Russia hosts ‘Tiger Summit’

Global wildlife experts and officials from 13 countries opened a “Tiger Summit” to discuss how to save the big cats whose numbers have shrunk so sharply they could become extinct if quick measures are not taken. The World Wildlife Fund and other experts say only about 3,200 tigers remain in the wild, a dramatic plunge from an estimated 100,000 a century ago. James Leape, Director General of the World Wildlife Fund, told the meeting in St.Petersburg that if the proper protective measures aren’t taken, tigers may disappear by 2022, the next Chinese calendar year of the tiger. Their habitat is being destroyed by forest cutting and construction, and they are a valuable trophy for poachers who want their skins and body parts prized in Chinese traditional medicine. The summit is hosted by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who has proficiently used encounters with tigers and other wild animals to bolster his image. It’s driven by the Global

FROM THE STATE DIRECTOR’S DESK

The Teachers Training Workshop series on ‘Biodiversity Conservation’ proposed in Kerala with the support of CPREEC, Chennai got off to a start for this academic year with the initial two workshops being organized in Malappuram and Kozhikode on 3rd and 4th November, 2010. Both the workshops received good response from the participants. The teachers have great influence on the students, who are responsible citizens of tomorrow. Hence these workshops for teachers and teacher trainees holds high significance, especially 2010 being observed as the ‘International Year of Biodiversity’. We could do some major programmes with regard to the conservation of our avian friends. The HSBC Bird Race received overwhelming response from the society and the participants of the birdwatching programme had many new faces who are keenly interested in bird watching. Bird watching requires a keen sense of vision and observation. This event ultimately helps you in observing the other small and big changes in the environment around you and helps you to analyse the environmental issues around you and their attributing factors. So introducing a person to bird watching is an innovative way of making him a nature lover. The observance of Salim Ali Day on 12th November in association with Kerala State Biodiversity Board helped us to recollect, acknowledge and celebrate the life and contribution of the Great Birdman of India. The sharing of the simple lifestyle of Dr. Salim Ali and his honesty, hardwork and dedication in his work towards studying birds was a great eye opener to the present day student community. We had four internship students from NUALS Kochi who helped us developed new programmes and resource materials for our upcoming programmes. Having interns gives them an experience to understand the dynamic working environment of an NGO like WWF and also helps us to orient them to take interest in observing and conserving the nature and environment around us. It helps us in work load sharing and also in bringing up new ideas for programmes and projects. The first Indian Biodiversity Congress organized by CISSA and other associates including WWF was a grand event to end the year. WWF put up an exhibition stall on endangered animals and also conducted a workshop on forest certification as a tool towards biodiversity conservation. WWF-India brought out some very good and useful publications related to law. This has been distributed to judges, advocates, environmentalists etc and we have received high recommendations on the novel approach. Wish you a happy reading on all these experiences.

Renjan Mathew Varghese, 
State Director
Tiger Initiative which was launched two years ago by World Bank President Robert Zoellick. (Source: www.desertnews.com, 21 November 2010)

Roads through Gir National Park to be closed during night

The Gujarat Government has decided to close all the roads passing through the Gir National Park - the only abode of the Asiatic Lions - during the night. The decision, according to the State Forest and Environment Department Principal Secretary, S. K. Nanda, is to ensure the safety of the lions and other animals in the Gir forest in view of numerous cases of accidents and killing or injuring the animals by the speeding vehicles. Spread over about 1,500 sq.km. area including about 900 sq.km. of area of protected forest zone, the Gir has 411 Asiatic Lions, including about 300 inside the protected zone, as per the latest lion census, besides numerous other animals. The animals move freely in the nights frequently becoming victims of passing vehicles while crossing the roads. About 10 important roads pass through the Gir forest connecting major towns and several other small and medium towns on the periphery of the sanctuary area. According to one estimate, about 600 vehicles pass through the Gir forest every night, many of them at high speed. Besides endangering the safety of the animals, the speeding vehicles also cause environment and noise pollution, disrupting the peace of the animals. Mr. Nanda said in addition to banning vehicular traffic through the forest in the nights, the government had also constructed speed-breakers at regular intervals to ensure that even during the day hours, the vehicles could not rush beyond 40 km per hour speed. (Source: The Hindu, 23 November, 2010)

