministry, GOI.

— Out of 283 sanctioned posts in all categories of the **Palamau park staff, 102 posts are lying vacant**. 65 of these in the category of forest guard! In **Valmiki 70 posts are vacant**.

— There are **major shortages in equipment**. Funds for two 4-wheel drive vehicles released nearly two years ago by Project Tiger for Palamau TR have not reached the park. No binoculars, tranquillizer guns etc.

— The Chief Wildlife Warden is neither responsible for submission of budget proposals at the time of finalisation of allocations, nor does he submit the schemes to the government under the plan head. The **Chief Conservator Forests Development** is entrusted with these responsibilities by government order.

— Palamau has been consistently **starved of funds** throughout the last two financial years. The bulk of the release has been made in March each year. The system of planning and budget allocation is such that it is inevitable that funds will only reach their destination in the last month/s of the financial year. The result has been: (i) delayed payment of wages; (ii) delayed salary payments; (iii) no fire protection; (iv) no anti-poaching work—one female elephant shot dead by an express rifle within core area on 23 March 1997; (v) no habitat management work; (vi) no water facility development work; and (vii) no new work taken up under 100% centrally sponsored schemes.

In spite of all this the team reported that the field staff of PTR have continued to perform their duties with dedication despite the overwhelming odds against them.

### • **Valmiki starved of funds**

One of the most important tiger bearing areas in Bihar, or indeed the country, is **Valmiki Tiger Reserve** situated on the border with Nepal. Its contiguity with the Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal creates a large transboundary area still capable of supporting a viable population of tigers. However while

conservation in Chitwan is being strengthened, the situation on the Indian side is grim.

Besides the presence of criminal gangs and of the railway (see T-L News vol.2 no.2) as well as staff vacancies (see above), an enormous problem is the drastic lack of funds. Project funds are sanctioned year to year and are often delayed up to the last weeks of the financial year. Thus in January 1997 when **Ashok Kumar** of WPSI visited the reserve he found that the lack of funds was having severe results:

i. TR staff had not been paid their salaries for the last five months!

ii. Funds were not available to the Field Director (FD) for patrolling or any other management activity.

iii. The FD's office telephone had been cut off due to non-payment.

iv. There was no office staff in the offices of the DFOs.

v. No jeeps were available for patrolling. Two recently allotted Gypsies sat 105 km away from the Reserve and anyway there was no petrol allocation to run them and

vi. Field staff have not received uniforms or shoes for the past six years.

There is also an area of dispute along the border resulting from a change in the course of the river. Kumar reports that a good amount of land called Susta has been encroached upon by Nepali settlers and that these persons are regularly indulging in poaching timber and wildlife. He reports that venison is being supplied from the area right up to Kathmandu.

The field staff are doing what they can in the circumstances but if the situation is not rectified soon, they will not be able to go on. Kumar's report says, "it is essential to provide regular funding to Valmiki, to rectify administrative procedures and to restore law and order by deputing CRPF battalions for some period".

## Karnataka

### • **Leopard/tiger slaughter**

Various participants have voiced their concern about the number of large cats, mostly leopards but also



occasionally tiger, that are being killed in Karnataka. At least 22 leopards have been killed by the Forest Department, or villagers, in the area around Kadur in the Chikmagalur district. The earlier peaceful co-existence of humans with the big cat was reportedly shattered by the large-scale stone quarrying that was unleashed upon the area in 1992 as a result of the Bangarappa regime denotifying forest land and granting quarrying leases. This greatly disturbed the natural prey base of the leopards and forced them to depend more and more on the domestic animals of nearby hamlets. One or two leopards apparently turned man-eater. A possible explanation for this may lie in the fact that prior to October 1995, 4000 labourers working on the railway gauge conversion were camped in the area and this migrant community's custom is to leave their dead in the open without cremation or burial. The first man-eating incident occurred in November 1995 less than a month after they wound up the labour camps. The seven human kills that occurred over the next nine months resulted in the Forest Department going on a "virtual killing spree" which has upset many wildlife enthusiasts and conservationists. Also in March 1997 a tiger was killed near Balele village, close to the Nagarahole National Park. Allegations of mismanagement and gross inaction are being levelled at the Karnataka Forest Department for these incidents.

**Tushar Dev** from Bangalore appeals that pressure should be brought to bear on the Government of Karnataka to take up the following measures:

1. Adopt modern concepts of wildlife management in dealing with situations of man-animal confrontation;
2. train forest officials in tranquillisation and other techniques and provide them with better equipment;
3. educate villagers living on the periphery of forest areas to treat wild animals with greater compassion. Such villagers who participate in killing of wild animals should be prosecuted so that it will act as a deterrent to others;

4. Appoint committed individuals as Honorary Wildlife Wardens in all wildlife areas to act as independent observers in protection of wildlife.

Source: Tushar Dev, *The Indian Express Bangalore* 23/9/96; B.C. Nanda, Coorg Wildlife Society

**Wildlife First!**, an active conservation organisation based in Bangalore write: "We have kept a close watch on these incidents and discussed this in detail." "There was a tremendous amount of tension and a huge law and order situation cropping up. In such circumstances the Forest department had no other option but to keep on killing the leopards in the area till the man eating stopped. Dr Ullas Karanth had a detailed talk with the concerned DCF and came to the conclusion that the action taken by the Forest department was justified."

"Four tiger/leopard deaths have been reported around Nagarahole. Detailed enquiries revealed that all four deaths occurred when these animals strayed outside the park boundary. One tiger was an old male which was stoned to death and the other was a subadult male which was injured, possibly in a fight with another tiger while trying to establish its home range. One leopard was shot by the Forest department when it had entered a nearby town and created panic, while the other leopard was caught in a snare just outside the park boundary."

#### • **Ranger/ACF training programme**

"This year the Karnataka Forest Department, based on directions from the Centre, has changed over from the traditional 'compartment method' of counting herbivores to the scientifically accepted method of line transect sampling.

Volunteers of the Bangalore based NGO, **Wildlife First!**, on an official request from the Nagarahole National Park Warden, conducted a one day **training programme** for all Rangers and ACFs of Nagarahole N.P., Bramhagiri and Talakaveri wildlife sanctuaries. The programme included a detailed classroom session and actual field training. Participants were also

provided with a detailed technical paper on the subject including sample data forms.

This is the fourth training programme for the Karnataka Forest department field staff conducted by **Wildlife First!**. The three previous ones were two day workshops for Foresters, Guards and Watchers which aimed at upgrading their skills in wildlife field craft, anti-poaching techniques, handling and maintenance of firearms and wireless equipment. Mr. K.M. Chinnappa, President of the NGO was the chief instructor for these workshops."

**Wildlife First!**, 248, 4th Main Rd., Chamarajapet, Bangalore 560018.

#### • **Mining to resume at Nellibedu**

According to company officials, the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd (KIOCL) will resume mining operations at Nellibedu near Chikmagalur next year. They said that the company had obtained 310 hectares of land there.

Mining was stopped for more than a week recently because of the Karnataka Electricity Board engineers' strike and the Supreme Court order banning mining activity in forest areas.

They said in the wake of the Supreme Court order, a survey of the project area had been conducted by a joint committee and the reports would be available soon. The agencies involved in the survey had submitted the reports to the government and a decision in this regard would be taken soon.

Stating that the company had acquired 4,605 hectares of land on lease and mining was going on in 900 hectares, they said the project area was not forest land as per government records.

Source: *Deccan Herald* 22/5/97

## Kerala

#### • **Forest for dams?**

Kerala Electricity Board is proposing to build "a 23 metre high dam to divert water from the Poringalkuttu left bank project and 26 km of its own catchment, through a 4533 m long tunnel and 2 penstock pipes to a power house." Environmental

agencies in Kerala have cleared this **Adirapalli Hydro-electric Project**, stating that it would have no serious impact on elephant movement. However, as a group of **senior biologists** point out in a **letter** on the subject to **Mr Saifuddin Soz, Minister, Environment & Forests**, the project area is in the Vazhachal Forest Division which lies south of the **Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary** and north of the Malayattur Forest Division. The combined area of 1305 km holds a population of approximately 2000 elephants in addition to tiger and other endangered species. The Vazhachal Division holds the highest density of elephants in the region and is a vital connection between the Sanctuary and Malayattur. Having surveyed the proposed site, the scientists, Dr Arun Venkataram, Dr Ullas Karanth and Dr. R. Sukumar, conclude that elephant movement will be severely impeded. They also point out that the project lies within Reserve no. 9 identified under Project Elephant. Dr A.J.T. Johnsingh of the W.I.I., has also given his opinion that there should be no further disturbance or destruction in "this unique biodiversity-rich area". Fortunately this project has not received central clearance and hopefully, keeping the Supreme Court order of 12/12/96 in mind (see page 1 & 31), it will not.

### • **Education centres proposed**

The **Teacher & Environment Network**, an associate arm of **THANAL**, reaches out to students and public through teachers and educators. "We are publishing a *Wall paper and are focusing our activities on two ecosystems—the coastal & marine and rainforests. Our activities are centred on the marine turtles for coastal and on tiger and elephant for rainforests.*

*We wish to establish two education centres in Kerala, one for wetlands at Kottayam and a second Rainforest Education Centre, near Periyar Tiger Reserve. We are identifying our partners and developing specific action plans."*

Jayakumar C. Conservation Action & Information Network (Kannur, Thrissur, Trivandrum) Post Box No: 815, Kawdiar, Trivandrum 695 003

### • **Corruption in Neyyar**

The government has recommended the suspension of eight Forest Dept. officials for irregularities in the construction of buildings at the Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary near Thiruvananthapuram. The Vigilance Department has registered 10 corruption cases against them. Apparently the files went missing but were later reconstructed.

Source: *Indian Express*, New Delhi 18/5/97

## Madhya Pradesh

### • **Forest department—isolated and alone?**

The forest department bears a heavy burden in its responsibility for the country's wildlife and natural environment. The burden becomes almost unbearable in the face of lack of cooperation from its fellow departments. Two examples from **Panna Tiger Reserve**:

In the first phase of relocation, three villages in the tiger reserve, Talgaun, Bhudhrod and Pipertola are to be resettled. The villagers want to move and are anxious to go as soon as possible. They identified suitable land around 40 km from the reserve and the Forest Department agreed and completed the paper work a year ago. However the **Revenue department** are required to evaluate their land and property for compensation and no priority is being given to this. Both villagers and Forest Dept. are thus frustrated.

On two occasions a Panna Forest Department patrol party were beaten up by the relatives and supporters of fish poachers whom they had caught within the reserve. In spite of a case being registered, no arrests have been made by the **Police department**.

### • **P.T. director visits Panna**

After a visit to the **Panna Tiger Reserve** at the end of April 1997, Project Tiger Director, **Mr P.K. Sen** reports that **white sand stone mining** is very common in and around the tiger reserve. However the status of the land is not clear as the civil authorities do not recognise the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department's claim that it is forest

area. A report by the Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Bhopal was submitted in 1995 to the Government of India but follow up action is still awaited.

Mr Sen also reports that NDMC's **diamond mining** is encroaching into the Gangau Sanctuary which adjoins Panna and that, in violation of the Environmental Protection Act and Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Kaimasan nala is carrying sludge and slurry from the mining sites to the Park. "The Park is almost choked with slurry and whatever water is flowing is highly polluted". Also "overburdens and tailings are being dumped on the boundary of the reserve and have taken the shape of hills" which are "growing every day. The situation is likely to be critical during the rains". Multi-storey buildings have been constructed although the lease has been pending for renewal for more than six years!

**Relocation of villages** from within the park is urgently needed as the park is suffering extreme pressure from grazing, illicit cutting and fishing. Action has already been taken and the Field Director requested to submit the proposal to the GOI for consideration. Non settlement of claims of the villagers shifted in the past are pending with the collector and causing conflict.

A considerable part of the **World Bank M.P. Forestry Project** is dedicated to biodiversity conservation, improvement of habitat and other management facilities. Within Panna a large sum of money is being spent on **widening roads and constructing buildings!** The P.T. Director points out that this could be better utilised for habitat improvement, water management, soil conservation etc. and the matter should be taken up during appraisal of the project by the State Government and donor agency.

Other problem issues identified by Mr Sen are: i. demoralisation of subordinate staff because of inaction on the part of local police administration, ii. as elsewhere, the lack of legal aid and legal support to field personnel, iii. inadequate staff strength, iv. the presence of the



Jhansi-Rewa highway passing through the Park. Speeding trucks kill large numbers of small animals like langur, hyaena, wild pig etc. A new petrol pump just on the boundary and a mushroom growth of roadside stalls is causing a congregation of trucks at night to the detriment of the park and v. the seasonal encroachment of the Gangu reservoir land.

### • *Officers moved*

In a rapid move in January 1997, Field Director, **Pench Tiger Reserve**, Deputy Director, Pench TR and Conservator Wildlife in the Chief Wildlife Warden's Office were transferred. Could all this activity relate to the fishing in Pench issue? (see page 33) Were Project Tiger guidelines for transfers followed?

### • *More paper tigers!*

Much to the embarrassment of the Director, Project Tiger, in Delhi, senior forest officials in Madhya Pradesh started announcing that tiger numbers in M.P. have increased and may now be over 1000, even before the process of estimation was completed.

(See 'Rethink on census', p. 36)

### • *People's rights campaign*

A number of people's organisations have grouped together under the banner, '**Campaign on People's Rights over Sanctuaries and National Parks in Madhya Pradesh**'. Seminars and other activities have been organized, with the aim of getting the MP govt. to review its policies and programmes relating to forests and wildlife. They are also protesting against the World Bank funded MP Forestry Project which they say will be "opposed at all costs". They object to the formulation of forest-related policies, projects and legislation without consultation with the "forest dwellers"; also to the displacement of people in the name of National Parks and Sanctuaries. They argue that the destruction of forests is more due to industrial and urban demand than that of tribals and other forest dependent communities and that the government has failed to protect

forests and only the local people can do so.

It seems that the campaign is not opposed to the protected areas per se but many people are confused and disturbed by various forest protection related activities undertaken by government officials. For example, the Collectors' moves to settle rights prior to the final notification of the N.P.s and sanctuaries, in some cases, have been mistaken for eviction notices. There is little reliable information at the village level and rumours abound. Here as in so many areas there is a great need for better communication between Forest Department and local people and this is an area where local NGOs can play a crucial role.

### • *Trouble at Kanha*

Funds—from the World Bank and Government of India—are now available to develop the buffer zone area of **Kanha National Park**. The Forest department's project is aimed at multi-pronged habitat development and 'upliftment of the tribals'. However this has led to a number of confrontations between the forest department and local people and would appear to be another example of lack of communication and interaction between the department and those affected by their actions. Residents of the 185 tribal villages in the vicinity are afraid that the afforestation cum economic development will lead to their relocation and they remember the plight of villagers ousted from the Kanha N.P. who were not properly rehabilitated. Violence has erupted in several places, four officers were hospitalised and five tribals injured in one incident. The villages, assisted by various NGOs and political parties, are launching an agitation.

Source: Tapas Chakraborty, *Telegraph*, Calcutta 27/4/97

### • *Crusade for tigers*

A new NGO called "**Crusade for Revival of Environment and Wildlife**" has been set up in Bhopal to save M.P.'s tigers, protect wildlife and begin a massive education awareness drive.

Contact: Lalit Shastri, E 3/8 Arera Colony, Bhopal 462016. Tel: 0755 566002/552888.

### • *New tiger society*

In January 1997 the Madhya Pradesh government formed an independent organisation, "**Madhya Pradesh Tiger Foundation Society**" on the basis that the state alone cannot shoulder the entire responsibility of saving the tiger and its habitat. The Society aims to establish a network of district and village level Nature Clubs all over the State "to motivate and promote conscious individuals/ groups inclined towards conservation of living natural resources"; to support the Govt. and NGOs in efforts to curb wildlife trade and develop a "network for intelligence gathering workers, informers and active strike force in sensitive areas"; to build up a data-base of potential donors and thereby raise and provide funds and equipment for implementation of the various objectives through the government and NGOs; to promote "ecologically, socio-culturally sustainable and educational nature/wildlife tourism with the active participation of local people".

The Hon'ble Minister of Forests is chairperson of the Society, Principal Secretary, Forest Department is Vice-chair, while the Chief Wildlife Warden is Member Secretary. The Tourism Department, Publicity Department and Tiger Cell are also represented on the governing body. In addition four non-government members have been nominated. M.P. Minister for School Education, Shri Pushpraj Singh; Shri J.J. Dutta, retired CWW of MP; Kartikeya Sarabhai, Director of the Centre for Environmental Education; and a representative from the WWF.

### • *Gaur lesson for tiger*

In the 1960s it was possible to see herds of 60 and more gaur in the Tala forests which now form part of the **Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve** in the Shahdol District. Within a couple of decades the numbers had dropped drastically and no one was concerned to discover why. In 1986 only 17 individuals remained. The

Management Plan for the Park says that "since last four to five years their number is around 35-36, representing all age groups in 4 herds". This winter, 1997, only a single individual has been sighted—a lone male.

Dr. R.S. Chundawat of the W.I.I., warns that the demise of the gaur population is a **lesson for tiger conservation**, as it highlights the extinction vulnerability of small and isolated populations even when they are in protected areas. He points out that most of India's tigers actually occur in such populations; the average population for all PAs known to hold tiger, is less than 20! Such small populations are particularly sensitive to even normally operating demographic and environmental events and thus need close monitoring for appropriate management.

Source: Unpublished article on gaur by Tariq Aziz; R.S. Chundawat pers.comm.

### • **Tiger/wild dog**

In a major interaction between a tiger and a pack of wild dogs, the tiger succeeded in killing a dog and wading away with it through shallow water. This rare tiger and wild dog interaction took place in **Kanha National Park** where some time earlier a visitor had witnessed wild dogs treeing a leopard.

## Maharashtra

### • **Tadoba mining threat**

6548 hectares of forest are **under threat** for supplying coal for Nippon Denro Ispat's thermal power project. The mining proposal is awaiting clearance under the Forest (Conservation) Act but senior forest officers in the state say that it threatens the department's Clonal Teak Seed Orchard set up in 1969 and containing "a priceless collection of clones of teak" as well as affecting Reserve and Protected forests in Lohara, Baranj and Bandar blocks. Furthermore these are located very close to **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve** and "mining activities here could spoil the continuous track of forest, severely damaging the habitat of tigers and other wildlife". Will this become yet

another area where political pressure allows mining operations to destroy wildlife habitats in spite of environmentalists objections?

Source: Madhav Gokhale, *Indian Express*, Madras, 27/4/97

### • **Melghat denotification**

The Project Tiger Director, Mr P.K. Sen has sent a letter to the Chief Wildlife Warden, Maharashtra drawing his attention to an item from the minutes of the 32nd Steering Committee meeting stating, "the changes in the area of a Tiger Reserve should have the approval of the Steering Committee as it is mandatory to get clearance of the Steering Committee prior to notification". He requests the CWW to let him know whether the Government of Maharashtra has taken any decision on the denotified area of Melghat T.R. which has been pending in court.

### • **Gautala sanctuary saved**

Another 'protected area' threatened with denotification in Maharashtra was the **Gautala Autaramghat Wildlife Sanctuary** near Aurangabad. This 261 km sanctuary was declared in 1989 and is mainly dry deciduous teak dominant forest containing sloth bear, barking deer, wild boar, nilgai and leopard. The sanctuary "is unique in Maharashtra...as there is no village inside the sanctuary". However in October 1996 a petition was filed by the Revenue Department demanding denotification due to doubts regarding boundary demarcation. It appeared that some Forest Department personnel were also supporting this move. However nature lovers and wildlifers of Aurangabad district rallied and **Prof. Vijay Diwan** of **Nisarga Mitra Mandal**, a local organisation, intervened in the court. On 23 December 1996 the decision was given in favour of wildlife. The Hon. Justice ordered that the sanctuary should not be denotified and that the Revenue Department should complete the boundary demarcation process immediately.

