



for a living planet™

Jungle Express

WWF-India - Species Conservation Update

June 2007

Tiger Tales...

Breeding Tigers for Trade Rejected at CITES – WWF/TRAFFIC

The proposal for raising captive tigers for trade in tiger parts was rejected at the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP14). The meeting took place at The Hague, Netherlands from June 3-15, 2007. The CITES members urged China to phase out its large-scale commercial tiger farms. This is a victory for wild tiger conservation.

On June 13, 2007, India joined by Nepal and Bhutan called on China to phase out the country's privately run "tiger farms" that house nearly 5,000 big cats. These tiger farms have been pushing the Chinese government to allow legal trade in tiger parts. With leadership from these countries, the 171 member countries of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) adopted a strong tiger trade decision by consensus.

India spoke out strongly and courageously for their wild tigers, along with Bhutan and Nepal and urged China not to reopen any trade in tiger parts and to increase protection for tigers in the wild. China assured that it will not lift its ban without listening to scientific opinion from around the world.

Investors in massive, captive tiger breeding centers in China had been pressuring the Chinese government to lift its successful 14-year-old ban on trade in tiger parts so they can legally sell products like tiger bone wine and tiger meat. These facilities

have acknowledged stockpiling tiger carcasses in the hopes that the trade ban will be lifted soon.

WWF and TRAFFIC, along with a coalition of other organizations working on tigers, have offered guidance and technical support to China on shutting down its tiger farms and stepping up law enforcement efforts to stamp out illegal trade of tiger parts. If tigers are to survive, governments must stop all trade in tiger products from wild and captive-bred sources, as well as ramp up efforts to conserve the species and their habitats.

This victory is only a beginning. There are many other threats that have led to drastic reduction in tiger number. Issues such

as habitat loss and intense poaching of tigers and their prey, combined with inadequate government efforts to maintain tiger populations must be tackled immediately.

CoP14 is the first CITES CoP that was held in the European Union – the top global importer by value of many wildlife commodities, including tropical timber, caviar, reptile skins, and live reptiles. The meeting provides WWF with an

opportunity to achieve conservation outcomes through policy, advocacy and communications efforts. CITES has always been a major priority for WWF Global Species programme.



Photo: Ravi Singh

Tiger Tales :Tattle from the field

1. Trailing the tiger in North Kheri forests - The North Kheri Forest Division along with WWF-India, Pilibhit field office undertook a detailed survey of the North Kheri forests in Terai Arc Landscape on May 30th and 31st, 2007. The main

purpose of the survey was to assess the presence of the tiger and its prey species in the forest.

Distributed along the floodplains of Sharda and Ghagra rivers in Lakhimpur Kheri and Pilibhit Districts, these forests provide a vital link between Nepal's Shukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve and India's Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary. It allows movement of tiger and mega herbivores across the border. It is also home to many other endangered wildlife species such as swamp deer, hog deer, spotted deer, wild boar, bird species such as swamp francolins, black partridges etc. These forests also have a large number of wetlands that attract migratory birds during the winters.



Photo: Harish Guleria

Tracing the pugmarks

During the survey, many pugmarks of tigers were seen through the entire flood plain of Sharda River which is approximately 15 to 20 kms long. There were other direct and indirect evidences showing the presence of tiger and its prey species. It was clear that this is a significant area for tiger and other wildlife movement.

Despite of prolific flora and fauna in the region, it is also suffering in many ways. Large numbers of people are settled around this forest and are dependent on it for their day to day activities. This has lead to biotic pressure and also habitat degradation. There is also Human-wildlife conflict in the region.

Efforts need to be extended to conserve these forests that provide significant corridor and home to a large number of wildlife species. WWF-India has offered all possible to the Forest Department in protection and management of this forest.

Contact: Harish Guleria at hguleria@wwfindia.net

2. Fire fighting in tiger landscape - WWF-India has strengthened initiatives to curb forest fires in the Satpuda Maikal Landscape in Central India. This is being done through implementation of a 'Forest Fires Monitoring Programme'. This unique programme lays emphasis on preventing forest fires rather than doing damage control later.

The programme is being implemented in all our project villages in the landscape. Its main role is to help prevent forest fire by constantly watching out for fires and reporting them to the Forest Department and if need be assisting Forest Department in extinguishing the fires.