Climate change affecting Assam tea growers

Climate change is affecting the cultivation of Assam tea, with rising temperatures reducing yields and altering the distinctive flavour of India’s most popular drink, researchers say. High hills and abundant rainfall make the north-eastern state of Assam an ideal place to grow tea, with 850 gardens over 3,20,000 hectares (5,93,000 acres) producing the majority of the country’s harvest. But in the last 60 years, rainfall has fallen by more than a fifth and minimum temperature has risen by a degree to 19.5°C. “This is clearly climate change, and it is bound to have a major impact on the tea industry,” said Debakanta Handique, a Climate Scientist in Assam. The Tea Board of India said it had recorded a steady decline in tea production in recent years. In 2007, Assam produced 5,12,000 tonnes of tea. By 2008 this had declined to 4,87,000 tonnes, with estimated production in 2009 down again to 4,45,000 tonnes. A further decrease is expected this year. (Source: Guardian Newspapers Limited, 28 December, 2010)

A sanctuary coming up for Gharials

A sanctuary for Gharials (fresh water crocodiles) spread over 1,600 sq.km. will be created along the Chambal River in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to protect the species from extinction, Minister for Environment and Forests Jairam Ramesh said. Speaking to journalists, Mr. Ramesh said a three-State authority had been formed for the purpose. The Ministry had approved the proposal and allotted ₹ 8 crore. At present, there were only 200 breeding adult gharials and their total population in the wild would be a mere 1,400. The sanctuary would help stabilise the population. (Source: The Hindu, 28 December, 2010)

Olive Ridley nesting in peril

Will the spectacular sight of mass congregation of endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles for mating and nesting on the beaches of Gahirmatha become history? The beaches coming under the Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary have shrunk considerably. A 32 km. long beach has shrunk to less than one kilometre in the past 35 years. Gahirmatha is one of the first rookeries of turtles discovered along the Orissa coast. While presenting the outcome of the study spanning from 2007 to 2010 here recently, B. C. Choudhury, WII Scientist said: “When as a researcher I worked in 1975, we used to walk the 32 km. stretch beach where nesting used to take place. When the fragmentation occurred, at that point of time the nesting beach was six km long. And today it is about 950 meter”. (Source: The Hindu 27 December, 2010)

‘Toxic culture’ leading to loss of ecosystem: Vandana Shiva

Noted environmental activist Vandana Shiva has stressed the need for a nation-wide ban on Endosulfan. Inaugurating the first Indian Biodiversity Congress (IBC) at Thiruvananthapuram she said the ban on the deadly pesticide in Kerala had to be followed up with a nation-wide ban. Ms. Shiva said replacement of biodiversity with monoculture, emergence of monopolies in the agriculture sector and genetically-
engineered products posed a serious threat to India over the next 20 years. Linking the rise of monopolies with the increased threat to biodiversity, she said Bt Cotton had become a symbol of slavery in India. “Today, monopolies control 95 per cent of the cotton industry in the country. Farmers are forced to buy genetically-engineered seeds and pesticides, leading them to high indebtedness and ultimately driving them to suicide. One cannot imagine the situation if the monopolies turn to other crops like rice and banana.” Ms. Shiva cautioned that a ‘toxic culture’ was leading to the total loss of ecosystem productivity in India. In Punjab, the number of cancer patients was on the rise, following the increase in the use of pesticides. She said the transformation from biodiverse systems to monoculture would lead to less production. “Monoculture of the mind prevents us from seeing the abundance of biodiversity,” she said. (Source: The Hindu, 29 December, 2010)

Waste dumping threatens Kadalundi Sanctuary

Thoughtless dumping of waste in bulk in the Kadalundi estuary has begun to pose a serious threat to one of the most famous sanctuaries of migratory birds in South India. The arrival of migrant birds in Kadalundi has reduced considerably in the last few years because of problems arising out of waste dumping. Incessant dumping of waste in Kadalundi is also making a mockery of the first Community Reserve in the country. Declaration of Kadalundi as a Community Reserve a couple of years ago brought national attention as well as funds for this mangrove-filled estuary. But nothing worth mentioning has been done either to protect the Kadalundi Bird Sanctuary or to prevent dumping of waste in the river mouth. The animal and poultry waste from most slaughter houses between Parappanangadi and Kadalundi reach the estuary in a systematic fashion every day. The waste dumped in the estuary is often washed ashore by the tides and gets trapped in the mangroves, attracting omnivorous scavengers like crows and kites. These scavengers are posing a threat to the migrant birds which visit Kadalundi between October and March. (Source: The Hindu, 26 December, 2010)