Source: Kishor Rithe, Nature Conservation Society, Amravati

### • **Roads to prevent malnutrition!**

Some social organisations supported by OXFAM, U.K. have taken it upon themselves to ask for roads and electricity to be introduced into the **Melghat Tiger Reserve** to "prevent malnutrition" among Korku communities. This move is ill-advised as the only real infrastructure of benefit to adivasis is the forest itself. Roads and electricity (which have created havoc in places such as Amazonia) are both available in plenty in Dharni, outside the Tiger Reserve. This, ironically, is where the vast bulk of malnutrition deaths have occurred.

By contrast, even social groups agree that malnutrition deaths inside the Tiger Reserve are extremely rare because adivasis have forest fruit, tubers and medicinal plants available for their use. The protection afforded to the tiger has thus come to the help of traditional communities. A dialogue between social and wildlife groups is underway and an attempt is being made to:

(a) ensure 100 per cent employment guarantee of one adult in all tribal families living in Melghat (for soil and moisture related works). A proposal in this connection, involving 13.5 lakh man-days of employment has been sent to the Directorate of Project Tiger for funding.

(b) Get social groups to add their voice to that of wildlifers to renotify Melghat.

Email from Bittu Sahgal 19/5/97

### • **Project "Cheetah Revival"**

The **Vidarbha Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure (VIMA)** is a "multi-adventure training centre" founded at Nagpur on 15 November 1980. Throughout the year they conduct camps and expeditions in various adventure activities and along with these "members are also educated on nature conservation and wildlife. Project Cheetah Revival is a project of the VIMA". They have "16,000 strong young members who are involved in protecting the tiger of our **Pench National Park**".

Information from: Mehernosh Mavalwala, Project Director, 'Guidara', Bhupesh Nagar, Nagpur 440 013



• **Forest staff fight to try to do their duty**

"Provoked by the situation and fueled by the apathy shown by the head of the department in particular and the Government in general, all four cadres, i.e., Van Kamgars, Forest Guards, Foresters and Range Forest Officers of the department throughout the State have come together and decided to agitate for the protection of the forests". These strong fighting words were written by the President of the **Van Karmachari Saurakshan Kruti Samiti Maharashtra Rajya** to the then Prime Minister H.C. Deve Gowda in March 1997 on the occasion of the IBWL meeting.

The letter points out that under Article 51 (A) (g) it is the duty of every citizen to protect the environment and wildlife but that they, in their capacity of forest officers, were being prevented from carrying out their duties due to the lack of equipment, vehicles, arms, communication systems and other amenities required to fight out the present situation.

"In a nutshell, even if the field officers of the Forest Department throw their hearts out to save the forests, it has become practically impossible for them to do so. In a series of incidents occurring day in and day out in the forests, forest officers are open to attacks/assaults from the "Van Mafia" which proves the helplessness of the forest staff to protect the forest in the absence of the machinery to fight the culprits. In a recent incident, one Shri P.K. Kharat, Forester and four others were assaulted by the mafia in Kinwat in Nanded District in which Mr P.K. Kharat was brutally murdered."

The letter also notes the lack of active support and cooperation from the superior forest officers. "Hence, the tiger in Pench National Park, Melghat Tiger Reserve and other protected areas of the State is facing all types of pressure from poachers, wildlife traders and fish-mafia. Therefore, this national heritage may get extinct within 2-3 years."

Some revealing facts and statistics are presented:

Of the **326** jeeps and cars in the department **only 54 vehicles are with officers involved in protection.**

6031 (43%) of the staff are involved in forest protection along with other departmental works; 8056 staff have no responsibility regarding forest protection.

Less than 2% of the forest area is covered by a wireless network.

As per the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980, the compensatory value of one hectare of forest land having density 1 is 1.26 crores. The average environmental value of forest in Maharashtra is therefore valued at Rs. 31 crores per 1 km<sup>2</sup>.

On this basis the Maharashtra Van Karmachari Saurakshan Kruti Samiti have estimated the value of the forest area in charge of the various cadres of Forest Officers:

A **Range Forest Officer** who, on average, is in charge of 1386 km<sup>2</sup> area of which 222 km<sup>2</sup>, on average, is forest area, is thus responsible for government property worth **Rs. 6882 crores.**

The value of the area under a **Forester's charge** (average physical area 254 km<sup>2</sup> including 53 km<sup>2</sup> of forest) would be **Rs. 1643 crores.**

The value of a even a **Forest Guard's** beat responsibility (average 69 km<sup>2</sup>, 14 km<sup>2</sup> forest) would be **Rs. 434 crores!**

The government does not even provide a vehicle to these staff for protection!

The Samiti has put forth 20 proposals for consideration to enable their work to be done effectively. These include compensation for death and injury in the course of duty, presentation of awards and medals and other such morale boosting needs, recruitment of female staff, provision of necessary equipment and infrastructure, establishment of intelligence cells and special courts to deal with forest offences, compulsory inspection and patrolling for all departmental cadres and revision of the outdated Bombay Forest Manual.

VKSKS-MR, c/o Range Forest Officer, Station Road, Usmanpura, Aurangabad 431005

Loss due to illicit felling of trees:	59,997 cases	4,41,702 trees illegally felled	estimated loss Rs.12.23 crores
Loss due to encroachments	7,646 cases	174.96 sq km encroached	estimated loss Rs.5423.76 crores
Losses due to forest fires	1,783 cases	1.18 sq km area affected	estimated loss Rs.35.58 crores

The total loss to Maharashtra of the above three items is: **Rs. 5472.57 crores**

• **Tigers for Bombay?**

On 18 April 1997 the *Bombay Times* reported that Mumbai was planning a "tiger safari" on a 5 km area of the **Borivali National Park**. It reports that this Rs.1.2 crore project will be an added attraction to the already existing lion safari and is the "dream project" of Uddhav Thackeray, "the Sena chief's son".

This proposal has apparently been included in the integrated development plan for the park submitted to the state government. The Deputy Conservator of Forests is quoted as saying that they will be writing to tiger reserves such as **Melghat** for supply of the tigers!

**A.I. Dalal**, a reader from Mumbai, calls on all concerned to use every

means to try to kill this "revolting proposal", believing that it shows ignorance about the park, the tiger and its habitat and about wildlife laws and National Parks. He writes that Borivali does not need gimmicks and *tamashas* like safaris, which are degrading and cruel to the predators, to make it an attraction. 25 million people a year visit the area.

He suggests a number of measures to improve the park including immediately ridding the park environs of all the encroachments and banning all further construction activity within 300 metres of the park boundary by acquiring adjacent land with fair compensation and assimilating all these lands back into the park precincts as a buffer zone.

Over 200 hectares of the park have been swallowed up by encroachers. Slum dwellers are being used as a shield for the activities of slum landlords and political parties, according to the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Mr A.R. Bharati, quoted in the *Indian Express Bombay*.

One forest officer pointed out that they have no vehicles, no arms and only two men to patrol an area of 10 km<sup>2</sup>.

"The park has been continuously eroded by the government over the years" and "the 1.2 crores earmarked for the proposed tiger safari would be much better spent on the required improvements".

A.I. Dalal of Mumbai—no address sent

### • *PT Steering Committee consulted*

Due its proximity to **Melghat Tiger Reserve** (4 km away), the **Chikaldhara Pumped Storage Scheme** proposal which had been sent to the GOI for appropriate clearances was referred to the Project Tiger Steering Committee for review and a 'no objection certificate'. The Ministry had earlier deputed the Dy. Director (Wildlife Preservation), Western Region to inspect the area and submit a report. This was done at the end of 1996. While having no general objection to the project, the report suggests certain conditions to the Project Authorities. These include providing substitute for wood for the workers during the construction period, providing funds for an anti-poaching squad in view of the likely increase in biotic interference during/after construction and providing an undertaking to be given by the Irrigation Dept. that the transmission line of the scheme, which is intended to generate 400

MW of power, will not pass through any areas of the Tiger Reserve. The report concludes that the scheme's dams and power house "will not have adverse affect on the wildlife in the area provided the above suggested steps will be taken." This echoes the comments of the Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) in Nagpur, Shri Jagir Singh in his letter of 13 June 1997 to Project Tiger Delhi: "I do not think that this dam will have adverse effect on the wildlife of the area."

However **Project Tiger Steering Committee**, at their meeting on 31 January 1997, requested that a letter be written to the Maharashtra Government to stop further work on the Chikaldhara Hydel Project.

## Orissa

### • *"Save wildlife and ban akhanda shikar"*

**Dasi**, an NGO from Baripada and **Simlipal Tiger Reserve** held an awareness campaign to "Save Wildlife and Ban Akhanda Shikar" which culminated in a cycle rally, tribal sports and public meeting with prize distribution and cultural programme on 13 April 1997. Chief guest was S.J. Nikunja Kishore Sundarray, Collector & District Magistrate, Mayurbhanj, and chief speaker was environmentalist, S.J. Amarendra Lal Bose.

### • *Tigers facing extinction?*

Forest officials and environmentalists in Orissa are warning that if steps are not taken to prevent the rapid loss of habitat and rampant poaching in the state, the tiger may become extinct. A recent **census** in **Simlipal Tiger Reserve** indicated that the population "had remained virtually stagnant at 98 against 97 in 1995". The Field Director, S.S. Srivastav says the **situation has deteriorated** over the last five years and that there has been a sharp erosion in the tigers' prey base. This is aggravated by the 65 villages in Simlipal and 1200 villages on the periphery especially as many of these villages have become "havens for poachers". The FD said that Rs. 47 lakhs had been deposited with the District Administration for relocation but that nothing has been

done. He also reported that the annual hunting ritual by local tribals had of late become a "daily, routine affair".

Source: Rajaram Satapathy, *The Times of India* 19/5/97

### • *More forest to go under water?*

Information has been received suggesting that around 1200+ hectares of the **Pipalpanka forest** of Ghumsar South Forest Division in the **Berhampur** circle may be threatened by a new reservoir being planned to supply water to the Tata Steel plant coming up in Gopalpur. Those who know the area say that there is good, moist deciduous forest with tiger, elephant, orchids, leopards etc. However, it is rumoured that the Forest Department in Orissa are approving the project on the grounds that there is no forest there. Is this a way to avoid obtaining necessary clearances under the Forest Conservation Act? It would seem that an independent assessment of the forest status of the area to be submerged is required. Local T-L participants could monitor the situation and report back.

## Rajasthan

### • *"From Death to Rebirth"*

A small rivulet, the **Arvari**, in the district of Alwar which had been a dry river bed for many years, came to life again in 1994 thanks to villagers' actions of constructing johads (small reservoirs). The first was made in 1987 in a village called Bhavta (see T-L News vol.2, no.2). Seeing the advantages, many other villages followed suit until now there are 200 johads in the catchment of this river.

"Water, in the Johads, raised the water-table in the entire catchment area of the river. This, in turn, enriched the forest in the same area. Forests and scrubs helped to retard the run-offs of monsoon waters. This way, in a decade, the river Arvari came to life from a dried up dead watercourse. Today the river flow continues the year round. At places, the river is full of fishes, which attain a length of 2 feet and weigh up to 7 kg. There are lush



green fields of wheat, gram and mustard on its banks in winter."

However the presence of fish has attracted the notice of fishermen and the Fisheries Department of the Government of Rajasthan who claim the river as theirs. This has enraged the local people whose efforts it was that created the river and they have prevented fishing from taking place. "They have declared "Satyagrah" against the Rajasthan Government. The agitation is on to this day." **Tarun Bharat Sangh** is appealing to the Chief Wildlife Warden to declare a sanctuary in the Arvari river region to be supervised by the people themselves. They point out that "since it came to life wildlife like tiger, leopard, sambar, chital and nilgai occasionally come to drink water from the river."

Tarun Bharat Sangh have produced a booklet: *Story of a Small Rivulet Arvari—from death to rebirth* by **Jashbhai Patel** (quoted above).

Available from TBS, Bhikampura, Thanagazi, Alwar 301 022.

• **Tiger Watch**

Fateh Singh Rathore, an earlier Field Director of the park, has launched a new organisation, **Tiger Watch**, to protect **Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve**. The main objective is to set up **anti-poaching squads** on the periphery of the park to deal with poachers, timber cutters and graziers. The protection squads will

be made up of village participants and the effort will be in close collaboration with the Chief Wildlife Warden and the Field Director of Ranthambhore. Their first major campaign will be launched over the monsoon by a village *padyatra* against the grazing of cattle within the National Park, followed by strict enforcement of the park rules.

Communications should be addressed to: Shri Fateh Singh Rathore, Maa Forestry Farm, Ranthambhore Road, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan.

• **Injured tiger taken captive**

At the end of April a large male tiger from **Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve** was seen to be seriously injured in one of its front legs. On 2 May, a team from Jaipur Zoo and the W.I.I. was called to help tranquillise and treat the tiger. They did not manage to capture it and the tiger disappeared and could not immediately be traced. However it was clear that the injury was such that the tiger would need to have treatment for many days.

Mr Fateh Singh Rathore, was then called in at the request of the Chief Wildlife Warden to supervise the operation and on 16 May the tiger was successfully tranquillized, caged and taken to Jaipur Zoo for treatment. Tragically it was found to have a fractured leg and was extremely weak. The animal measured 8'7" (263 cm). All his canines were intact and he was estimated to be 9 or 10 years old. There were no bullet wounds or unnatural injuries. An operation was carried out on the tiger's leg in Jaipur on 17 May but he died the same night.

• **Kailadevi ecodevelopment**

**Kailadevi Sanctuary** is to be taken up in the second phase of the **India Ecodevelopment Project** proposed for Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve. However it is reported that there is no reliable information available on this project at the village level. As part of the plan, two micro-plans are reported to have been drawn up by the Forest department for Lakhruki and Maramda villages in the Kailadevi area. However the people of these villages are unaware when this exercise was carried out nor

have they actually seen a copy of any micro-plan for their village.

The World Bank appraisal mission visited Ranthambhore in February and reportedly asked for all micro-plans to be redone in the next six months, this time with more meaningful involvement and participation of the local people.

Source: *JPAM Update* 13 April 1997

**Tamil Nadu**

• **Tiger sighting**

Madhu Katti reports that he finally saw a tiger in Mundanthurai after five years of watching warblers in a tiger reserve. In the evening of 8 January 1997, about 12 km from Mundanthurai near Kodomadi bungalow, on the edge of the rainforest, he and Anindhya Sinha, a primatologist from the Centre for Ecological Studies, Bangalore, were looking for slender lorises on an abandoned road towards Chinnapul estate when they spotted the tiger. They were able to watch it for a few minutes as it moved from the path and went into a nearby bush. He reports that this is the first sighting by a researcher in the **Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve** in recent times.

• **Tigers should give way for transport?**

*The Hindu* reports that the Union Labour Welfare Minister, Mr. M. Arunachalam is urging the MoEF to "allocate adequate land in the reserve forest" for building an 11.3 km stretch of road from Papanasam in the Tirunelvi-Kattabomman district to Thiruvananthapuram to create a transport facility via Karayar. The newspaper reports that the Tamil Nadu Forest department have already given clearance and their opinion is that it "would in no way affect the forest wealth". TigerLink participants have other views.

**Dr Mahesh Daniel** who "knows this area very well" writes, "The truth is that this proposed road will be going through the core area of Project Tiger in the **Kalakad-Mundanthurai** sanctuaries. This is the last remnant stretch of rainforest left in the south."

**Mogia rehabilitation scheme**

The project proposal for Mogia rehabilitation has been ready for many months but sadly has yet to find financial support. Initially WPSI had made some commitments but now find they cannot support it.

Anyone interested in the proposal to provided alternative livelihoods to nomadic poachers, please write to: Shri Fateh Singh Rathore, Maa Forestry Farm, Ranthambhore Road, Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan

"Going by past record, roads through forests are only conduits for exploitation, mostly of the illegal kind. Activities like poaching and felling of trees are made easier because of roads. ...Roads have helped in the degradation and urbanization of our forests in the name of plantations, power generation, tourism, welfare and pilgrimage centres. Any number of check posts will not protect our forest or its denizens. ...Even now there are well established foot and bridle paths inside this area which are used for extracting illegal things. There is very little patrolling going on."

"Even today the T.N. government has not finished surveying the interstate boundary line in the Agasthyar Koodam, Chemmunji and Panditheri pass area which is a very large and beautiful place overlooking Kerala. It is full of large mammals including the tiger. The head waters of the major rivers like the Thambarabarani, Neyyar, Paeiyyar Valzhupurithiyar, Karamanai Aar and Kallar start from this region. Do we need to pollute them at source?"

"This road will also be close to the Agasthyar Koodum peak area, which is fast turning into a

Pilgrimage centre, with the active support and connivance of the Kerala Government. Maybe they want to start another money spinning hill shrine...It will degrade this area of pristine forest wealth. Especially its endemic flora. Even now there is a big dormitory at Athiramalai with a surveyed road plan leading up to it on the Kerala side..."

"The proposed road will open a Pandora's box of destruction of the last tract of rain forest in the south on both sides of the border. Can we preserve at least some parts of India as true wilderness and not allow petty religious and regional differences and vote gathering rhetoric to destroy it."

"Last but not least, will this road be viable for transportation as one has to climb up till 5,500 feet and descend again along winding Ghat road, when one can skirt the Ghats down the plains along a National Highway a little more to the south, albeit a little longer route."

Source: Dr Mahesh Daniel, 38 Sarguna St., Ramavarmapuram, Nagercoil 629 001

### • *Western Ghats awareness*

Aiming to arrest the progressive

degradation of forests, the **Tamil Nadu Green Movement** wishes to take the conservation message to the villages bordering the Reserve Forests abutting the Western Ghats and to address the needs of these communities. Efforts of government agencies as well as NGOs are to be roped in and the Movement **wishes to get in touch with people, organisations and groups along the Western Ghats** who share their concerns. They are looking to the Government Art colleges, private colleges and especially the departments of botany and Zoology as prospective centres for these activities. They request TigerLink participants to provide information and get in touch with them in relation to this.

Contact: A. Rangarajan, TNGM, Thamarai Villa Cottage, 9A Cornwall Road, Coonoor 643 101. Tel: 0423 31749. Fax: 31710

## Uttar Pradesh

### • *Poaching threat to Corbett*

"Poaching on the periphery of the **Corbett National Park** is still posing a grave threat". According to newspaper reports even some local forest officials believe the tiger population of 135 is "greatly exaggerated". A mahout from the park reported large scale poaching taking place in and around the park and says that most of the poaching goes unreported unless a carcass is found or poachers arrested with animal parts. A forest guard said they were scared to go into the forest as they only had sticks with which to face the poachers' guns. The field director reported that there was a proposal to give police powers to the forest guards of the park.

Source: PTI report in *The Asian Age* 14 May 1997.

### • *Tigers and towns*

Ever think that an entire small town complete with roads, street lighting, a housing colony and a bank can be set up inside a Tiger Reserve? That is precisely what has happened at **Corbett Tiger Reserve** from where Project Tiger was launched in 1973.