Four fire watchers have been appointed per village. These fire watchers patrol the area along with the Forest Protection Committees set up by the Forest Department. Their route of inspection is fixed and all along the routes rubber stamps are placed at specified locations. The patrolling team stamps its form and submits it to WWF-India field office in Mandla. This helps to ensure that there is complete patrolling and no routes have been avoided. This data is then sent to the Forest Department. Forest Department is satisfied with this activity as it helps them to ensure that the patrolling is done regularly.

Our efforts have been successful in curbing forest fires by almost 45% around our project areas in the last two years.

Contact: Shivaji Chavan at schavan@wwfindia.net

3. Training in conducting elephant census: On May 18, 2007 WWF-India Ramnagar Field office organized training of the Forest staff of Ramnagar and Terai West Forest Divisions covering six forest ranges, namely, Kosi, Kota, Dhechuri, Bailparaw, Kaladhungi and Fatehpur in conducting elephant census.

The staff was trained in elephant identification and monitoring techniques and filling out information in formats. The trainees were also given an update on WWF-India's conservation work in the Terai Arc Landscape. The participants found the training very helpful in the forthcoming elephant census.

Contact: Suresh Singh at rawat.jungle@gmail.com

4. WWF-India sponsors Biodiversity Workshop: WWF-India was one of the main sponsors of a workshop on Biodiversity Conservation organized by the Forest Department of Uttar Pradesh. The meeting was inaugurated by the Forest Minister of the state, Mr. Fateh Bahadur Singh. Mr. V.N. Garg, Principal Secretary - Forests, Mr. B.K. Patnaik, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Pawan Kumar, Secretary, Uttar Pradesh Biodiversity Board and senior officers



of the Forest Department including the Divisional Forest Officers of the Forest Divisions were present at the workshop.

Mr. Sujoy Banerjee, Director-Species Conservation Programme, made a presentation on WWF-India's work in the Terai Arc Landscape. This was followed by a discussion where concrete feedback was given by the audience on how to enhance our conservation efforts and make them more meaningful. This will help to fine tune our work in the landscape.

Contact: Sujoy Banerjee at sujoybanerjee@wwfindia.net

The AREAS (Asian Rhino and Elephant Action Strategy) Update

Veterinary Doctor visits Zimbabwe to enhance his knowledge and skills on animal capture and translocation

- Dr. Kalaivanan, Forest Veterinary surgeon, Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary in Nilgiris Eastern Ghats landscape attended a training programme on "Physical and Chemical capture of wild animals" in Zimbabwe in the month of February 2007. The training was organized by the Zimbabwe Veterinary Association Wildlife Group and WWF's AREAS programme. Eleven participants from four Asian countries that is India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Nepal attended the programme.

The training programme covered various aspects of planning and executing wildlife capture and translocation operations. There were separate sessions on general physiology of wild animals/stress and capture related mortality, precautions to be taken while darting from a helicopter, drug delivery system and mechanism on capturing wildlife, a practical session on

elephant and rhino capture, lecture on drug accidents and first aid. Dr. Kalaivanan also spoke at the programme about the elephant captures that he has been involved with and the kunkie operations carried out in the Nilgiris Eastern Ghats Landscape.

Dr. Kalaivanan was extremely happy to have attended this course. He added, "The visit was useful as it helped to update my knowledge and understanding on wildlife capture and translocation techniques that are being used in other countries. This training has given me the opportunity to know, see and use new drugs for wild life capturing."

WWF-India is sure that the learning from the training programme will be put to its best effect and aid in elephant conservation and management in Nilgiris.



Contact: Mohanraj at smitha.mohanraj@gmail.com

World Environment Day celebration at Mayanng village

- World Environment Day 2007 was celebrated elaborately at Mayanng Higher Secondary School, Mayanng, near **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary** in North East India. The programme was collaboratively organized by the Pobitora Conservation Society, WWF-India, Aaranyak, Pobitora Forest Range and State Bank of India Mayang Branch.

Around 1,000 school students from nearby schools along with their teachers and parents participated in the programme. The key activities conducted were— planting tree saplings, spreading message of conservation through an environment awareness rally led by school children, teachers and parents, art competition on environmental issues and a talk on the role of children in bringing a positive change in our environment. The programme received excellent response from the school children, parents, teachers and others from the communities. Such initiatives only help to popularize the cause of conservation in order to build solidarity for it.