In 1961 an area of 8390 hectares of Corbett National Park was temporarily transferred to the Irrigation

## Obituary

TigerLink was very sad to hear that **Maj. Richard Radcliffe** passed away in January 1997. He was Vice-President of the 120 year old Nilgiri Wildlife & Environment Association and had been associated with the organisation since the 1960s and indeed was instrumental in its conversion from the then Nilgiri Game Association to the Nilgiri Wildlife Association before it later adopted its present name. British born, he came to India in 1933 to join a coffee plantation and in 1963 settled down in the Nilgiris.

His dedication and conservation interest and activities were such that he became known as the 'Great Old Man' of the Nilgiris and was the guru and mentor for a generation of environmental activists. He was often considered 'the Salim Ali' of the Nilgiris for his pioneering conservation work and insistence on perfection in all spheres. His efforts were all directed towards conserving the rich biodiversity of the Nilgiris and he remained active and optimistic till the end.

A major contribution of his was the establishment of the Mukurthi National Park to help save the Nilgiri tahr and he was its Honorary Wildlife Warden for many years. The Save Nilgiri Campaign presented him their first, and only, Award for a Lifetime of Environmental Conservation. He will be sorely missed, but his spirit will live on in all of us who met and were inspired by him.



Department of U.P. for construction of a dam on the Ramganga river. Approximately 7588 hectares was submerged in the reservoir formed by the construction of the Kalagarh dam. 802 hectares was used downstream for infrastructural requirements of dam construction. After completion of the dam in 1970, this land was to revert back to the park. This was a condition of the original land transfer order. Even the housing on this land was to be of mud mortar so that it could be dismantled after completion of the dam.

The land was never returned. Instead officials who were transferred out, illegally sold their houses to private persons. So today Kalagarh is a small town of squatters and officials. The legal status of this land continues to be that of a Reserve Forest declared a National Park.

The problem is that the Kalagarh colony sits directly astride the migration corridors of tigers, elephants and other wildlife. Fresh elephant dung on roads leading to the Kalagarh dam bear mute testimony to the blockage of a crucial corridor. There is heavy forest cover on both sides of the colony.

The existence of this colony is a clear violation of the Forest (Conservation) Act and the Wildlife (Protection) Act. A writ petition has been filed in the Supreme court, by three NGOs: A. Rangarajan, the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) and the Association for Protection of Environment.

WPSI, Thapar House, Janpath, New Delhi 110 001

### • **Croc conflict**

On the Western boundary of the **Corbett National Park**, near Boxar, a crocodile attacked and killed a Van Gujjar near the banks of the Ramganga river. The Gujjar was apparently taking a dip after delivering milk to one of the remote settlements. Brijendra Singh, Honorary Wildlife Warden of the park led a search party to try to rescue his remains. However they were unable to do so as the crocodile attacked the boat they were travelling in. B.S. carries the mark of the crocodile's tooth in his foot. Yet

another dimension is added to the man/animal conflict which could cause problems for the park management.

Source: Tariq Hasan, *Times of India* 16/5/97

• Retd. Addl. I.G. Forests (Wildlife), **Shri S. Deb Roy**, member of the Indian Board for Wildlife, Cat Specialist Group and Steering Committee of Project Tiger has joined the **Corbett Foundation** as the Director Coordination.

## West Bengal

### • **Canal politics**

The devastating **Sankosh Canal Project** involving the cutting of a 143 km canal from the Sankosh to the Teesta barrage at Gazaldoba (see *T-L News* vol.2 no.2 page 11) now apparently has the **support of the Chief Minister**, Mr Jyoti Basu and of Mr Asim Dasgupta, the **West Bengal Finance Minister**. It is reported that the canal is being constructed to increase the quantity of water in Farakka and that allotment of funds will be coming from the ninth Five Year Plan to speed up the process. However the **Irrigation Minister**, West Bengal, Mr Debroto Bandopadhyay is **vehemently opposing** the construction on the grounds of the severe adverse effect it will have on the environment and ecology. He understands that the ecological balance of nature will be destroyed and believes that the project must be opposed.

Source: *Ananda Bazaar Patrika*, 13/12/96

### • **"Chaos in Buxa"**

It is amazing that, in spite of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and in spite of a 1993 affidavit filed in by Shri Pranabes Sanyal, the then Field Director of **Buxa Tiger Reserve**, stating that North Bengal Dolomite Ltd were mining in the Sachaphu reserve Forest of the tiger reserve in violation of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 as they had no Central clearance to do so, and in spite of the December Supreme Court order banning all non-forest activities in forest areas without

**prior** Central clearance, in spite of all this the Institute of Climbers & Nature Lovers report that the **illegal dolomite mining continues** in this area.

It also seems extraordinary that the Bengal Lime and Stone Co. Pvt. Ltd are writing to the Secretary, MoEF in January this year quoting the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and detailing all the violations of the North Bengal Dolomite Ltd company and yet requesting that they should be allowed to resume dolomite mining in the same Sachaphu Reserve Forest which falls within the Buxa Tiger Reserve!

### • **NGO awareness activities**

"The **Indian Society for Wildlife Research** has taken up time bound action plan framed by a core group headed by Anuradha Dasgupta with the following objectives:-

(a) to promote and develop a/v materials relating to the general ecology of tiger, their habitat and threats.

(b) to promote alternative economic approach, for the fringe population to reduce economic reliance on forest resources.

(c) to recommend and pursue the Government agencies for introduction of benefit sharing system and participatory management by local communities in tiger reserve areas.

(d) to promote puppetry and other means of communications to highlight the tiger crisis at educational institutional level. ISWR will be executing the programme in close association with a network of NGO's in Calcutta as well as at a national level and in collaboration with agencies like the Environmental Investigation Agency, Tiger Direct, TRAFFIC International and Call for the Wild, based in the U.K." T. Bhattacharyya, ISWR, 122B Southern Avenue, 3rd Floor, Calcutta 700 029

### • **Serving people to save tigers**

"The number of tiger victims at Sundarbans has been reduced considerably. During the year 1996-97 only three incidents have been reported. Previously the number ranged between 25 to 30 each year.

## An Invitation to Sundarbans Tiger Reserve

The **Institute of Climbers & Nature Lovers** has a **Field Camp** at Eyanpur village (Sat-jelia Island), about half an hour sailing from Sajnakhali. The camp can accommodate 10-12 people.

TigerLink participants are invited to stay there during their visit to the **Sundarbans**. Kindly contact Shri Mrinal Chatterjee Tel: 033 472 5994; Fax: 033 472 8112 well in advance of your intended visit.

It is perhaps due to the decrease in the number of villagers going into the forest to earn their livelihood. The reason behind this decrease lies in the excavation of irrigation canals in different islands on the fringe of the **Sundarbans Tiger Reserve** which has resulted in the villagers getting a second (kharif) crop, beyond their usual expectation.

Besides, the present Field Director, **Shri K.C. Gayen** is trying to develop a good and friendly relation with the villagers through various ways—eg. vocational training, regular free medical camps, with the help of NGOs etc. At the same time he is launching regular raids against the poachers and not compromising with the political pressure.

Mr Gayen deserves support from all quarters for the good job he is doing."

Mrinal Chatterjee, Institute of Climbers & Nature Lovers, 17 New Santoshpur Main Road, Santoshpur, Calcutta 700 075

### • *Guard falls prey to tiger*

Tragically one forest guard, Gobinda Chakravarty was killed by a tiger recently while on patrol in the **Sundarbans Tiger Reserve**. According to the report the tiger attacked him while he was on a boat patrol to protect the honey gatherers who come into the park in April/May. The boat was negotiating a bend on the Banka river and as it tilted with

the tiger's weight, the others fell into the water and could do nothing until too late. The body was recovered. Rs. 75,000 compensation and a job will be given to his widow.

Source: Manojit Mitra, *The Sunday Times of India*, New Delhi 18/5/97

### • *Sundarbans threat*

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is proposing to develop a **national waterway** 191 km long **through Sundarbans** linking the Ganga with the Brahmaputra and Barak rivers. The project is being promoted to allow deep draft boats carrying cargo and passengers to pass through the Sundarbans area of West Bengal, and Bangladesh. It involves 6,00,000 cubic metres of capital dredging and a further 1,20,000 cubic metres of maintenance dredging each year. The silt is supposed to be dumped on the edges of the channels. Even the Environmental Impact Assessment, which otherwise seems to favour the project, says: "due to the dredging activity, a complete change in ecosystem is anticipated". It also states: "as the proposed IWT route passes through the Sundarbans Biosphere Reserve, the channels used for the migration of tigers from one hinterland to another will be disturbed. This will also increase the possibilities of attack on human beings by these man-eaters". "The proposed development may lead to further increase in pressure on the already endangered species".

The project threatens the delicate mangrove ecosystem and one of the most secure tiger populations in the world, yet it appears to be streaming ahead. Apparently the Chief Wildlife Warden of West Bengal has now indicated his support for this project.

The Project Tiger Director, Mr. P.K. Sen, has not even been informed officially that this proposal exists, let alone been consulted on its effect on the tiger reserve or approved the alignment of the proposed channels! However, given the number of ships and steamers plying, he says it will definitely cause a lot of pollution and create

noise and at very least "disturb the tranquillity of the area".

Protest letters should be addressed to:

The Chief Minister of West Bengal, Writers' Building, Calcutta and

The Prime Minister of India, South Block, New Delhi.

Source: *Environmental Impact Assessment for international steamer route in Sunderbans as national waterways*. Final Report September 1996. RITES (A Govt. of India Enterprise); Email from Bittu Sahgal 19/5/97; Project Tiger Director. pers.comm.

## FIELD SUPPORT

*Save the Tiger Fund* of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, USA in partnership with the Exxon Corporation has donated 3 Gypsies to the beleaguered World Heritage Site, the **Manas Tiger Reserve** in Assam.

*Care for the Wild* has donated 2 Gypsies: one to the Bansbari range of **Manas National Park** and the other to the **Orang Wildlife Sanctuary**, both in Assam.

Three more Gypsies have been donated by *Care for the Wild* to:

**Dr. D.S. Srivastava, Nature Conservation Society, Daltonganj**, Bihar whose tiger and habitat protection work is mainly around Palamau Tiger Reserve,

**Kishor Rithe of the Nature Conservation Society, Amravati** in Maharashtra and

**Fateh Singh Rathore, Tiger Watch, Ranthambhore** in Rajasthan.

These are the first donations to people outside government.



### Tiger Appeal

Over 6,000 people signed the rhino appeal (see page 30 "CITES meeting/rhino appeal"). Now let us wake up the Indian Government to the plight of the tiger and its habitat with many times that number. TigerLink requests ALL participants to collect as many signatures as possible (minimum 50 each!) on a tiger appeal and post it to the Prime Minister's office as soon as possible. For a suggested text/format to use, see page 43.

#### • *Project Tiger*

Since the arrival of Mr. P.K Sen as Director, Project Tiger in October, the entire office has changed. It has been re-furbished and cooled which has helped to create a new atmosphere conducive to productive work.

Also, since his arrival, Project Tiger Directorate has succeeded in:

1. modifying census methodologies by consensus (see page 36);
2. quick clearances of annual plans of operations;
3. visiting at least one PT tiger reserve each month for better field knowledge of prevailing problems;
4. holding meetings of both PT Steering Committee and the Tiger Crisis Cell in the last six months

**Congratulations to Mr Sen** for this turn-a-round! Finally Project Tiger gets geared for action.

#### • *33rd Steering Committee meeting*

At the **Project Tiger Steering Committee** held in New Delhi on 31 January 1997, the Minister for Environment & Forests, Prof. Saifuddin Soz, said that the Committee should meet without fail every six months and in the present crisis the next meeting should be held in May 1997. The Addl. IGF (Wildlife) Mr S.C. Dey said that the tiger population in India was sliding down. It was noted with "anguish" that **very few** of the various **reports and recommendations**, including those of the Steering Committee over the last 5 years, had been **implemented**. This was said to be partly a funding problem and partly due to the federal structure of governance as much depended on the states. Chief Wildlife Wardens should take up the matter with their respective state governments for implementation of decisions. Members discussions and decisions included the following:

- the **Prime Minister** should address the nation expressing concern for the tiger and wildlife habitats; also the message should go down to Assembly level;
- an **emergency appraisal** is needed in Srisailem, Dudhwa, Manas, Valmiki and Palamau (see "News from the States", Bihar) as these reserves are practically out of control of the PA managers;
- the problem of funds not reaching the field until the end of the financial year. The Steering Committee recommended the creation of a '**Project Trust Fund**', making the Field Directors directly responsible to the Director, Project Tiger and the whole amount released in one instalment;
- a request should be made to the relevant State authorities for raising a **special armed force** in specific PT areas;
- a subcommittee to scrutinise **new areas** proposed for inclusion into tiger reserves should be formed; objective criteria for such inclusion should be formulated. There should be no forcible eviction. However, voluntary relocation will be encouraged;
- **development projects** which come up in PAs for EIA clearance should go to the PT Steering Committee before being cleared; clearance of any development project inside tiger reserve areas be given only after Director PT's comments;
- **transfer/appointment** of Field Directors and Deputy Directors of Tiger Reserves should be regulated and cleared by the Steering Committee. The MoEF and Secretary (E&F) should take the matter up strongly with state governments and Madhya Pradesh in particular. The Secretary (E&F) agreed to send a letter immediately for cancellation of the Field Director of Pench's transfer;
- **fresh guidelines** should be issued, highlighting the duties, expectations and responsibilities of PT Steering Committee members;
- the traditional **tiger census** approach should be replaced by population estimations. A scientific subcommittee will examine introduction of more vigorous monitoring techniques to replace the traditional methodology (see research pages);
- commercialization of tiger habitats to be prevented;
- immediate EIA to be conducted on the effect of eco-development and forestry project activities with special reference to Kanha;
- letter to be written to Maharashtra Government to stop further work on the Chikaldhara Hydel Project near Melghat tiger reserve.

### • *IBWL meeting after 9 years*

After a nine year gap the newly reconstituted **Indian Board for Wildlife** met on 13 March 1997 chaired by Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda. An **appeal** which had been signed by 15 of the non-official board members was read out to the P.M. and a general discussion invited prior to the agenda items. In the light of the nation's "worst ever wildlife and natural heritage crisis, in which the tiger, our national animal, and other key floral & faunal species are slowly dying out", the appeal urged the P.M.:

1. to **address the nation** to acknowledge and highlight the threat to the tiger and our natural heritage;

2. to **add the weight of the PMO** to an initiative to reform the mechanisms of environmental and forest management;

3. as Chairman of the Planning Commission to help sanction the MoEF's need allocation of Rs.2,500 crores in the Ninth 5 Year Plan. The **allocation of budgets should be proportionate to the assets sought to be protected**. Rs.40,000 crores worth of resources are extracted from natural habitats every year. Between the Centre and States only Rs.100 crores per annum is spent on protecting the wildlife species that created this wealth;

4. through communication with the respective Chief Ministers, to help establish **new mechanisms for coordination between Centre and States** to ensure that national policy is effectively executed by the States and allocated funds actually reach the parks and sanctuaries;

5. to **strengthen the wildlife cadre**. This will involve a realistic review and possible reform of the entire structure and working of the Indian Forest Service in general and those serving in wildlife positions in particular. It will also involve a radical improvement in the service conditions of all forest guards, rangers etc.

Other points that came up for comment before the P.M. were: the need for regular and more frequent **IBWL meetings**; the danger of **eco-development** leading to economic development rather than ecosystem development; the pressure by State Governments towards **denotification**; the insufficient penalties awarded for **wildlife offences**; the **need for 4 to 6%** of the geographical area to be **fully protected** and the remaining 95% used more efficiently; the lack of intelligence to identify linkages in the **poaching** and illegal trade network; the **role of the army** in wildlife conservation to help and train protection staff.

The Prime Minister expressed the view that wildlife conservation is an important matter to which all concerned must collectively apply their minds. Also that the tiger is a very valuable species and strategies must be adopted to protect it from poaching. He wanted to hold another meeting during the recess of Parliament so that more time could be devoted to various issues and requested members to go through the agenda items and give concrete suggestions. He agreed to address the nation through the electronic media and also to talk to the Chief Ministers on the subject. He then had to leave and handed the chairing of the meeting's agenda items to the Minister of Environment & Forests (MEF), Prof. Saifuddin Soz.

Agenda items covered, with pertinent points included:

1. **The tiger crisis**—it was recommended that para military forces be used in PAs affected by insurgency, in consultation with the States; MEF agreed to write to Bihar regarding Palamau and Valmiki and follow it up with the visit of a Central team; similar action to be taken in respect of Manas in Assam; suggested that M.P.'s good example of a Tiger Cell be followed in other states also.

2. **Increase in financial outlay**—the board unanimously recommended that the Central Plan outlay for wildlife in the IX Plan should be Rs.2400 crores as recommended by the Working Group of the Planning Commission; they further recommended that 15% of the total forestry outlay in the State Plan Budgets should be devoted to wildlife conservation.

3. **Appointment of tribals as forest guards**—issue to be taken up at the meeting of Chief Ministers.

4. **Acquisition of private forests**—priority should be given to corridors, private land inside PAs and private forests abutting corridors. A three person committee was set up to consider the recommendations and prioritize crucial habitats in collaboration with the W.I.I.

5. **Settlement of rights**—MEF to write to all CMs to ensure expeditious completion of this exercise with regard to PAs.

6. **Denotification of PAs**—denotification should not be left to state governments; national level committee to rationalise boundaries.

7. **Relocation of development projects from PAs**—no new projects should be undertaken inside PAs and evaluation required of WB aided forestry



projects especially regarding use of pesticides and fertilizers.

8. **Control of poaching**—strike forces under PT to be taken up again with the Planning Commission and other Subramanian Committee report recommendations endorsed and emphasised.

9. **Sustainable utilization of species**—the board unanimously rejected the proposals and requested that people who continue to breed species under captivity despite instructions not to, should be penalised.

10. **Demand of elephant capture**—the board rejected capture for the purpose of sale but allowed it on a case to case basis strictly within the provisions of the act for problem populations and for management purpose.

On closing, the MEF proposed that members should come up with concrete proposals which could be recommended to the States prior to the meeting of the Chief Ministers which the PM had agreed to convene.

It is hoped and expected that the new Prime Minister, Shri I.K. Gujral will continue and strengthen these initiatives.

Source: minutes of the XIX meeting of the IBWL

**Stop Press:** Prime Minister, I.K. Gujral is convening another IBWL meeting in June 1997.

• ***P.M. shielded from tiger concern***

It is understood that hundreds of letters sent to the Prime Minister from school children and other individuals concerned about the tiger, were forwarded to the Project Tiger office "for necessary action" without the P.M. even seeing them. Will the same procedure be followed under the new incumbent?

• ***Field Director's meeting—Corbett***

The meeting of Chief Wildlife Wardens and Project Tiger Field Directors took place in Corbett Tiger Reserve in the third week of December 1996 to appraise and review the state of the tiger all over India. The meeting was inaugurated by the then Minister, E. & F., Capt. Jai Narain Prasad Nishad who said that "tiger conservation...has become the top most priority". He was confident that India had no dearth of able officers to tackle this problem and stated, "we know what we have to do".

The following "main points" were arrived at after the two day discussion:

1. Increased infrastructure is required for tiger protection.

2. The existing vacancies in Tiger Reserves (TRs) and other PAs need to be filled immediately.

3. A mobile strike force is required in all TRs and a special (paramilitary) force directly under the Field Directors is needed in specific areas where insurgency/law and order problems exist.

4. The issue of special pay and tiger allowance in the PT areas needs to be addressed.

5. Forest Officers need appropriate arms and ammunition for defending themselves against criminals and mafias.

6. Welfare measures (housing, medical, schooling etc.) particularly with regard to field level staff are to be provided.

7. More input for scientific based management systems in the TRs required; and "general points":

1. Need for more prime areas to be selected and converted to tiger reserves.

2. Where areas cannot be converted to TR, similar support management plans may be followed there.

3. A legal cell is required in each state to follow up cases initiated in the courts.

4. Need to involve appropriate public participation in the conservation of tigers and redress their grievances through eco-development programmes.

5. Issue of prey base must be addressed.

6. Appropriate intelligence network required.

7. Orientation training programmes should be organised for staff and also the fringe dwellers.

8. Better documentation and transparent reporting of facts and figures related to tiger conservation is required.

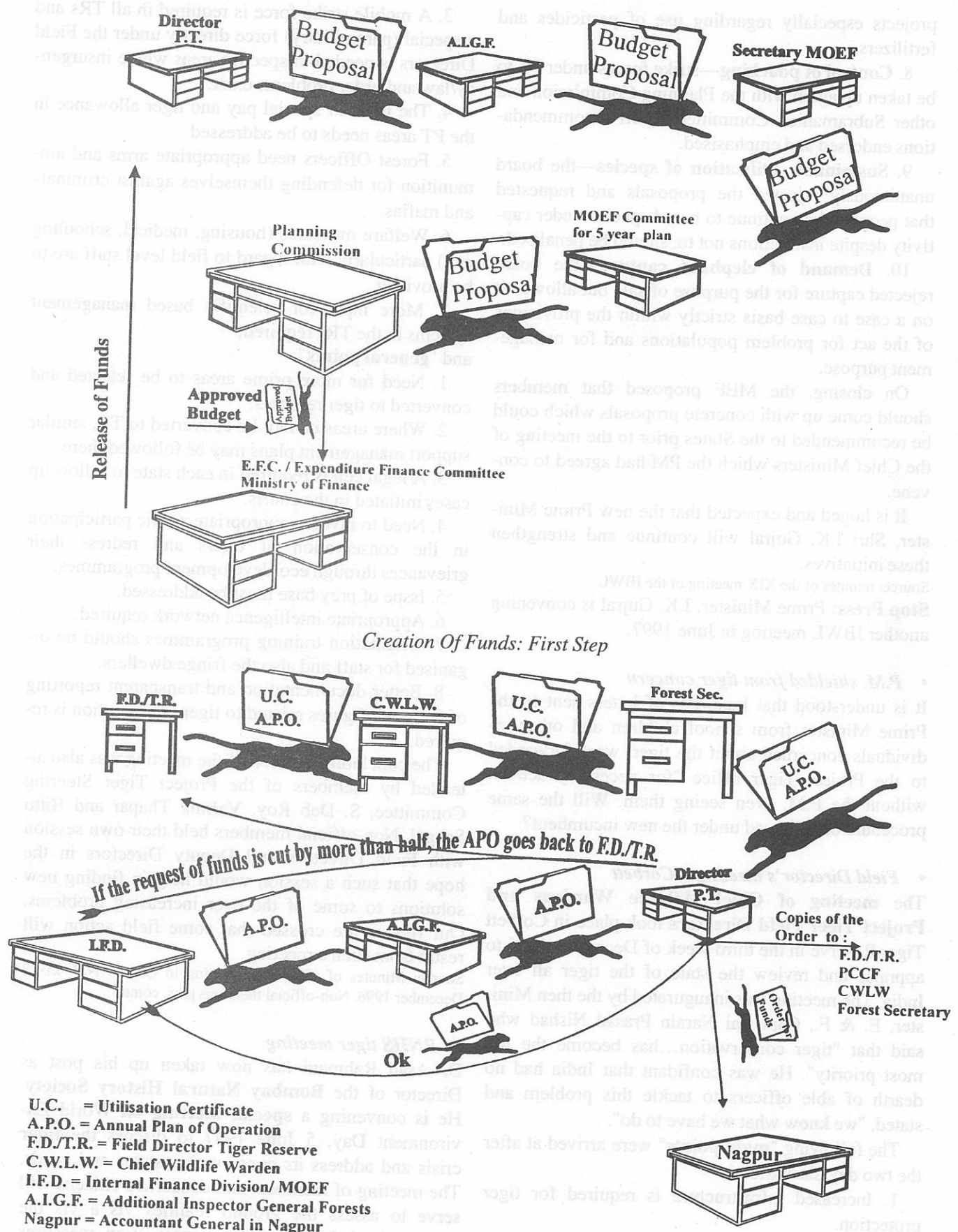
The concluding session of the meeting was also attended by members of the Project Tiger Steering Committee, S. Deb Roy, Valmik Thapar and Bittu Sahgal. Non-official members held their own session with Field Directors and Deputy Directors in the hope that such a session would help in finding new solutions to some of the ever increasing problems. Our fingers are crossed that some field action will result from such a meeting.

Source: Minutes of CWW/FD meeting in Corbett N.P. 21-22 December 1996. Non-official members pers. comm.

• ***BNHS tiger meeting***

Dr Asad Rahmani has now taken up his post as Director of the **Bombay Natural History Society**. He is convening a **special meeting on World Environment Day, 5 June 1997** to discuss the **tiger crisis** and address its conservation status and needs. The meeting of members and concerned citizens will serve to assess the ground realities vis à vis the species, its habitat and the conservation measures which need to be prioritised.

# The diagrammatic example of the funding mechanism for Tiger Reserves illustrating the present ponderous process of moving funds to the field



Funding Mechanism—Project Tiger Reserves: Second Step

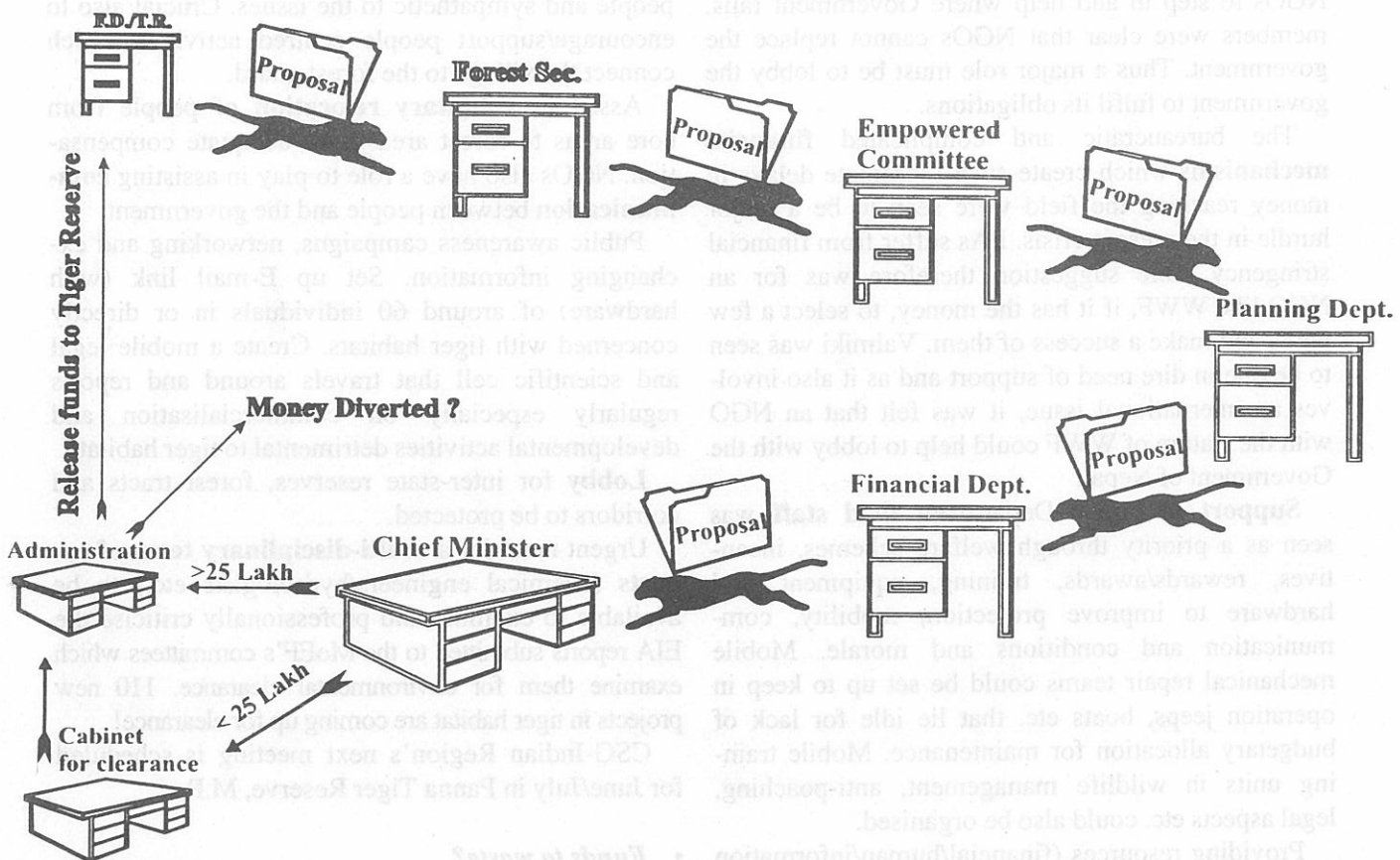


### Accountant General in Nagpur releases funds

to State Government



Funding Mechanism—Project Tiger Reserves: Third Step



After Release of Funds to State Government: Bihar Example

Credit: Ranthambhore Foundation

### • *Cat Specialist Group meeting*

The Cat Specialist Group—Indian Region (CSG) met in New Delhi 18-19 December 1997. One day was spent in the presentation and discussion of various topics including the Asiatic lion re-introduction programme, wildlife poaching and trade and the tiger ecology project in M.P. The second day, at the request of WWF-UK, discussion centred on tiger conservation and the best ways and mechanisms to fund this in the field in relation to anti-poaching, motivating forest guards etc. focussing especially on "ways in which WWF could effectively channel its money into tiger conservation in India". Some of the priority issues in tiger conservation and suggestions for action by WWF (and other NGOs in India and elsewhere) given by CSG members are listed below (not in order of priority):

The CSG identified **lack of political will** as the biggest obstacle to effective tiger (and other) conservation. While recognising the power of and need for NGOs to step in and help where Government fails, members were clear that NGOs cannot replace the government. Thus a major role must be to lobby the government to fulfil its obligations.

The bureaucratic and complicated **financial mechanisms** which create such inordinate delays in money reaching the field were seen to be a major hurdle in the present crisis. PAs suffer from financial stringency. One suggestion therefore was for an NGO like WWF, if it has the money, to select a few parks and make a success of them. Valmiki was seen to be one in dire need of support and as it also involves an international issue, it was felt that an NGO with the stature of WWF could help to lobby with the Government of Nepal.

**Support to Forest Department field staff** was seen as a priority through welfare schemes, incentives, rewards/awards, training, equipment and hardware to improve protection, mobility, communication and conditions and morale. Mobile mechanical repair teams could be set up to keep in operation jeeps, boats etc. that lie idle for lack of budgetary allocation for maintenance. Mobile training units in wildlife management, anti-poaching, legal aspects etc. could also be organised.

Providing resources (financial/human/information reports etc.) for **legal support** to wildlife staff who also suffer from fake counter cases and spend much time and money of their own in court cases. Provide a legal defense fund.

Fund **scientific studies** for better management techniques for the protection also of small but vital tiger populations. Target areas other than those where

there is already significant NGO input. Review the WWF Global Tiger Strategy. Fund rapid habitat assessments for monitoring areas. Create a 'Centre for Tiger Information'.

Lobby for and support a central government run **Directorate for Prevention of Wildlife Crimes** to target wildlife traders based in towns and cities. There is an urgent need for a small core to be formed at the Centre which should develop intelligence on illegal wildlife trade in India, carry out seizures, make arrests and take up prosecution.

Support to the creation and running of **anti-poaching cells** in tiger habitats both within and outside PAs. Fully equipped and adequately armed mobile squads required and also elaborate network for reliable information.

**Strengthening** and empowering small **local NGOs** already working to protect the tiger and its habitat. Network with other NGOs not directly in conservation but working with the rapport of the people and sympathetic to the issues. Crucial also to encourage/support people centred activities which connect the village to the forest guard.

Assist in **voluntary relocation** of people from core areas to forest areas with adequate compensation. NGOs also have a role to play in assisting **communication** between people and the government.

Public awareness campaigns, networking and exchanging information. Set up E-mail link (with hardware) of around 60 individuals in or directly concerned with tiger habitats. Create a mobile legal and scientific cell that travels around and reports regularly especially on commercialisation and developmental activities detrimental to tiger habitats.

**Lobby** for inter-state reserves, forest tracts and corridors to be protected.

Urgent need for a **multi-disciplinary team of experts** (chemical engineers/hydrologists etc.) to be available to examine and professionally criticise the EIA reports submitted to the MoEF's committees which examine them for environmental clearance. 110 new projects in tiger habitat are coming up for clearance!

CSG-Indian Region's next meeting is scheduled for June/July in Panna Tiger Reserve, M.P.

### • *Funds to waste?*

It may be interesting to note how much funds get released to the Tiger Reserves from Central Assistance and how much of these are utilised.

Under the **Eco-development Scheme** the amounts—in lakhs—range from Rs.32 released to Palamau TR in 1993/94 to nil to the same park in 1995/96. The amount released to Ranthambhore has



gone down from Rs.29.23 in 1993/94 to Rs.9.4 in 1995/96 with an increase again in 1996/97 to Rs.15.61.

In 1993/94 Rs.14.64 was released for Kanha, Rs. 12.27 of which was utilised but in 1995/96 the figure had dropped to only Rs.4.02 of which none was utilised. Bandhavgarh, in 1993/94, was released Rs. 3.86 only, all of which was used while in 1995/96 its share rose to Rs.14.67 but apparently none of this was utilised.

Under the **Project Tiger scheme** the release of Central Assistance in 1993/94 to Kanha was Rs.65.89 (63.88 used) and to Bandhavgarh Rs. 7.90 (nil used). The following year Bandhavgarh used only Rs.4.25 of the more generous Rs.16.85 released, while in 1995/96 again 'nil' was utilised though Rs.12.05 released. In the same year Kanha utilised Rs.71.06 of her Rs.78.57, the highest release for any reserve. Palamau meanwhile was centrally assisted to the tune of Rs.54.2 (53.5 used) in 1993/94 and, according to government records, continues to receive and utilise approximately this amount each year. Valmiki in 1994/95 is listed for Rs.25.75 but utilised nil. In the following year the park used the full amount of Rs.25.75.

It may be pertinent to discover why there are several major differences between the amounts released as Central Assistance under the Project Tiger scheme and the amounts utilised. Are they all cases of late receipt of funds?

Looking at the latest comprehensive figures available, for the year 1995/96 other significant differences occurred in Pench Rs. 28.20 lakhs out of Rs. 51.80; Manas Rs.34.81 of 55.93; Panna Rs. 6.18 of 9.00 and Nagarjunasaga, Rs. 20.33 of 29.95.

Under the eco-development scheme comparison examples for the same period are: Dampa nil of 4.80; Sariska, Rs. 7.65 of 17.34; Tadoba, nil of 3.77; Periyar, Rs. 4.58 of 10.07 and Sundarbans, Rs. 2.98 of 9.28.

Source: Project Tiger

#### • **Consensus for action**

In early April a meeting was called by the Indian Institute for Public Administration and Kalpavriksh to develop a dialogue between those "advocating the cause of wildlife protection and those struggling to uphold the human rights of rural communities living in and around wildlife habitats". Tarun Bharat Sangh hosted a group of about 20 people at Bhikampur-Kishori in the Alwar District next to Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan. A consensus for further action was arrived at based on the following principles:

1. Wild animal and plant species have a **fundamental right to existence**. Protected areas (PAs) and the Wildlife (Protection) Act are essential to protect this right. The primacy of conservation values in protected areas must be recognised.

2. Local communities have a **fundamental right to resources** necessary for living and livelihood, along with a responsibility to conserve these resources in PAs and other natural habitats, without interference from market forces.

3. Conservation attempts must have the **full and equal participation** of local communities, from the stage of conceptualisation to planning and implementation; eg. PAs should move towards joint management.

4. Efforts at **conservation, social justice and sustainable development** have to go hand along with brakes on the consumerism of the rich.

5. Community and national **self-reliance** is fundamental to conservation and development efforts and we oppose any dependence on foreign agencies (eg. the World Bank state forestry projects and the GEF Ecodevelopment project.)

6. **Forcible displacement** of local communities in the name of wildlife conservation is **unacceptable** and reparations must be made for such displacement that took place in the past.

7. The complete protection of **threatened wildlife species** all over India is essential.

8. The complete protection of some **areas as inviolate** (core zones, sacred groves etc.), with the consent and participation of local communities, is essential.

On the basis of these various strategies and joint **actions** were discussed and agreed including:

— facilitating a detailed investigation into the tensions in and around some of MP's PAs including Kanha, Pench, Bori, Udanti & Samarsot.

— providing research, legal and financial support to the proposed Arvari Water Catchment Sanctuary, Rajasthan.

— taking legal action against major tourism projects in and around some PAs including Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan and Bhimshankar Sanctuary, Maharashtra.

Further details, comments and suggestions should be addressed to: Ashish Kothari, IIPA, I.P. Estate, New Delhi 110 002. Tel: 3317309; Fax: 3319954; Email: akothari@kv.unv.ernet.in

#### • **Participatory Management**

Over the last one year a **project on participatory management** of protected areas has been carried out at the IIPA. It explores the potential for community participation in wildlife conservation and generation

of sustainable livelihoods in and around three areas **Dalmia** in Bihar, **Kailadevi** in Rajasthan and **Rajaji** in Uttar Pradesh. Apart from research, the project team also organised a workshop each in Dalmia and Kailadevi, attempting to initiate a dialogue between villagers, forest officials, NGOs and independent experts. This dialogue is continuing at various local levels. Apart from this work in specific PAs, the project also examined the policy, legal, institutional and benefit sharing issues relating to PAs in India as a whole. A full report on the project is currently being finalised. The team also continues to bring out JPAM Update newsletter on these issues.

For further information contact: Ashish Kothari, IIPA, I.P. Estate, New Delhi 110 002. Tel: 3317309; Fax: 3319954; Email: akothari@kv.unv.ernet.in

### • **WWF tiger conservation programme**

WWF has formed a Steering Group consisting of International as well as Indian WWF representatives to supervise WWF's growing **Tiger Conservation Programme** (TCP) in India. A tiger conservation unit within WWF-India, New Delhi, headed by Thomas Mathew, was set up in January 1997 to implement this programme. Since then they have been busy producing field assessment based reports for seven reserves: Corbett, Dudhwa, Palamau, Periyar, Manas, Kaziranga and Bandhavgarh. The first four are complete, Manas is 'incomplete' and the last two are in first draft planning stage. "With luck, action plans for all seven reserves will be under implementation by the target date of 30 June 1997", the WWF TCP progress report states.

WWF TCP is also setting up a network of Tiger Conservation Coordinators (TCC) in 13 tiger range states. Most of the individuals are from WWF-India's branch units and seven people are now "in place (U.P., A.P., West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Assam & Orissa) with the wholehearted support of the respective WWF-India state offices. An excellent NGO and TCC have been identified in Kerala who would not be acceptable to the moribund WWF-India office in the state. A good NGO has been appointed in M.P. in the face of a WWF-India state office that lacks any real conservation commitment". "By June 30 a minimum of 10 (out of 13) tiger range states should have TCCs in place and functioning".