Contact: Ramesh Bhatta rbhatta6@gmail.com

Wildlife 'TRAFFIC' (Illegal Wildlife Trade)

TRAFFIC-India at CITES meeting in Netherlands

June 3-15, 2007, The recently held 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP14) at The Hague, Netherlands was an important milestone in international cooperation and collaboration to strengthen implementation of CITES. TRAFFIC-India was represented at this important forum by Mr. Samir Sinha, Head TRAFFIC India who attended the 14th CoP as member of the TRAFFIC delegation.

CITES is an inter-governmental treaty to regulate wildlife trade. It aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. It is one of the most successful international conventions and has 172 countries party to it. Therefore ensuring the effectiveness of CITES is one of the TRAFFIC Network's top priority.



Photo: Samir Sinha

TRAFFIC assists with the implementation of the Convention through research, policy initiatives, training and enforcement at the national, regional and international level. **TRAFFIC also works in co-operation with the CITES Secretariat and serves as a technical advisor on wildlife trade issues to the member countries.**

During the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to CITES held in Netherlands, TRAFFIC helped by providing analysis of the various proposals submitted by the member countries regarding the trade and use of wildlife

species. These covered a broad range of species from sharks to corals, elephants and rhinos to orchids, timber and tigers. This, along with the various other interventions made by TRAFFIC on the floor of the house and side events organized by it, brought attention on the key issues at stake and helped parties to make informed decisions based on the best available scientific information. Discussions at the conference often acknowledged the technical reports and other inputs by TRAFFIC with considerable appreciation.

TRAFFIC-India also worked closely with India and other parties on issues related to tiger trade. Three countries with wild tigers – India, Nepal and Bhutan – were joined by the United States in calling on China to phase out the country's privately run "tiger farms" that presently house nearly 5,000 big cats and are pushing the Chinese government to allow legal trade in tiger parts. With leadership from these countries, the 172 member countries of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) adopted a strong tiger trade decision by consensus. "Tigers should not be bred for their parts or derivatives" was the unequivocal message from the forum and this is expected to have a significant positive impact on the future of wild tigers. A series of side events also helped focus attention on the tiger.

Mr. Samir Sinha, Head, TRAFFIC-India who was present at the meeting adds, "It was truly rewarding to see India speaking out strongly and courageously for their wild tigers. Hopefully, this will translate into more strong and concerted efforts on the ground for the conservation of our national animal".

TRAFFIC along with WWF and IUCN was also a source of credible information and updates for the media and other interested parties. The role of TRAFFIC in the CITES meeting was reported in over 500 news articles from around the world. For more information please visit www.traffic.org

Contact: Samir Sinha at ssinha@wwfindia.net

Cheers:

Communities in Conservation Help in Nabbing a Rhino Poacher

May 27, 2007: A rhino poaching operation was busted and a poacher was caught after an intense combat between the poachers and the Forest Department at Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary. The poachers had been near the sanctuary for more than fifteen days before the actual operation took place.

Due to the information provided by the local communities about the poacher's movement and whereabouts in the area the Forest Department could take prompt action in nabbing them. The four men gang of poachers had entered inside the sanctuary near Kholabhuyan anti-poaching camp. After an intense one and a half hour combat between the forest staff and the poachers, the leader of the poaching gang was arrested. The others escaped under the cover of darkness and heavy rain. One Mark-III rifle and nine round of live ammunition were recovered. On interrogation, the accused confessed that the gang had shot two rhinos in Kaziranga National Park last year. A case has been registered against him.

these villages towards the programme but due to collaborative and sustained efforts the response from the villages began to improve. The rapport has been built with these communities. The result of this partnership is being reflected time and again.

Contact: Ramesh Bhatta at rbhatta6@gmail.com

Wild Cry (Emerging Issues)

Neutrino Lab threatens prime 'Elephant Habitat' in Nilgiris

In order to revive Neutrino experiments in India, an INO (Indian based Neutrino Observatory) is proposed to be built at Singara in Nilgiris in South India. Singara-Mavinhalla is a significant elephant corridor that allows movement of elephants between Mudumalai and Eastern Ghats.