Thomas Mathew says that "field support will reach the areas in the next 45 days" (i.e. end June). Participants would certainly appreciate the rapid translation of plans in to field action.

The progress report also introduces a new head, "research studies" under which it states: "Dr. T.N. Khoshoo (former Secretary of Environment &

Forests and WWF-India trustee) has put together a proposal on 'Genetic Management of Indian Tigers' and handed a copy to WWF TCP." "One of Dr Khoshoo's cherished dreams has been the eventual establishment of a tiger gene bank", because of the little hope he holds out for the wild populations of India. Dream or nightmare?

### • **WWF—new tiger post**

Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh is being appointed as WWF International's **Regional Director for Tiger Conservation** for the entire region of the tiger.

A new director of operations will be appointed for the WWF Tiger Conservation Programme in India.

• **Toxics Link** was set up in March 1996 by a group of like-minded NGOs, voluntary organisations and individuals concerned about toxic pollution in India. "We are a group of people working together for environmental justice and freedom from toxics. We have taken it upon ourselves to collect and share both information about the sources and dangers of poisons in our environment and bodies, and information about clean and sustainable alternatives for India and the rest of the world" The objective: to put in place an information exchange mechanism that would strengthen campaigns against toxic pollution and help push industries towards cleaner production. Toxics Link is an information exchange body, not a campaigning organisation. It is a mechanism to source and deliver information on cleaner alternatives to dirty industries, moving from pollution control to pollution prevention. It is campaign-driven by the needs of its members.

Write or Email to: Toxic Link Exchange Delhi, c/o Room 1001, Antariksh Bhawan, 22 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi 110 001. Tel: (011) 3328006. Email: etl@tl.unv.ernet.in

• **Bird Link** was formed in January 1997 as a society linking persons and organisations concerned with the conservation of birds and their habitat in south Asia. Its primary goals are "to exchange data and information regarding birds", "to become an effective pressure group to prevent the threat of extinction of bird species and their habitat" and to "create awareness amongst students and the community at large". Operating on TigerLink lines, Bird Link will also publish a newsletter twice a year and sponsor awards for outstanding contributions to the study or conservation of birds and their habitat.

Details from: Bird Link, 101/4 Kaushalya Park, Hauz Khas, New Delhi 110016. Tel: (011) 6961520/660607. Fax: 6864614. Email: biks@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in.



## Tiger funds

**Save the Tiger Fund** is a special project of the **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** in partnership with the **Exxon Corporation** that was launched in September 1995 to assist in the long-term survival of Asia's remaining populations of wild tigers. The largest single corporate donation was made by Exxon who pledged \$5 million over five years. Now in its third year of operation the Save the Tiger Fund has funded **41 projects with \$3,348,712**. Over \$200,000 of this funding has been raised by the general public.

\$1,464,530 has gone to 15 "in situ projects of on-the-ground conservation efforts in tiger range countries". These include projects in Cambodia, Malaysia, Nepal, Russian Far East, Sumatra, Thailand and India, although many of the recipients are US and UK institutions/organisations. The only Indian projects in this category are anti-poaching vehicles for Manas and Kaziranga National Parks and tiger conservation activities in Karnataka. Other categories are:

"tiger range conservation support projects"—14 projects totalling \$362,670—the overwhelming bulk of this amount has gone to captive breeding projects;

"international conservation and education"—10 projects, \$848,800. Although referred to as 'international', all of this amount has gone to tiger exhibits, awareness projects and captive breeding information centres in the U.S.A. and

"STF launch, promotional and supplemental projects"—2 projects—Dallas Zoo "Exxon Tiger Exhibit" and Exxon credit card inserts—\$672,712.

STF, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 120 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 900, Washington DC20036 Tel: 202-857-0166 Fax: 202-857-0162 Email: tiger@nfwf.org

## Tiger/rhino funds

The **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service** is calling attention to the **Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund** and requesting **proposals for 1998**. Proposals should be postmarked by **1st August 1997**. Under the 1996/97 proposal request, 68 proposals were reviewed and commented upon. To date **14 have been approved** and another 18 remain under consideration. Of those approved 4 concern the African rhino, 5 the Asian rhino, 3 the tiger and 2 both tiger and rhino. Two of the Asian rhino awards come to India, to *The Rhino Foundation for Nature in North-east India*. One of the tiger projects goes to the WPSI for expanding their investigations into the poaching

and illegal trade of wild tigers. India also benefits from one of the tiger/rhino awards; this goes to *The Green Movement* for conservation education activities and anti-poaching training.

All proposals must have the explicit support of the Government of India and several requests for funds from India have fallen by the wayside due to the strict interpretation of this requirement. Not only are NGOs expected to go through the rigmarole of obtaining official government clearance for their activities but even prestigious institutions, like the Wildlife Institute of India requesting additional funding for an ongoing GOI-cleared, part Government-funded tiger project, are not being given funds because of this. Will the rhinos and tigers still be around by the time such paper work is complied with?

Further **details** for how to apply for funds from: Herb Raffaele, Chief, Office of International Affairs, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, ARLSQ 860, Arlington, VA 22203-1622, USA. Tel:703-358-1754; Fax: 703-358-2849; Email: fred-bagley@mail.fws.gov

## Tigers 2000

In February 1997, with the financial support of Esso U.K., the Zoological Society of London held an **international symposium** on the tiger, "**Tigers 2000**". Delegates were invited from all over the world and many tiger biologists and experts presented their research to an audience of approximately 200 people. From India, Dr Ullas Karanth spoke on the importance of prey density on the viability of tiger population and on long-term monitoring of tigers; Dr R.S. Chundawat, drawing on the W.I.I.'s study in Panna, argued for conservation planning in line with the metapopulation concept looking at a large landscape rather than single isolated units; Ashok Kumar and Belinda Wright outlined the tiger anti-trade and anti-poaching strategies for the subcontinent and Valmik Thapar detailed the funding hurdles (see diagram page 18-19) and many of the other problems besetting tiger conservation in India. He also suggested essential steps for securing the tiger's future.

The symposium covered recent research in tiger ecology, the status of tigers in different parts of the world and tiger conservation strategies. Overall there was a stimulating exchange of ideas and experience with several common threads running through the findings of studies as far apart as the Russian Far East, Indonesia, Thailand and the Indian sub-continent.

There was a general recognition that "*we will not save the tiger unless we cooperate and work together*" as John Seidensticker, one of the symposium's organisers said in his opening remarks. He also spoke for all of us when he said, "*we will lose the tiger unless we immediately take up the challenge of saving it*" and he warned against the "*dangerous illusion of security*" that a composite number may give when in fact tigers exist in small isolated reserves. He tried to end the two day discussion on an optimistic note by quoting anthropologist, Margaret Mead: "*never doubt that a small group of thoughtful individuals can change the world—indeed it is the only way*".

Many delegates however felt that it was unfortunate that the symposium ended without any unifying concluding statement nor collective comment on the critical situation facing the tiger. Such a statement from so many international experts could have been used to raise awareness and carry weight with range country governments which need all the pressure we can bring to bear in order to encourage them to act now for tiger and other wildlife conservation.

The contributing papers of the symposium will be published by the London Zoological Society later this year in a book.

### 21st century tiger

At the Tiger 2000 conference held in London in February 1997, a tiger conservation partnership was announced between Global Tiger Patrol (GTP), London Zoo and Tusk Force called **21st Century Tiger**. Esso UK plc is a founder supporter of this unique partnership and the British Government pledged £50,000 for its work to save the tiger in the wild (this was however the same £50,000 that UK Prime Minister, John Major had pledged at a meeting in Calcutta in early January!). GTP's work concentrates on the Indian sub-continent and the Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*); **London Zoo** since 1994 has been helping to conserve the Sumatran tiger in the wild as part of its Conservation in Action mission; **Tusk Force's** work concentrates on the Russian Far East and the Amur tiger.

### Global Tiger Forum

The second meeting of the **Global Tiger Forum** took place on 6–7 March 1997 in New Delhi. Four countries have now ratified: India, Myanmar, Bhutan

and Vietnam. A fifth, Nepal has given a letter of intent.

Eleven tiger range states attended the meeting along with four donor countries and representatives from the US Fish & Wildlife Service and WWF. The Union Minister for Environment and Forests called upon affluent nations to help tiger range countries in tiger conservation. He also emphasised the need for people's support especially from those communities who lived along the peripheries of tiger habitats.

As a result of deliberations the meeting recommended the following urgent actions.

1. All transborder tiger areas not already indicated in the country action plans should be identified and GTF informed by 30 August 1997.

2. GTF should liaise with IUCN/WCPA, CITES & TRAFFIC for collection and collation of information and then take effective action to disseminate this.

3. Range States should compile updated information in their areas and forward it to GTF by 30 June 1997. GTF will produce an overview report by 30 September 1997.

4. A working group would be established to examine the current membership fee structure.

5. GTF Secretariat should approach various donor organisations and individuals for financial help.

6. A nodal officer will be designated by 30 April 1997 responsible for maintaining contact with GTF and other range states.

7. With respect to funds already available, immediate action should be taken to process available proposals.

8. By 30 September 1997, GTF should prepare a document outlining a procedure for monitoring and evaluation.

9. Since GTF is in a "developmental stage", it should not try to take on a whole range of activities but rather concentrate on capacity building, exchange of information, tiger conservation campaigns and preparing action plans for transborder areas.

10. GTF should be represented as an observer organisation at the Conference of parties to CITES at the June 1997 meeting.

Source: Recommendations from Secretary, GTF; PIB release 6 March 1997

### U.K. govt. support to tiger & GTF

In order for the Global Tiger Forum to be formally convened, five countries must ratify the agreement. The U.K. Government announced at the 37th CITES Standing Committee meeting in Rome in December



1996 that the £50,000 they had donated to the Forum could be used to pay the initial joining fees for countries if this would help ratification.

In a letter from the Prime Minister's office to Allen Thornton dated 7/1/97 stating this, the U.K. Government confirmed their deep concern for the plight of the tiger. "We shall continue to ensure that the Indian authorities are in no doubt of our firm wish for effective measures to protect the tiger population." The issue was raised both during the Foreign Secretary's visit to India in August 1996 and later by Prime Minister, John Major during his visit in January 1997. Indeed the P.M. during his speech to Calcutta businessmen pledged to donate another £50,000. In the end this was converted to a donation to **21st Century Tiger**. (See above)

Hopefully this will be one Conservative policy that the new U.K. Labour Government will not wish to change.

### EIA campaign continues

The **Environmental Investigation Agency** came to India in March 1997 to talk with NGOs, Indian political representatives, government officials and the media, to appraise the situation in order to decide the best way to carry forward their tiger campaign. They held a press conference and highlighted the limited action that was apparent since their last visit (apart from the IBWL meeting). They publicised the findings of their US survey (see page 29) and updated information since the publication of their October report, "*The Political Wilderness—India's Tiger Crisis*" which details many of the problems facing the tiger in India today and the necessary actions required to remedy the situation that have been suggested by NGOs and individuals in India.

### Bangladesh: zoo deaths

Recently 'quite a number' of tigers in the **Dhaka Zoo** were poisoned by the workers because of an internal conflict between two rival groups. "This appalling disregard for one of the threatened species of our country coupled with a lack of public awareness and utter neglect on the part of the concerned authorities has become a serious threat to the existence of these animals."

Mahtab Haider, Dhaka.

### Bhutan: high altitude tigers

It is reported from Bhutan that tigers have been found breeding at 3500 m and there is evidence of transient tigers from 4000 m.

### Canada: better awareness for BET'R

The **BET'R (Bear, Elephant, Tiger & Rhino) Campaign** based in Vancouver has been campaigning vigorously to "put an end to the slaughter of endangered or threatened species for Oriental medicine". The campaign director, Anthony Marr went on an intense cross-province tour giving presentations and talks and drawing much media attention to his 'crusade' to expose the crisis faced by the tigers, rhinos, elephants and bears around the world. He has taken on cultural traditionalists who "value endangered species parts over nature, or Fend Shui over trees". "As Chinese people we have to shed old ways and modernize ourselves. Part of this process is to get rid of environmentally unsound medicinal practices and superstitions".

The BET'R Campaign, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, 20 Water Street, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 1A4

### Russian Far East

"The second half of 1996 and the first few months of 1997 were relatively good for **Operation Amba**" reports Steve Galster of Global Survival Network (GSN) one of the members of the Siberian Tiger Support Coalition (STSC) who started 'Operation Amba' in 1993. In August and September 1996 the Ussurisk and Iman Amba teams converged on a network of illegal wildlife dealers operating around the city of Ussurisk and made its biggest ever arrests of tiger dealers. 15 tiger skins were recovered, most of them over a year old, confirming that the trade in Russia has reduced, leaving the dealers with skins and bones that few people are willing to risk buying. There is an increased fear of being caught amongst all sectors of the trade, Galster reports, due to Prime Minister Chernomyrdin's National Decree 'On Saving the Amur Tiger' whereby Russian police are required to cooperate with Amba.

Amba is also trying to clean up the countryside by seizing illegal weapons. 186 weapons were seized in 1996 (365 since 1994) and 229 fines and protocols have been issued to poachers and traders in 1996 (564 since 1994). The intense anti-poaching work has been covered widely in the local media, thus spread-

ing awareness of tiger conservation and enforcement action.

The US Government has assisted the STSC by sending US Fish and Wildlife agents to Primorsky Krai to conduct field training. The first team went in October and a second team is due to go over in "late spring" 1997. Also from April 1997 Amba will have a full radio system in action, linking all the ranger patrols. This was made possible by support from the David Shepherd Conservation Foundation, one of the STSC.

GSN is leading discussions in Moscow to secure financial support within the next two years from Russia's fledgling State Committee for Environmental Protection. The goal is to hand over the project to the government by the turn of the century by when hopefully it will be possible for 'Operation Amba' to be funded locally with little, if any, international aid and by when it is hoped it will have become the "strongest most effective tiger protection team in the world".

Steve Galster, GSN's report in *Wildlife Matters*, DSCF magazine

### Targetting wildlife consumers

Three conservation NGOs, Tusk Force, Global Survival Network and David Shepherd Conservation Foundation have created the **Asian Conservation Awareness Programme (ACAP)** to address the consumer demand for endangered species. (see *T-L News* vol.2 no.2). Launched in **Taiwan** in November 1996, its hard-hitting awareness campaign has been given unprecedented coverage in the national press and its announcements have been aired on seven television channels there. The message has also been carried on the sides of 120 city buses. ACAP's advertisements concentrate on the effect on the bear, tiger, rhino, ivory and marine turtle shell and the message is "**when the buying stops, the killing can too**". About 20,000 people attended the launch in Taiwan and the I-Mei Environmental Protection Foundation of Taiwan erected a huge 'tree of life'. Speakers read aloud a pledge that they would not consume endangered species and signed the tree after which a constant stream of public made the pledge and signed the tree until by the end of the day, it was completely black with signatures.

ACAP held the **European premiere** of the five television announcements in London, U.K., in February 1997. These have been made with the help of one of U.K.'s largest advertising agencies, J. Walter Thompson, the Moving Picture Company and

funds from the Body Shop. Two of these stomach-churning appeals featuring the tiger and the turtle have been taken up by MTV to be broadcast throughout U.K. and Europe in a bid to raise funds and awareness.

At the premiere, Stefan Chmelik, the vice-President of the **Register for Chinese Herbal Medicine (RCHM)**, U.K. called for the U.K. Government to endorse registration of all practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine in the U.K.. At present, under the current law, although the RCHM would expel anyone trading endangered species, there is nothing to stop them continuing to practise. Membership needs to be mandatory. He also spoke of the ignorance regarding where products come from and how; there is a large information gap that ACAP can help fill.

ACAP is planning to run the Programme in Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada and the USA this year and then to reach Japan, South Korea and China in 1998 and 1999.

ACAP, c/o Tusk Force, 123 Askew Road, London W12 0HA.  
RCHM, P.O. Box 400, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 9NZ.

**Stop Press:** On 3 June 1997, the US Government took the decision to strongly oppose attempts to downlist the African elephant at the CITES meeting and to oppose any changes that would allow even limited resumption of trade in African ivory.

On 4 June 1997, US Congressmen announced that a bill was being introduced this week to create a special fund of \$5 million to be given annually for five years to help save the Asian elephant.

#### Change of Addresses:

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Email: DSCF@DSCF



## • Poaching & seizures in brief:

11 Nov. 1996: 2 persons arrested, 2 leopard skins seized by Police, in Solan District, H.P.

15 Nov. 1996: 5 shahtoosh shawls seized from 'Delhi Haat' by Deputy Director, Northern Region

10 Dec. 1996: 1 tiger trophy (full mounted cub), 1 piece of tiger skin, 2 leopard skins and other cat skins and trophies seized by Wildlife department of Chandigarh and Punjab. One taxidermist arrested.

End Dec. 1996: 5 leopards poached around Pithorgarh

15 Jan. 1997: 3 (sub adult) tiger skins seized at Cuttack, Orissa by Police & Forest dept. One person arrested

23 Jan. 1997: 1 tiger skin seized by Central Crime Branch. 3 persons arrested in Bangalore.

28 Jan. 1997: 28.5 kg of tiger bones & 3 tiger skull seized by Corbett Tiger Reserve officials. 5 persons arrested.

31 Jan. 1997: 3 leopard skins seized by police in Satna, M. P. 2 persons arrested.

1 Feb. 1997: 11 leopard skins seized by police at Satna. One arrest.

2 Feb. 1997: 2 leopard skins at Satna seized by police.

2 Feb. 1997: 1 tiger was killed by villagers at Balale, South Kodagu District, Karnataka.

10 Feb. 1997: 5 leopard skins seized & 2 arrested by police in Satna.

11 Feb. 1997: 1 leopard skin and one arrest at Dadakhar village, Betul District, Andhra Pradesh.

Mid Feb. 1997: 2 tigers poached in Nagarhole N.P., Karnataka.

Mid Feb. 1997: 3 tigers reported poached in the Wyanad area, Kerala.

18 Feb. 1997: 1 leopard skin seized & 2 persons arrested by police at Tilak Marg, New Delhi.

19 Feb. 1997: 1 leopard skin (cub) seized by authorities at Khatauli, Uttar Pradesh. One arrest.

19 Feb. 1997: 2 leopard skins seized & 2 arrested from Sarnath Express train near Satna, M.P. by Reserve Police

20 Feb. 1997: 1 leopard skin, 2 arrests by forest dept. at Sundernagar, H.P.

21 Feb. 1997: 138 shahtoosh shawls were seized by the Metropolitan Police from a shop in London, U.K.

21 Feb. 1997: 1 tiger trophy (full mounted), 2 tiger skins seized by forest dept. 1 person arrested. Katni, M.P.

28 Feb. 1997: 1 tiger killed by villagers at Magge, Karnataka.

1 Mar. 1997: 1 tiger found dead in Baikunthpur Division near Siliguri, West Bengal. It is believed that the tiger was poisoned.

17 Mar. 1997: 2 leopard skins seized, one person arrested by forest dept. at Darjeeling, West Bengal. 9 skins of other endangered species also seized in this raid. 1 snow leopard skin was shown to a WPSI field investigator, but a seizure could not take place.