This project is as a result of an inter-institutional neutrino collaboration initiated by the Department of Atomic Energy, The Department of Science and Technology, The University Grants Commission and the Government of India with cooperation of seven institutions that is Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, Saha institute of Nuclear Physics (Kolkata), Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre, Kolkata, Bhaba Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai, Harish Chandra research Institute, Allahabad and Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar. The project will help to study neutrinos that will be useful in optical and radio observation.

The INO at Singara will be built at an already existing under ground hydro electric project site PUSHPEP (Pykara Ultimate Stage Hydro Electric Project). This is located at the edge of Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary at the borders of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala and has already caused great damage to forest during its construction. The new ICAD detector will now be built about 1 km from PUSHPEP underground below a 2270 m peak and will be used for training research students and for promoting such experimentations.

If the proposal to set up an INO in Singara is accepted by the Government, it will mean a beginning of the end of this wildlife reserve. The impact on the populations and habitat of wild elephants in the area as well on local communities will be



Photo: Mukul Tamuli

This incident is a leading paradigm of active involvement of communities in curbing poaching in a forest area. Without community's involvement and ownership towards wildlife conservation any efforts to protect and safeguard the forest are futile.

The increase in community participation and cooperation for fighting wildlife crime around Pobitara Wildlife Sanctuary has happened only over the past few years. Earlier it was reported that the communities would help poachers by giving them shelter or joining them in their poaching operations for just meager amount of money. Now through mass sensitization and awareness programme communities have become more aware towards the impact of poaching on forests and natural resources.

WWF-India, Pobitara Conservation Society, Aaranyak, other NGOs and the Forest Department have been doing a series of awareness programmes in the target villages involving police officials, civil administration, banks, schools, local groups etc. Initially there was lack of cooperation among

disastrous. The transportation of tons of material to set up the laboratory, and other facilities shall take a toll on local roads, which pass through the sanctuary. Future development of the lab into an international research hub will bring in a large number of outsiders. This will eventually destroy the peace and tranquility of the forest.

The local communities will not benefit from this either. Lacking sophisticated skills the villagers will be exploited as menial laborers and their earnings will not help them to enhance their quality of lives. Skilled workers and laborers will be required to come in to set up and later run the lab. These people will compete with the local communities for natural resources.

The INO will eventually turn into a bustling business centre where both national and international delegates will visit. To cater to these visitors, resorts and hotels will come up around these precious and pristine elephant habitats. Furthermore, there is no assurance that the excavated material and other waste will be disposed off properly.

The Government on one hand plans to invest large sums of money to acquire a piece of land in the Singara –Mayinhalla elephant corridor and protect it to ensure that the elephant movement is not stalled. While on the other hand clearance to build the INO will only result in wastage of such resources and will expedite the process of destruction of the elephant habitat.

While it is understood that establishment of this project will help to undertake the study of neutrinos, this project in Singara will also destroy a significant elephant habitat and damage the eco-system. The loss to the environment will be far greater than the benefits of establishing this project in this area. An alternative site at Rammam in Eastern Himalayas has also been identified by the government and should be considered over Singara for setting up the INO.

Habitat fragmentation and loss has threatened the survival of elephant populations in the wild. There is continuous conflict between man and elephant for the limited resources. Any further interventions that will destroy their habitat or disrupt their movement will only worsen the situation. Future of the elephant in this area is grim if the INO is to be built.

WWF-India is monitoring the development closely and has had two meetings with the scientist involved in the project.

Contact: Mohanraj at smitha.mohanraj@gmail.com

Meet our new Species Communications Officer

Ms. Dilpreet B. Chhabra has moved over to TRAFFIC-India and her position has been taken over by Ms. Ginni Suri. Ginni brings with her over seven years of work experience in varied fields of



media. She has graduated in Journalism and has mastered in Communication Journalism with a diploma in Environmental Law. It is her passion and ardor to be closely linked with environmental issues and work towards the cause. In the past she has served as a journalist, a film maker and travel writer. Her last assignment was with Yatra.com. While her hobbies include traveling, painting and photography, she has a keen interest in wildlife conservation and protection.

Species Conservation Division welcomes her and wishes her the very best in her new assignment.

Ginni can be contacted at gsuri@wwfindia.net

Editor: Dilpreet B. Chhabra, Species Communication Officer, Species Conservation Division, WWF-India
Contact: dchhabra@wwfindia.net, Tel: +91-11-41504783 Fax: +91-11-41504782
For more information about our projects please visit www.wwfindia.org