18 Mar. 1997: 2.5 kg of leopard bones seized and 2 persons arrested by wildlife dept. in Corbett N.P., U.P.

13 Apr. 1997: 4 leopard skins seized by police at Kondli, Delhi.

17, Apr. 1997: 3 leopard skins seized by police at Deeddag village, Sirmour District, H.P.

14 May 1997: 1 leopard skin and 4 chital skins seized by Vigilance Department, Bhubaneswar

15 May 1997 3 leopard skins seized and 2 commerce graduates arrested by forest officials in Bhubaneswar.

16 May 1997 15 leopard skins seized, five people arrested by Police in Dehra Dun.

## • Tiger & leopard deaths

14 Nov. 1996: 1 dead leopard found by Field Director, Rajaji N.P.—injuries as a result of being hit by a vehicle.

28 Nov. 1996: 1 leopard found dead in Mangaldai Wildlife Division, Assam by Forest Department.

30 Nov. 1996: 1 dead female tiger found by forest dept. in Kaziranga N.P., Assam. Reported to have died of natural causes.

19 Dec. 1996: 1 tiger found decomposed in Chakrata Rang, Haldwani Forest Division, U.P.

Mid Jan. 1997: 1 female tiger killed in a fight in Gori Range of Rajaji N.P.

Mid Jan. 1997: 1 tiger found dead inside Corbett N.P. It is reported the tiger died as a result of injuries sustained in a fight with an elephant.

31 Jan. 1997: 1 tiger died in an accident in Kaziranga N.P., west range, Assam. Reported by DFO's office.

Feb. 1997: 1 tiger found dead in Lohachaur, U.P.

10 Feb. 1997: 1 tiger found dead in Sonitpur East Division, Assam.

24 Feb. 1997: 1 tiger found dead in Dudhwa N.P. It is stated the tiger died as a result of injuries sustained in a fight.

Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), Thapar House, 124 Janpath, New Delhi 100001

## • Tiger skin seized

In March the Chamrajpet police, Bangalore, arrested two men and recovered a tiger skin, a 'cheetah' (leopard?) skin and 12 snake skins worth Rs. 50,000. The police acted on a tip off and arrested the men when they tried to sell these skins on the Mysore Road. The accused were produced in court and later released on bail.

Source: Times of India 28/3/97

## Concern over fake skin trade

The Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI)'s investigations have revealed that the number of fake tiger skins in the market has increased substantially in the last two years. The skins of domestic dogs, cows and horses are being painted and dyed and passed off to unsuspecting Indian buyers as those of the endangered tiger and leopard. The people selling these skins are usually people who are already active in the illegal wildlife trade. The fact that people are buying these phoney skins, unknowingly, illegally and often at incredible sums is a clear indication that there are buyers out there for the real thing and fakes are fuelling the trade.

Over the last year fake skins have been seized in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Maharashtra, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. The quality of the fakes has improved, so much so that at times even experts have mistaken them for the real thing. This menace has now acquired all-India proportions and is wasting a huge amount of the time and resources of wildlife officers, other enforcement agencies and NGOs working in this field. There have been cases when it has taken many days to set up a sting operation only to find the tiger skins being offered are fakes.

Another even bigger problem is that in some cases real skins have been swapped for fake skins after the criminal has been apprehended. In such cases the criminal can no longer be charged under the Wildlife (Protection) Act. Securing a

conviction is not easy. Such fraudulent dealings are considered little more than a misdemeanour in the courts and many police officers consider the matter insignificant. Charged simply with "cheating", most offenders are nominally fined and speedily released to continue their trade.

Until those who buy the skins are convinced of the urgent need to protect endangered wildlife, the trade in both genuine and counterfeit articles will be hard to stop. While the financial gains outweigh the risks of prosecution and imprisonment, the trade will undoubtedly continue.

**20 Nov. 1996: 5 fake tiger skins** seized in Siliguri West Bengal by Wildlife Protection Department. They believed the skins were real at the time of the seizure, later they were identified as fakes.

**1 Dec. 1996: 3 fake tiger skins** seized in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh by the police. Later discovered to be cow skins.

**16 Jan. 1997: 21 fake tiger skins** seized at Roorkee, U.P. by forest dept. A number of women were arrested. Skins were those of stray dogs.

**17 Feb. 1997: 13 fake tiger skins** seized by forest dept. 4 persons arrested in Lucknow, U.P.

**24 Apr. 1997: 11 fake tiger skins** seized from 3 persons by forest officials. The skins were those of stray dogs.

## • *Further delay in wildlife case*

On 21 May 1997 the case relating to the **biggest seizure of wildlife articles** in India's history finally came to court. Four years ago, in August 1993, a huge haul of wildlife articles, including 8 tiger skins, 287 kg tiger bone and 43 leopard skins, were seized in Delhi and a case registered against **Pema Phinley, Mhmd. Yaqub and Sansar Chand**. The first evidence to be heard by Sri S.K. Kaushiq, Addl. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, was from Mr Lakhwinder Singh appearing for the prosecution, the Union Government of India. He could not complete his evidence before the magistrate stopped the case and gave a new hearing date in September. However the prosecution must also take some responsibility for the delay in this case. At two previous hearings they had failed to produce the case property (i.e. the seized articles) in court.

## • *Travelling zoos to shut down*

Over the last two years it became apparent that there was a large but clandestine trade in live wild animals including tiger and leopard cubs. Two clouded leopards and one leopard were seized in November 1995 at Kathmandu by Nepalese authorities on a tip off from WPSI.

WPSI research revealed that the small travelling zoos were acquiring, displaying and trading in live wildlife. In April 1995 wild animals were seized from Santosh Travelling Zoo. When the illegal practices of travelling zoos were brought to the notice of the Central Zoo Authority, an inspection of all such zoos who had applied for recognition was undertaken. Almost all of them were found to display illegally acquired wild



animals and indulge in other illegal and cruel acts. When CZA refused recognition to these zoos, they appealed against the order to the Ministry of Environment and Forests which finally rejected the appeal in May 1997.

WPSI, New Delhi.

- Travelling zoos country wide have been banned by the GOI and State Governments instructed to take over their animals.

Source: The Pioneer. 2/6/97

### • **Corbett authorities continue crackdown on poachers**

T-L News (vol.2 no.2) covered the crackdown on poachers by the Corbett NP authorities. The initiative has continued, resulting in a seizure of three tiger skeletons and one python skin in Jhirna range of the park on 28 January 1997. In the operation five persons (Omi, Shiv Dayal, Jaya Shankar, Naveen and Mohan Singh) were arrested.

WPSI filed an intervention petition in the district court opposing bail to the arrested persons. The bail has been rejected till date. The skins of these tiger have still not been traced.

Wildlife authorities of Corbett NP have successfully undertaken the third seizure of tiger products in the last eight months and deserve recognition for their efforts. The work is worthy of emulation by officials in other national parks of India.

WPSI, New Delhi

### • **New York tiger supermarket**

On 23 & 24 February 1997 the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) carried out an undercover survey in New York. Out of the 17 pharmacies and supermarkets investigated in the Chinatown district (Canal Street area) 14, or over 80%, had some

tiger products which they claimed (and the packages claimed) contained tiger bone. One Chinese supermarket was selling tiger bone wine openly on its shelves. One pharmacy showed the EIA investigator a bone he claimed was from tiger. Many of the store staff stated that the packaging had changed but the products remained the same and contained tiger bone. Some products no longer named tiger on the outside packaging but the ingredients list inside listed tiger bone.

EIA believe that this widespread availability is due to the lack of New York and Federal legislation prohibiting sale of products labeled as containing endangered species. The onus of proof is thus placed on the enforcement authorities. Forensic testing is expensive and impractical on this scale. Other countries have already prohibited sale of products labeled as containing endangered species. EIA recommend immediate action at a Federal level to prohibit such sale in the USA also.

In the last four years, the international community has repeatedly accused China, Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan of continuing to consume tiger parts in Chinese medicine. As a result of pressure which peaked with President Clinton's sanctions against Taiwan, new legislation and enforcement has been carried out in all these countries. "It is outrageous that tiger products banned all over the world can be so easily purchased in New York": Dave Currey, Director of EIA.

### • **Shahtoosh shawls nabbed in London**

The nexus between trade in tiger bones and shahtoosh has become a cause of serious concern to

wildlife conservationists in India. (see T-L News vol.2 no.2) Last year, on 12 November, the department of customs at IGI Airport seized twelve shahtoosh shawls while they were being exported to U.K. The destination showed that the product was being exported by a reputed handicrafts centre based in New Delhi to clients in London. The shawls were being routed through a bank in London.

During December and January, the London Metropolitan Police and WPSI actively collaborated in this matter. The London Metropolitan Police, finally succeeded in identifying the recipients of the shahtoosh shawls but were hesitant in doing a seizure because they were not confident of identifying the shahtoosh shawls from other shawls.

This problem was finally resolved and the illegal export of shahtoosh shawls was unearthed on 21 February 1997. The London Metropolitan Police with the help of WPSI, identified the consignee of shahtoosh shawls and subsequently raided the shop selling them. A total of 138 shawls valued at £353,000 were seized in the operation.

WPSI, New Delhi

### • **Tiger bone trade still legal in Japan**

WPSI attended the second international symposium and meeting of the Asian Conservation Alliance (ACA) in Tokyo from 7 to 10 February. Members from Japan, Russia, Taiwan, South Korea and Thailand were also present. Tiger conservation and trade was one of the items under discussion, along with the forthcoming CITES Conference in Harare.

## Anti-poaching and Wildlife Trade

Japan is one of the largest consumers of wildlife products and it is the **only major consumer nation that has not banned domestic trade in tiger bones**. ACA met with Japanese Government officials from the Environmental Agency, the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry and were horrified to learn that the Government of Japan is making no attempt whatsoever to even regulate the tiger bone trade despite a CITES resolution asking all the parties to ban domestic trade in tiger parts. Traditional Chinese medicine pertaining to contain tiger bone was openly for sale.

Japan is presently the Chair of the CITES Standing Committee; yet does not even enforce and regulate CITES issues in their own country.

WPSI urges TigerLink participants to express their outrage & write immediately to: The Minister, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Kasumigaseki 1-3-1, Choyoda-ku, 100, Tokyo, Japan. Fax: Int+81.3.3501.0997

### • *China catches antelope poachers*

The **CITES Management Authority of China (CNMA)** has been enlarged, with a headquarters in Beijing and 17 regional branch offices to be set up, indicating the serious attention the Chinese Government is giving to such concerns. Since the 1993 ban on use of tiger bone and on using 'tiger' in a product name, **\$ 200 million** worth of revenue has been lost just from medicines without tiger parts but using the name. Besides this the CNMA is reported to have taken a number of actions strengthening the enforcement and awareness of CITES in China. In

heightening the enforcement of law and international cooperation, China has been pursuing action against poachers. In 1996 in **west Qinghai** wildlife protection agencies with police officers are said to have **caught 65 poachers of Tibetan antelope**. Around **3,000 skins were seized** and two poachers shot dead. A deputy country magistrate was killed by poachers in protecting Tibetan antelope. In order to control the

poaching of antelope and smuggling of the wool (*shahtoosh*), CNMA is planning to propose that the CITES Secretariat organize a workshop between range, consumer and smuggling transfer countries to discuss cooperation on smuggling control and antelope protection.

Source: Country Report for CITES Implementation of People's Republic of China presented to CITES Asian Regional Meeting, 9 -12 December 1996, Amman, Jordan.

### CITES meeting/rhino appeal

The tenth meeting of the **CITES Conference of Parties** will take place 9-20 **June 1997** in Harare, Zimbabwe. When EIA brought to our notice that a resolution was being planned by South Africa that could lead to the reopening of trade in rhinoceros parts, it was decided to use the TigerLink network to inform concerned persons around the country and to collect signatures on a **rhino appeal** as part of the attempt to persuade South Africa not to go ahead with such a move and to alert other CITES participants to Indian people's concern and opposition to this. 300 appeals were sent out and around 6,000 signatures came back.

Copies of all the signed appeals (that arrived in time) were sent in the diplomatic pouch through the South African High Commission to President Nelson Mandela. They arrived in the President's office on 23 May 1997. Letters with details of the appeal are also being sent to key CITES management authorities.

TigerLink participants who were especially active in spreading the word and collecting signatures were: **Ajit Sonakia** who alone collected 3450 signatures, receiving a wonderful, positive response from St. Joseph's School and Jawaharlal Nehru School, Bhopal; **Achintya Barua, Arun Kumar Maurya and Nature's Foster, Bandhavgarh Foundation, Kanchan & Sidhrajsinh, Mrs G.S. Rathore, Ms Sumita Rath, Mr Niladri Bihari Mishra, Mr R. Selvam and Green Peace Associates, Dr. A.B. Srivastav, Nature's Beckon and Mr. J.C. Daniel** of the **Bombay Natural History Society** who further circulated it to all BNHS members who also responded en masse.

**Dr. Karan Singh and Ms Maneka Gandhi**, on the request of the EIA, collected signatures from M.P.s and MLAs. In total **250 members**, of all parties, signed their appeals.

In a letter to Valmik Thapar, dated 30 May 1997, the Indian **Prime Minister, Shri I.K. Gujral** wrote, "Thanks very much for your letter dated 23 May, 1997 enclosing an appeal to conserve the Rhino. **The preservation of our natural heritage, both flora and fauna, must indeed be a top priority for all of us**".



## Forest protectors

On 12 December 1996 a landmark order was passed when **Supreme Court** Justices J.S. Verma and B.N. Kripal **banned the felling of trees** on private and Government forest land all over the country except in accordance with proper working plans approved by the MoEF as declared in the National Forest Policy 1988. This order was modified on 4th March 1997 to allow collection of minor forest produce, including bamboos etc. The following are some salient extracts from the order:

"It has emerged....that there is a misconception in certain quarters about the true scope of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (FC Act) and the meaning of the word 'forest' used therein". There is also misconception about the need for prior approval of certain activities in forest areas and the judges felt it "necessary to clarify that position".

### **The FC Act covers all forest land "irrespective of ownership or classification"**

1. "it is obvious that prior approval of the Central Government is required for any non-forest activity within the area of any forest" **All activities without such approval "must cease forthwith"**. i.e. running of saw-mills and mining of any mineral. "State Government must promptly ensure total cessation of all such activities forthwith"

2. In addition, in the tropical wet evergreen forests of **Tirap and Changlang** in Arunachal Pradesh there would be a **complete ban** on felling of any kind of trees. All saw-mills there & within a 100 km from its border in Assam should be closed immediately. State Governments must ensure strict compliance.

3. Felling of trees in all forests suspended except in accordance with the **Working Plans** of State Governments as approved by the Central Govt. Where permit system exists (eg. Arunachal Pradesh) felling under permit can only be done by Forest Dept. or State Forest Corporation.

4. **Complete ban on movement of cut trees** and timber from any of the **7 north-eastern states** to any other state by rail, road or waterway. Defence/Government purposes exempted & from private tree plantations in non forest areas.

5. **State Governments** to constitute within one month an expert committee to **identify all "forests"** whether degraded, denuded, cleared forests or plantations.

6. State Governments to file, within 2 months, **reports on the number of saw-mills** in their state, with particulars of ownership, capacity, proximity to forest and source of timber.

7. Within one month expert committees should be appointed to **assess sustainable** capacity of the forests qua saw mills and timber based industry, number of mills that can be safely sustained and optimum distance from forest.

Jammu & Kashmir and the hill regions of Himachal Pradesh, U.P. and West Bengal and Tamil Nadu are dealt with separately regarding details of the ban.

- Readers who come across violations still continuing, should send details and evidence, with photographs if possible, to the *amicus curiae* of the Supreme Court or to TigerLink.

## Forest support

NGOs all over India are expressing their strong support of the Supreme Court's action. Six groups in Karnataka issued a press release in January noting the significance of the order and urging others to support it. At the same time, in the North East, Nature's Beckon was urging the closure of saw, veneer and plywood mills in order to preserve the biodiversity of the forests. The Cat Specialist Group (Indian Region) at its December meeting also expressed full support and welcomed the order hoping that "it would play a vital role in saving our endangered and precious forests and all the wildlife that abounds in them". Also that "through such judicial process vital tribal cultures will be preserved and their ways of life will be respected".

TigerLink had sent out copies of an appeal sup-

porting the Supreme Court's ban, as a counter-balance to the objections being sent in by timber traders. There was a "terrific response" with signatures from people in all walks of life, with notable overwhelming support coming from people in the North East of India. The appeal was passed to the *amicus curiae* ('friend of the court') and the judges went through the names and were apparently impressed by the genuine concern of people towards the reckless exploitation of resources and by the enormous local support for their action. In contrast, all the interim applications were coming from outsider businessmen, attempting to be allowed to remove timber from the state. The appeal helped to make a big difference in revealing the actual ground realities to the Hon'ble Justices.

### • **Rajeswar report**

In the same Writ Petition, on 4 March 1997 the Supreme Court ordered the constitution of a High Power Committee under the chairmanship of Shri T.V. Rajeswar "to oversee the strict and faithful implementation of the orders of the Court" and specifically "to oversee the preparation of inventory of all timber in all forms" in the north east region. The hard-hitting 35 page report was presented by the Committee on 1 May 1997 and reveals the shocking situation prevailing there. The following are a few extracts:

"The magnitude of the denudation of forests in the North Eastern region may be seen from the following figures: the total number of **saw mills** in all the north-eastern region is **1,228**, the number of **saw-cum-veneer mills** is **291** and the **plywood factories** are **77**."

To feed these wood based industries the committee calculated that "the total number of trees officially allowed to be cut in the north eastern region would come to around **2,82,397 trees per annum**".

"The Committee feels that such sustained large scale felling of trees over the years dating back to the 1980s would result in a **serious environmental and ecological imbalance** in the region, with far reaching consequences to the nation as a whole. After careful consideration of all the factors relevant to the situation, the Committee **recommends** that the **ban on the felling of trees** in all the forests of the North Eastern Region **may continue** until further review."

"The **value** of this large quantity of **trees** is about **Rs.1,977 crores...**" "On the other hand the total **earnings** of the seven North Eastern region (states) ... (is) **Rs.79.25 crores**. It is apparent that the forest wealth of the North Eastern Region is being systematically squandered away."

"The Committee believes that the **Working Plans** of the State Governments in the North Eastern Region have become **irrelevant and unrealistic** in view of the extensive illegal cutting and transportation of timber from the forest areas. The Committee **recommends** that a **fresh survey** of the Reserved Forests of the North East may be carried out by survey parties constituted under the overall supervision of the Forest Survey of India...."

"The Committee submits that there is a need for a **Special Forest Protection Force**, centrally administered, for protecting the forests." This force should be set up "on the lines of the CRPF with adequate strength (and) with units posted in each of the seven North Eastern States."

The Committee's report also details the situation in each State and reveals massive illegal felling and flouting of the law, including an attempt to illegally transport 27 wagons of timber by rail from **Nagaland** to Delhi even while the Committee was in the North East doing their investigation. "This only shows that the cutting of timber as well as their transportation beyond Nagaland has been going on without restraint."

In **Arunachal Pradesh** "denudation of forests seems to have been going on at an alarming pace. The tropical wet evergreen forest of Debang Valley north of Brahmaputra river has been more or less completely denuded. "It was clear that illegal felling has been going on almost non-stop all these years and the Namsai Forest Division would soon share the fate of Debang Valley if felling remained unchecked."

Arunachal Pradesh has followed a "system of tree permits for many years, whereby individuals are selected for sanction by DFOs in theory, but in fact these trees are given to favoured individuals at the instance of the politicians of the party in power." "In short this is an instrument of great abuse and hardly benefits the poor tribals which it was originally intended to do." "The Committee believes that a sizeable per cent of the raw material requirements come from illegal sources from more than one North Eastern State." "In respect of employment, very few Arunachalis are working in the factories operating within Arunachal Pradesh."

In **Assam**, the State Government asserted that there was no green felling; yet there are 427 saw mills, 79 veneer-cum-sawmills and 38 plywood factories said to be operating on seized illegal timber that was auctioned and allotted to them. The Committee comments, "this was indeed a strange explanation. This could only mean that the Forest Department indirectly encourages illicit felling on a big scale."

"There is **already an uproar** against indiscriminate felling of trees by the autonomous regions of **Meghalaya**. The Khasi Students Union filed a PIL in the Guwahati High Court on 5 June 1996 pleading for a 10 year moratorium on timber trade, closure of all saw and veneer mills and preservation of the tribal forests of the State", asserting that in 1972 40% of the State was under forest cover while by 1996 only 18% remained! "Many delegations and persons who met the Committee urged that the ban on cutting of trees should remain permanent if we were to save the forests of Meghalaya."

Source: Report of the Committee for the North Eastern Region, Dinesh Mishra, B.N. Kaul and T.V. Rajeswar



• **Plantations or forest?**

**The Palni Hills Conservation Council** has requested the Supreme Court to consider the monocultures, that were established by the clearing of natural forest or grasslands at higher altitudes, as forest and treat them as such. These areas were put under plantations of eucalyptus, wattle, pine and other exotics in the 1960s to supply pulp wood to paper mills and the viscose industry. Approximately 18,000 hectares above 1500 mts. have been affected in this manner. PHCC say that the ecological balance has been disturbed and the rainfall pattern altered by the conversion of the natural shola forest and grassland to these monocultures which are clear cut every seven to ten years. They argue that the plantations should be allowed to revert back to forest and that these highland forests should be considered part of the watersheds.

This appeal has been sent in opposition to the local Committee's conclusion that the exotics should be considered as plantations, not forest, as they were established prior to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. PHCC point out that the Committee Chairman had at one time been consultant to the viscose industry, now closed due to the pollution it was causing, but previously the beneficiary of the eucalyptus plantation.

PHCC, Post box 34, Kodaikanal 624 101, Tamil Nadu.

• **Wildlife Act review**

The committee set up to review the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 under the chairmanship of Dr. M.K. Janjitsinh has completed its task and submitted their suggested amendments to the Minister, Environment & Forests. While some NGOs are upset at what they see as the lack of transparency and discussion by the committee, members say that the public participation involved in the framing was "greater than anywhere else in the world". It is understood that the committee has proposed further safeguards to prevent violation of protected areas and has proposed changes to the rules regarding denotification, which at present lies in the hands of the State Legislative Assemblies.

• **Nagarahole hotel directed to apply to Centre**

Public Interest Litigation was taken up in the Karnataka High Court in Bangalore by four Karnataka tribal activist groups challenging the legality and propriety of leasing an area inside **Nagarahole Tiger Reserve** (renamed the Rajiv Gandhi N.P.) for use as holiday resort. The 56.41 acre area in question was Murkul where earlier there had been a government saw-mill and subsequently, a complex of cottages,

reception centre, staff quarters etc. built by the Karnataka Forest Plantation Corporation.

The Court found the lease contravened both the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Thus at the hearing on 20 January 1997, the Taj group company was ordered to stop all activities on the forest land and to hand over its possession to the State Government.

However, on appeal, a division bench of the Karnataka High Court set aside this order and **Taj was directed to seek the approval of the Central Government**. This may be granted or rejected in accordance with the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the court ruled.

Source: Order dated 20/1/97 on the Writ Petition no: 31222 of 1996 in the High Court of Karnataka at Bangalore before the Hon'ble Mr Justice G.C. Bharuka. Nagarahole Budakattu Hakku Sthapana Samithi and others v. State of Karnataka and others. Update from *Wildlife First!*

• **Dandeli mining stopped**

"A *Wildlife First!* team visited **Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary**, Karnataka and spent four days trying to understand the problems of the sanctuary, in particular the devastation due to mining. After collecting full information about the mining companies operating in the area, the team went around the sanctuary and was able to record the extensive damage to the habitat on video and photographs.

Based on the evidence/information collected *Wildlife First!* filed a PIL in the Karnataka High Court on 6 March 1997. The court has ruled that **no mining operations** should be allowed to be carried on in the area except in and under accordance with provisions contained under section 2 of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

As per the latest information collected from the Chief Wildlife Warden of Karnataka, all mining activities in Dandeli have come to a total stop based on this order and the Supreme Court order as well." *Wildlife First!*, 248, 4th Main Rd., Chamarajapet, Bangalore 560018.

• **Pench permits—final judgement**

The Government of Madhya Pradesh had issued 305 fishing permits in the Totladoh reservoir situated in the heart of the **Pench National Park** and this had been challenged by the Animal & Environmental Legal Defence Fund and a stay granted in November 1996. (see *TigerLink News* vol.2., 1 & 2). The Jan Van Andolan Samithi intervened on behalf of the tribals and the final judgement, given on 5 March 1997, appears to be more of a **balancing act** between human and ecological sympathies than it does a legal

verdict. "Therefore, while every attempt must be made to preserve the fragile ecology of the forest area and protect the tiger reserve, the right of the tribals formerly living in the area to keep body and soul together must also receive proper consideration".

While stating that it would have been preferable if they had been properly rehabilitated outside the National Park, the judges nevertheless direct that the licences be allowed under further conditions. These include issuing photo identity cards to the permit holders, demarcating certain areas of the reservoir for fishing, access to the reservoir only on the Totladoh-Thuepani road and no fishing between July and October; no night halts will be permitted in the park and no fires permitted on the banks of the reservoir. The M.P. Government is directed to sanction an adequate number of personnel and equipment in order to monitor the 305 fishing permit holders and the Jan Van Andolan Samiti to explain the conditions to the concerned fishermen. The State Government has also been directed to expeditiously issue the final notification in respect of Pench National Park.

Given the difficulty the conditions will impose on the fishermen and the continuance of such activities inside a national park, it would seem that this judgement while humouring all parties will satisfy none.

Source: Judgement dated 5/3/97 of the Writ Petition (Civil) No: 785 of 1996 in the Supreme Court of India. Animal & Environment Legal Defence Fund v. Union of India & others.

**Stop Press:** Bittu Sahgal reports that fishing is still going on in Pench in violation of the Supreme Court Order. No permits or identification cards have been issued. People are entering the park from all directions, rather than the one suggested by the Supreme Court. The officers of the MP Forest Dept. have not been re-instated. The Tiger State Committee has not met in the past six months.

### • M.P. govt. taken to task

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has issued a show cause notice to the State Government on a public interest litigation filed by **Ms Pinki Mishra**, a school teacher from Jabalpur, seeking a high level **enquiry into the status of wildlife**, especially tigers, in the country as well as into the continuing poaching and trade in tigers and tiger parts. The Director of Project Tiger, 'Indian Board for Wildlife, Bhopal' and CBI are co-respondents with the M.P. State Government and the petitioner contends that they have failed to perform their statutory duty under the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

Source: *Rajasthan Patrika*, Jaipur. 3/5/97

### • Kalakad-Mundanthurai plantations

The **impleading petition** of Mr. R. Selvam of the **Tamil Nadu Green Movement** has been admitted by the Madras High Court in the cases pending between the **State Government and the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation (BBTC)**. (See *T-L News* vol.2 no.1.) In these cases BBTC has challenged the applicability of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to the forests in its possession out of the leased area. The outcome of the case will have a bearing on several such disputes across the country. The impleading petition argues that the F.C. Act is very much applicable and all expansion of planted area after 1980 is not legal.

Further details from: TNGM, P.O. Box 95, Ootacamond 643 001.

### • Ivory ban continues

On 20th March 1997 Delhi High Court dismissed various Writ Petitions that sought to dilute the ban on the trade in ivory. Some ivory traders and manufacturers had gone to court in an attempt to argue that they were carving and trading in imported mammoth ivory and this was not covered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act and amendments. Also it was asserted that they only deal with African ivory that was imported before the Amendment Act of 1991 came into operation. Furthermore they tried to argue that the restriction was unreasonable, unfair and arbitrary and violated their fundamental rights as enshrined in Articles 14 and 19 (1)(g) of the Constitution. The Court went into the arguments in great detail but were unable to agree, finding no merit in the writ petitions and thus dismissing them.

### • Skin traders petition Delhi High Court

In a similar case to the ivory traders, certain manufacturers and traders in animal skins filed a number of writ petitions in an attempt to be allowed to continue their trade, challenging the Amendment Act of 1986. They denied that preservation of wildlife was in the public interest and contended that there was no relation between their trade in animal skins and products and those animals' preservation! They also claimed that they had been deprived of their right to livelihood and desired to sell off their stocks at a reasonable rate. However the Court noted that it was a fundamental duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment and that there is a connection between wild animal trade and species extinction. Opinion was given that the petitioners had already been given ample time to dispose of their stocks. Extensive misuse of such provisions earlier was noted. The writ petitions were thus dismissed.



• **Panna research project on the ecology of tiger: an update**

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

Since the last update in December 1996, one more tiger, a female with three nine to ten month old cubs, was radio-collared in Panna in January 1997. The collared male has expanded his home range considerably from 55 km<sup>2</sup> (T-L News vol.2 no.2) to over 230 km<sup>2</sup>. But 90% of his activities are restricted within 115 km<sup>2</sup>, which primarily lies in the middle plateau, in the Hinauta range. This is the least disturbed habitat of the park and it is the home of the recently collared female. Her movements are restricted to this undisturbed and prey rich area and four months monitoring reveals that her home range is 25 km<sup>2</sup>. She is predated mainly on sambar at intervals of 6-8 days. So far thirteen of her kills have been found, of which 7 were sambar (mostly females), 2 nilgai, and 1 chital. For a tigress who is raising three cubs the size of small leopards, the kill rate observed in Panna is less than is actually required. Sufficient requirement of food is critical for the mother to raise the litter successfully.

Principal prey, in the order of their abundance, are nilgai, sambar and chital. Though nilgai is the most abundant prey species of tiger in the National Park, it occurs in the more open thorny forest which is seldom used by tiger. Tiger's principal prey, chital,

occurs in low density and sambar is patchily distributed. Such limitations can certainly affect the reproductive success of the population. The male tiger, on the other hand, was feeding primarily on livestock, especially buffaloes and he ventures outside the Park boundary frequently. His habit of livestock killing, and venturing outside the Park exposes him to man-caused mortality.

In the coming months, we plan to radio-collar two to three more tigers. In the mean time, Mr. Neel Gogate, the project researcher, will continue to monitor the movements of the radio-collared tigers. Based on the primary information gathered from the project a paper titled "Tigers in Panna: their conservation prospects in semi-arid, sub-optimal habitats in India" was presented at the symposium *Tiger 2000* in London, on 20 February 1997.

Abi Tamim, M.Sc. Student at the WII, who had joined the project for his dissertation work, has completed the six month field work. He is presently writing his dissertation which will be submitted in June 1997.

Dr. R.S. Chundawat, Principal Investigator, Wildlife Institute of India, P. Box #-18, Chandrabani, DehraDun 248001.

• **Tiger research**

Dr. Ullas K. Karanth is monitoring the tiger forests of Karnataka with his photo trap, capture/recapture methods. His team are at present in Badra Wildlife Sanctuary.

The **Wildlife Conservation Society, India Program** is conducting a wide variety of tiger conservation activities in and around the Dandeli-Bandipur 'tiger conservation units' in Karnataka. The project involves intensive field study work, anti-poaching operations, law enforcement, volunteer training, environmental education and habitat acquisition. The project is funded by Exxon and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation's *Save the Tiger Fund*.

• **Census-workshop**

An **International Tiger Field Assessment workshop** was held in the Royal Chitwan National Park, Nepal, in March 1997. Thirty wildlife biologists and managers from tiger range states came

*Care for the Wild* has sponsored a **two year fellowship** for one MSc. student at the Wildlife Institute of India and we hope that this sponsorship will be ongoing. One candidate will work only on tigers and this year the MSc. student worked with the Institute's Tiger Ecology Project in Panna, Madhya Pradesh for his tiger dissertation.

together to discuss and critique current and past methodologies and to begin to develop a tiger field manual that can be distributed in the appropriate language to all tiger range countries.

The major objective of the workshop was to demonstrate methods for tiger survey so that uniform methods could be used throughout the tiger's range to obtain results which are comparable. Transects for estimating ungulate abundance and the use of camera

traps for quantifying tiger abundance were demonstrated. Presentations on the status of tiger in different range countries were also made.

The workshop was part of a regional effort to broaden tiger conservation efforts to encompass entire tiger populations as ecosystem management units. It was organised by the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation department in Nepal and Minnesota University, U.S.A.

### • *Rethink on census*

The last all India census took place in 1993. Four years on, the next one is due and is currently being conducted throughout the states of India. However this may be the last such total count **census**.

In April an historic meeting took place between the Project Tiger Director, MoEF and Forest Department officials, wildlife scientists and a WWF-India representative. This committee had been set up on the recommendation of P.T. Steering Committee. The outcome was an agreement that "research on population estimation techniques applicable to large mammals has now conclusively established the fact that approaches based on the concept of **'sampling' are more rigorous**, reliable, replicable and cost efficient compared to the earlier approaches based on total counts". The committee recommended that the total count based "census" of tigers and prey species be "modified and supplemented by the following population assessment and estimation methodologies:

1. Mapping tiger distribution" to be done once a year by recording tracks and location. "Park authorities should not be asked to come up with exact numbers of either tigers or prey."

2. In designated tiger reserves, continuous monitoring and recording presence/absence of tigers, with special emphasis on cubs, should be done.

3. Each important region should have access to a trained team of staff, scientists and NGO volunteers to carry out population estimation using sampling based methods.

For tigers this will be based on "the number of pug marks, scrapes and scats encountered per unit distance walked along predetermined sampling routes which will be replicated annually". If resources and skilled personnel exist, camera trapping on a capture-recapture model can also be carried out.

For prey species, including livestock, pellet estimate densities will be taken using plots along predetermined sampling routes and direct estimation

of prey density or at least prey encounter rates using a system of properly laid out line transects.

The recommendation is signed by Dr. L.A.K. Singh, Sanjay Singh Gailout, Vinod Rishi, Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh, Dr Ullas Karanth, Brig. Ranjit Talwar and Project Tiger Director, Mr P.K. Sen.

### • *Nepal: ecosystem approach*

Between December 1994 and December 1996 surveys were conducted in Nepal's lowland parks and reserves where tigers occur. (see T-L News vol.2 no.2). The resulting figures for adults maintaining exclusive home ranges (AF & AM) and subadults approaching breeding age that have already settled and maintain exclusive home ranges (SAF & SAM) were as follows:

<b>Chitwan and Parsa</b>	31AF	12AM	4SAF	1SAM
<b>Bardia and Banke</b>	21AF	11AM	4SAF	-
<b>Suklaphanta</b>	10AF	6AM	-	-

Non-territorial subadults and cubs are not included. Both these age classes are bound to be under-enumerated during field surveys. It is more accurate to estimate the total population (all age classes) by using a formula based on the number of adult females. The formula is 2.4 subadults and cubs per adult female. If we estimate the number of tigers in Suklaphanta, for example, the total number comes to 40. The number actually counted was only 31, 16 adults and 15 subadults and cubs, both the latter being under-enumerated.

As the International Field Assessment Workshop held in Royal Chitwan National Park in March 1997 recognized, protected areas may not be large enough to conserve tigers at the population level. An **ecosystem approach** to tiger conservation is **required**. Now we have to go beyond the confines of protected areas to establish the limits of populations.

The **Chitwan-Parsa-Bara-Valmiki** population: Chitwan and Parsa have been surveyed. Now it is essential to survey Bara and, in cooperation with the Indian authorities, Valmiki. As well as estimating the numbers of tigers, the plan is to assess the relative abundance of prey by pellet counts and to identify the nature and extent of human disturbance. Effective cooperation between the DNPWC and the Field Director of Valmiki Tiger Reserve needs to be established.

The **Bardia-Banke-westernmost Deukhuri** population: the rapid assessment carried out in the proposed extension of the Royal Bardia National Park (RBNP) needs to be repeated in greater depth and also extended to include the area south of the



Rapti river and the adjoining forests of India. On the west it appears that there is a break between the tigers in RBNP and those in the interior of Kailali District but this needs to be examined in greater detail. It is almost certain that there is no longer any connection between RBNP and Suklaphanta.

The **Suklaphanta-Kishanpur** population: it is essential to examine the corridor which extends south from RSPWR, between boundary pillars nos. 23-28, to connect with the Reserve Forests on the Indian side. Earlier in 1996 Bengali refugees who had settled in the area, threatening the corridor, were removed by the Indian authorities - an excellent example of Nepal/India cooperation. The team which surveyed Suklaphanta recommended that priority be given to the removal of Audaiya, Haraiya and Pataiya villages since they are next to and impact on the main dispersal corridor into the extension area. The possibility of a connection with the Indian forests via the Hirapur extension and westward along the foothills of the Churia should also be examined. In cooperation with the Indian authorities we should assess the status of tigers and their prey in the Kishanpur forest blocks.

Charles McDougal, Research Associate, National Zoo, Smithsonian Institution. Tiger Tops, Box 242, Kathmandu.

- Jagdish Krishnaswamy (jug@acpub.duke.edu) also argues for the **Bardia (Nepal)-Katarniaghat** and adjacent area to be managed as one unit as far as possible. He reports that recently 12 elephants crossed to India from Royal Bardia National Park.

- **Tigers fail to breed**

Studies done by the Wildlife Institute of India using camera traps and pug marks show that at least 3 male and 8 female tigers are using the Dholkhand area of **Rajaji National Park**. This is an isolated population and may represent the entire population in 1000 sq. km of tiger habitat on the west bank of the river Ganges. The population is connected to the Chilla/Corbett population on the east bank.

All the tigers were photographed during the last 18 months by 2 camera traps which were 500 m apart in Dholkhand, an area of about 15 sq. km in Rajaji which is relatively free from livestock grazing. A disturbing fact emerging from the camera trap study, is the total absence of cubs or tigresses with swollen mammary glands in the photographs and the absence of cub pug marks over the period. We believe that due to disturbance caused by *bhabar* grass cutting, grazing and poaching, tigers of this area are unable to breed. The only way to save the tiger on the west

bank of the Ganges is to give Dholkhand total protection from any form of disturbance and to create more such mini-core areas to enable tigers to breed. If this is not done immediately, tigers will cease to exist in the vast tracts of forest on the west bank of the Ganges.

A.J.T. Johnsingh, S.P. Goyal, W.I.I., Dehra Dun

- **Automated identification of animals using body patterns**

Lex Hiby of Conservation Research Ltd. in Cambridge, England writes:

"I run a small company...specialising in automated identification of individual animals using body patterns. We have developed a system that runs on a desktop PC and is being used to search photocatalogues of cheetahs in Africa, seals in U.K. and right whales in Argentina. The system uses a 3D surface model of the head and flank area of the animal to allow for differences in viewpoint between photographs.

I am wondering whether the system might be of value to wildlife professionals in India. It should be possible to develop a version which could search a central register of photos, collected from the various reserves, for a match to a photo of a tiger skin. A skin photo (head or flank) might be obtained at a shop or customs post, for example and posted or wired to the office holding the register. Although I am confident that such a system would succeed technically, I know very little about the current situation with respect to trade in tiger skins."

Lex Hiby will be in Delhi in mid June and offers to demonstrate the system "given half an hour on a PC 386, 486 or Pentium".

Conservation Research Ltd., 110 Hinton Way, Cambridge CB2 5AL, UK. Tel & Fax: + 44 1223 842387 Tel: (01223) 840936 Email: lex@conres.demon.co.uk / phil@conres.demon.co.uk

**Stop Press**

*"All is not lost in Ranthambhore"*

Fatch Singh Rathore estimates that there may be 18-20 tigers in **Ranthambore National Park** (N.B. not the full tiger reserve). This includes 9 cubs. He feels that "with good management" these new cubs can grow up to be healthy adults and "bring Ranthambhore back to its old glory".

## Publications and Media

- ***In Danger: Habitats, Species and People*** edited by Paola Manfredi. Ranthambhore Foundation in association with Local Colour. Sponsored by NORAD (the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation). 1997. 160 pp (98 colour photographs). This book contains a selection of essays concerning endangered habitats and species written by experts in their field. It also contains a survey and a directory of NGOs in India working in this field. The book is available in two editions, Hindi and English. Copies are available for NGOs, educational institutions and schools in India, subject to availability. Please write to Paola Manfredi, R.F., 19 Kautilya Marg, New Delhi 110 021.
- ***Through the Tiger's Eye: A Chronicle of India's Wildlife*** by Stanley Breedon and Belinda Wright. Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press. 1997. 193 pp. Illustrated with a fabulous collection of photographs that lyrically evoke the authors' many years work in the national parks and sanctuaries of India. The book also documents the events that turned Belinda from a film-maker and naturalist to a conservationist dedicated to exposing and prosecuting wildlife poachers and traders. US\$ 24.95. Available by mail order from (US) 800 841 2665 and (UK) 0181 443 5333. To be released in India shortly.
- ***Koenigtiger: Im Banne der Indischen Wildnis*** (in German) by Gertrud & Helmut Denzau. Tecklenborg Verlag. 1996. 152 pp. (154 colour photographs) The authors describe their personal encounters with tigers in the wild (India and Bangladesh) during the last 17 years and in the annexure, review Project Tiger. The book includes rare material on the Sundarbans with three authentic tiger pictures from this aquatic environment.
- ***Land of the Tiger: A Natural History of the Indian Subcontinent*** by Valmik Thapar. BBC Books. In press. This book which accompanies the BBC T.V. serial, *Land of the Tiger*, is expected to be out towards the end of the year. It "documents some of the most exciting wildlife habitats in the world".
- ***How the Tiger Lost its Stripes : An Exploration into the Endangerment of a Species*** by Cory Meacham, Harcourt Brace & Co., June 1997. The book states : " The tiger is in no danger of extinction", since the tiger in captivity breeds easily, the animal itself will indeed survive in captivity. Is that enough? Meacham states : " I am not an activist, nor am I a scientist, a politician or a biggame hunter". His book is the result of his research, gleaned from firsthand interviews and investigations conducted during a 100,000mile trek through more than a dozen countries. Available with Harcourt Brace, c/o Dori Weintraub : phone (USA) 2125921151, fax (USA) 2125921160.
- ***A Framework for Identifying High Priority Areas and Actions for the Conservation of Tigers in the Wild*** by Dinerstein, Wikramanayake, Robinson, Karanth, Rabinowitz, Olson, Mathew, Hedao, Connor, Hemley and Bolze. WWF-US and WCS in association with National Fish & Wildlife Foundation's 'Save the Tiger Fund'. 1997. 72 pp + maps. "This report sets forth an ecology-based framework for identifying areas that have potential to conserve tigers, so that limited financial and human resources available for tiger conservation can be applied with maximum result."
- ***Tiger Progress?: The response to CITES resolution conf. 9.13*** by Susan A. Mainka TRAFFIC International May 1997. This report is an appraisal of the response of both tiger range countries and consumer countries to the 1994 CITES resolution urging countries to do everything possible to help conserve the tiger. The author clearly states "Generally speaking the response to Resolution conf. 9.13 has been poor".

"From the information available, it appears that illegal trade in tiger parts and derivatives is occurring throughout the range and consumer states surveyed with few exceptions. Financial penalties in many range states are low compared to the potential financial gain. In many states where steep penalties exist, they are not used due to legislation that is difficult to enforce because of limitations in forensic techniques, lack of resources or political will, or backlogged legal systems which require years to bring cases to court".
- ***Rhinoceros Horn and Tiger Bone in China: An Investigation of Trade Since the 1993 Ban*** by J.A. Mills. TRAFFIC International 1997. Traffic East Asia has just published this investigation of trade since the 1993 ban. Mills states, "taken together, the results of these surveys could indicate that China has been highly successful in implementing the domestic ban on trade in rhinoceros horns, tiger bone and their medicinal derivatives".



The report also states, "the apparent increased usage of leopard bone as a substitute for Tiger bone in manufactured Chinese medicines is of possible conservation concern. Not one manufacturer who responded to the 1995 survey of pharmaceutical companies mentioned the protected status of the leopard in China or under CITES. Use of this substitute ingredient deserves further clarification and investigation". The report quotes one manufacturing company, "because of the international conservation regulations (CITES) which bans the use of tiger bone in medicines medicine containing tiger bone are not allowed to circulate. If your company needs these medicines, we can manufacture them but the tiger bone in the medicine must be substituted by leopard bone". Will the Indian leopard go the way of the tiger?

- **Tiger** by Lindsey Gillson, Care For the Wild. A new booklet on everything you wanted to know about the tiger and its crisis. Available from: Care for the Wild, Ashfolds, Horsham Road, West Sussex RH12 4QX. Tel: (01293) 871596 Fax: 871022 Email: cftw@fastnet.co.uk

- **Tiger Watch**, vol.1 no.1. This new newsletter is published by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Exxon Corporation to keep the "friends of the Save The Tiger Fund abreast of efforts to save tigers in the wild". Save the Tiger Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 1120 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 200360642.

- **China Environment News** is a national broadsheet newspaper published in China both in Chinese and in English. The Chinese edition was first published in 1981; it comes out four times a week and has a circulation of 300,000. The English edition was begun in 1989 and circulates in about 30 countries. Mr. Wen Bo, Editor, CEN, Chongwen District, 100062, Beijing China. Tel: 8610 67122478 Fax: 67113772 Email: cnenv@public3.bta.net.cn

- Besides filming a wild snow leopard in Ladakh, the BBC's '**Land of the Tiger**' units in Kanha Tiger Reserve have successfully recorded a tigress charging a langur and taking it to her three month old cubs. The three cubs first played with it before feasting on it with their mother.

The six part natural history series, 'Land of the Tiger' will be released in the U.K. before Christmas this year. We are hoping that BBC will also trans-

mit these films in India and push through a Hindi edition.

- **The Tiger Trap**, a film made by Mark Tully for EndBoard Productions was aired in the U.K. as part of the BBC2 series *East*, on 1 May 1997. Going out on the U.K. election night, the programme may not have had the impact of the earlier *Tiger Crisis* film. However it raised some important universal questions concerning conservation, environmental and social project funding agencies that have become entrenched in their own bureaucracies. NGOs that have been around for years seem to become so top heavy with administration that they appear unable to react to a crisis when required.

The main thrust of *The Tiger Trap* is questioning WWF's commitment to doing anything constructive for the tiger. It perpetuates the myth generated by WWF that it is responsible for Project Tiger, a myth which is not corrected by WWF in their interview with Mark Tully. While no one questions Guy Mountfort's initial involvement on behalf of WWF, the commitment in 1972 was matched by Indira Gandhi and from then on Project Tiger has been a Government of India project. Its successes and failures are its own but *The Tiger Trap* implies that the WWF still has a say in its workings. WWF's failure to react to the current crisis while allowing this myth to remain is possibly worse than the Government's own lack of appropriate response.

Mark Tully highlights three examples of the many problems faced by the tiger. He looks first at the tragic situation in the Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Bihar (see page 4) and then at the lack of involvement of the park management at Sariska with the surrounding villages. Thirdly, the programme looks at the failure of WWF to do anything on the ground while continuing to present itself as an international organisation at the forefront of tiger conservation.

The film is well made with a dramatic use of graphics and incorporates EIA footage. It conveys the dilemma facing the tiger and strongly implies that time is running out.

Unfortunately, the film only focuses on the failures and many of those interviewed are negative in their remarks. Surely we need to stress what needs to be done rather than always harping on the failures. It would be refreshing to see something about the few people and organisations who are battling the odds and trying to create a future for the tiger.

Toby Sinclair, New Delhi.

## **Please remember:**

TigerLink is the sum total of its parts and has no central organisation. Thus all letters addressed to the TigerLink News are addressed to **you** so **please respond** accordingly whenever you can help or offer advice or support. The aim of the Tiger-Link network is to put people and individuals in touch **with each other** and this is a forum for this, so do make contact with people offering or needing help in your area.

## **Extracts from your communications**

*We will be supporting your activities and concerns for protecting tiger habitats. THANAL is a decade old voluntary group with a difference. We support various NGOs but we do not want to be one. We are a group of concerned individuals supporting nature education and also natural history studies.*

**Conservation Action & Information Network** (Kannur, Thrissur, Trivandrum)  
Post Box No: 815, Kawdiar, Trivandrum  
695 003

*Many thanks for mailing us a copy of TigerLink News. Such a publication is the need of the hour to keep all like-minded people well informed and linked through a chain. I wish you all the best for the same.*

**Ramveer Singh**, WWF-India, Ranthambhore Project, Sawai Madhopur, Khandar 322 025

*The national and international news on tigers and their conservation efforts published in Tiger-Link News are of great value to us. We are doing our best to create awareness among the people of*

*Assam, particularly the people living on the tiger habitat fringes, about the fast dwindling population of tigers and the urgent need for saving them.*

**Soumyadeep Datta**, Director, Nature's Beckon, "Datta Bari" Ward No 1, Dhubri 783301, Assam

*I am of the opinion that this is the proper time for the Government officers to join hands with the NGOs having same concern. I am also of the opinion that it is the time to give utmost priority to protection of the forests in our hands....Vehicles for example are badly needed in the field. Range Officers should have at least a jeep to be mobile in the field. ...now the situation demands that with whatever equipments you have, you should best utilize it in the interest of forest protection.*

*Secondly forest officers who are really concerned about wildlife need to be given due protection in the sense that they should be allowed to continue in the wildlife wing until they prove otherwise. Some directives to these effects from central Government may prove of some help to officers in particular and wildlife in general.*

**K.A. Mishrikotkar**, Range Forest Officer, Anti Poaching Unit, Nagpur 440 001

*TigerLink indeed has become a most valuable correspondent between those who are linked to save this national animal....Certainly it would be a pleasure for me to become a participant and to express my views to "Save Tiger" campaign.*

*Having been brought up in the middle of the forests of Central India in old Chanrapur District in 1942, graduated in Science followed the subjects, Botany and Zoology in 1963 from Nagpur.*

*Being the son of a Forest Officer my pre mature days were spent in the forest areas of Central Province (old M.P.)....*

*I am professionally a farmer (cultivator) with seasonal time to spare for field observations for conservation of fauna and flora....Within these 15 years I have made 5 visits to Kanha N.P....Though all efforts have been taken by the Govt. of M.P., the casual reports on smuggling of tiger and other skins around this world famous park is a matter of all-time worry.*

*In the month of April 1996 my stay at township of Sighora-Bicchia on the M.P. border revealed that a network of smugglers still exist around the periphery of this N.P. While staying there I came across an aboriginal who came to me to have one raw tiger skin for purchase which he killed by insect poison on his dead cow (killed by tiger)....On cross-questioning, it was revealed that the concerned Forest Dept. do not take interest nor bother to make payments for the livestock killed either by tiger or panther in these districts. It has now become a sad affair to note that the Govt. of India...had already made provisions to hold proper inquiry of tiger kills. The owner who suffers is to receive cash payments nearly 3/4 of the purchase cost permissible by rules....*

*This is certainly a mockery on the part of those field forestry authorities who are not aware about wildlife existence and survival. Their failure to hold responsibility in such matters when legal provision is there to distract the tribals from destroying carnivores. These unhealthy attitudes by field management towards poor tribals in that section make them fall for*



*the meagre currency handed by smugglers in the trade.*

*I request you all to draw the attention of M.P. Govt. and other state govts. in north India to such irregularities and unresponsive attitudes of field management people of the forestry.*

**Mahendra Singh**, Vill. Chaprala, P.O. Chaurampalli, Tehsil Chamorshi, Dist. Gadchiroli, Maharashtra

*I am conducting an individual Project work on Environmental Education which I should apply for award. If there is any award scheme known to you for Environmental Education or Nature Education, please write to me.*

**Niladri Bihari Mishra**, Central Hospital Colony, Banikala 758034, Keonjhar, Orissa

*I am doing my BSc in Forestry and am in my final year. Wildlife and their management is my favourite subject. As we will not be able to apply for any MSc programmes this year, I want to work as an assistant to any wildlife related projects from November 1997 to August 1998. I request you to kindly give some suggestions regarding this so that I can pursue my career in the subject of my interest.*

**Rajesh S. Kallaje**, Room No.208, Forestry College Hostel, Ponnampet 571 216, South Coorg, Karnataka.

*TigerLink News is a very useful publication for our Scientist and Research Scholars for this research centre. It provides a lot of latest information for our user community.*

**Dr E. Johnson**, Librarian, SACON, Kalampalayam P.O., Coimbatore 641 010

*I am very interested in saving and seeing wild animals, particularly tigers. I want to be an active participant of your network. I am very interested and happy to take part in your projects (any type of field work). If you think you need a person like me, please write to me and I am ready to help you.*

**K.A. Mohammed Iqbal**, (faculty, AP-TECH Computer Education), 932, V.C. Road, Fort, Coimbatore, 641 001

*Received TigerLink News December 96 issue, and came to know about the crises of tiger in our country. I want to be a TigerLink participant.*

*I am an Indian farmer with diverse interest in Horticulture, Floriculture etc.*

*I also wanted to know what an average Indian resident can do for a tiger on earth.*

**T. Kukrija**, 5 Railway Road, Karnal 132 001, Haryana

*It is a matter of deep concern that two young tigresses and three panthers of local National Park, Van Vihar (Bhopal), died due to a deadly virus known as feline panleukopenia between November and December last. This deadly virus fatally attacks only members of the cat family.*

*Dr Pradeep Malik, an authority from the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun, had rushed to Van Vihar and saved the situation. It is said that the virus usually effects the tigers and panthers in captivity.*

**Abdul Khalique**, Journalist, 106/85 Shivaji Nagar, Bhopal 462 016

*I attended one meeting recently in Sariska area Bhikampura last dry season with Mr Bittu Sahgal, Walter Sahib and others. That was*

*very educational and knowledgeable meeting. I want to work on wildlife and environment, rural and village protection education programmes and some other activities. Please guide us.*

**M.R. Soni**, Chajusing Gate, Alwar 301 001, Rajasthan.

### **A Prayer for Tigers**

*All glory is yours, o God. You created tigers to make our lives joyful and happy, which, indeed they have done. All your work for us, creating such a wonderful animal, only for us to turn around and disobey you, killing thousands of tigers for our own selfish pride. Please have mercy upon the poachers who do this, and bless and encourage those who fight for your creation. Make them strong in your light. Protect tigers from all evil poachers, for you are the strength of our and their lives. Only you, O Lord, have let us have the liberty of regarding such a wonderful animal. You are the creator and we are the destroyers. Let this majestic beast be a stairway to you, that we may feel your everlasting love. Please protect tigers, as you have been protecting us. In Jesus Christ's name, Amen.*

**Joshua Shotton** (age 11), 34 Kirk Close, Oxford, England.

*A few days ago we received our first copy of the TigerLink News (vol.2 no.2) and were overwhelmed by the facts and information, criticisms and praise, suggestions and useful addresses. Reading your news, one has to admire the determination, enthusiasm and serious concern about saving the tiger. TigerLink, as a meeting point for those who do not want to give up fighting for the survival of the tiger, seems to*

## Open Forum

be the most important backbone for encouragement and inspiration, for joint actions and exchange of experience, for individuals as well as for any other form environmental organizations, local, national and international. India can be very proud for sheltering such a highly motivated independent network as TigerLink on her soil!

**Dr Gertrud Neumann Denzau,**  
Memelstreet 61, 45259 Essen, Germany

The views and comments published in that issue (T-L News vol.2, no.2) gives an idea of the increasing magnitude of commitment and concern among the people, organisations and government agencies. However the excellent sketch by Dr. G.S. Rathore depicts the sad story indicating the lack of unity, coordination among the concerned authorities.

We would like to be a member of TigerLink and would greatly appreciate if accepted and put on the mailing list.

We look forward to hearing from you and hopefully will reciprocate by sending information and concerns for saving the tiger.

**S.M.A. Rashid,** President, Centre for Advanced Research in Natural Resources and Management (CARINAM), 70 Kakrail, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh.

The operation "Project Tiger" by your government has to a certain degree been successful especially in the initial years and I genuinely feel that our government needs to take a similar initiative before it is too late. I would therefore like to become a member of your organisation and do voluntary work in this region to create awareness among the public as well as the authorities. I am 19 years old. ... (and) have been particularly in-

spired by the accomplishments of the great ornithologist and conservationist, Salim Ali. ... I once again repeat that one cannot over-emphasize the need for wildlife sanctuaries in Bangladesh and unfortunately, time is not on our side.

**Mahtab Haider,** 1/9 Block: A Lalmatia, Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh

I am Wen Bo, Editor of "China Environment News". In China there are also some people very concerned about tigers. In a high school of Beijing, students formed a "Tiger Ambassadors" group campaigning for conservation of tigers. As far as I know, South Korea and Russia's Far East have some conservation groups which you might be interested in having contact with. I myself would like to join TigerLink.

**Mr Wen Bo,** China Environment News, Chongwen District, 100062, Beijing, China.

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## Tiger Appeal

Shri I.K. Gujral  
Prime Minister of India  
Office of the Prime Minister  
South Block  
New Delhi 110 001

Honourable Prime Minister,

The tiger is the greatest symbol of natural heritage, not just in India but in the world.

We urgently appeal to you to initiate new and immediate reforms in the mechanisms of administration, funding and enforcement in order that the tiger and its habitat can be saved across the length and breadth of the country.

Prime Minister, the future of the tiger lies in your hands. Its extinction will herald a downward spiral of ecological decay which can only escalate the misery of millions. There is not a moment to lose. We ask you to please demonstrate your concern and take action now.

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

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

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सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान मंत्री  
PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE

On World Environment day let me state at the outset that conserving the natural heritage of this country is one of the most important objectives of my government. It is also the responsibility of every citizen of this country. The Himalayas are the fount of our culture, and the mighty rivers of India originate in them and flow out to the sea. The 6000 km coastline sustains the lives of millions of people - so do more than 70,000 inland lakes and wetlands. It is our duty to keep these treasures free of pollution and well protected. 20% of our land is clothed in forests and we must endeavour to prevent their degradation and protect their rich diversity of flora and fauna.

The tiger is India's national animal, the peacock India's national bird and a host of other wildlife form the rich natural diversity of this country. Their protection must have the highest priority across the length and breadth of this country.

On this day I call upon the nation to join me in the effort to keep our environment healthy, our water and air pure, and the natural treasures of this country safe so that future generations of Indian people have a chance to witness some of the natural wonders that sustain the life of our people right from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

(I.K. Gujral)

New Delhi  
May 29, 1997