Species of the Issue

Malabar Flying Frog

The Malabar Flying Frog (*Rhacophorus malabaricus*) is a moss frog endemic to the Western Ghats. It is an arboreal species of tropical moist evergreen forest, deciduous forest, secondary (disturbed) forest and coffee plantations. It is present in the lower canopy and under storey levels of the forest. It breeds in vegetation overhanging ponds, and the tadpoles develop in the pools. The term “flying frog” refers to its ability to break their fall by stretching the webbing between their toes when making leaps down from the treetops. It can make gliding jumps of 9-12 meters, a maximum of about 115 times its length. This frog has a body length of about 10 cm, making it one of the largest moss frogs. Males are smaller than females. Its back skin is finely granulated and the color is vivid green without markings making it very distinguishable. The belly is more coarsely granulated - particularly under the thighs - and pale yellow. There are skin fringes between and along the long limbs, and a triangular skin extension at the heel. The webbing between fingers and toes is large and orange-red. Like many moss frogs, they build foam nests above small pools of water, into which the tadpoles drop down after hatching. Conversion of forest habitat for use as intensively farmed agricultural land (coffee plantations) is the major threat to this species.

Invited lecture on ‘Environment Management’ at TIM

The Management Programme (MBA) conducted by TKM Institute of Management (TIM) has of lately added Environment Management as one of the papers. As part of this, Renjan Mathew Varghese, State Director was invited as a Guest Faculty to handle two sessions. The sessions provided a great platform of experience sharing and interaction with the students.
Teachers Training Workshops

The first programme in the series of Teachers Training Workshops on Biodiversity Education being organized by WWF-India Kerala State Office with the support of CPREEC, Chennai was held on 3rd November 2010 at Ace Public School, Manjery, Malappuram. Around 45 teachers from different schools of the district participated in the workshop. The workshop was inaugurated by Smt.Geethabai, Asst. Education Officer, Manjery. The technical session on ‘Biodiversity Conservation’ was led by Dr.Balakrishnan Peroth, Dept of Zoology of NSS College, Manjery and the second session on ‘Methods of Ecosystem Interpretation’ by Sri.A.K.Sivakumar. After the lunch break, the teachers were asked to prepare interpretations on different ecosystems and species. Following this, on special request by the majority of the participants, Sri. A.K.Sivakumar led another session on ‘How to run a Nature Club’.

The second programme was held on 4th November 2010 at St. Josephs College, Devagiri, Kozhikode. Around 75 teachers from different schools of the district participated in the workshop. The workshop was inaugurated by Sri.N.Ramachandran Nair, Secretary of Sahodaya School Complex, Malabar Region. The technical session on ‘Biodiversity Conservation’ was led by Dr.Abdul Riyas, HOD of Zoology, Govt. College, Kodenchery, Kozhikode and the second session on ‘Methods of Ecosystem Interpretation’ by Sri.A.K.Sivakumar. He also led a short session on Nature Education Camps as a real good opportunity and approach towards biodiversity education.

Nature Education Camp to Silent Valley National Park

Education Officer and 17 nature enthusiasts had a wonderful Nature Education Camp at Silent Valley National Park from 5th to 7th November 2010 and experienced the beauty and sereneness of the evergreen canopy.

Salim Ali Day

A single day awareness programme was conducted at Museum Auditorium, Thiruvananthapuram on 12th November 2010 in connection with Dr.Salim Ali Day in association with Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB) and Directorate of Museum and Zoos. Around 250 students from 6 schools and 3 colleges participated in the programme that was inaugurated by Dr.R.V.Varma, Chairman of Kerala State Biodiversity Board. Sri.Raju, Research Associate of the project ‘On the trail of Salim Ali’ by Kerala Forests & Wildlife Department led the technical session. A photography contest and exhibition exclusively on ‘Birds of Kerala’
was conducted in connection with Dr. Salim Ali Day and about 265 entries were received. Sri.T.Anilkumar of Cochin, Sandeep Das of Thrissur and Vijesh Vallikkunnu bagged 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes respectively. Sri.Biju.P.B of Thiruvananthapuram and Ashok.P.S of Palakkad won consolation prizes.

HSBC Bird Race

WWF-India, Kerala State Office successfully conducted HSBC Kerala Bird Race for the third time in Thiruvananthapuram on 14\textsuperscript{th} November, 2010. The Bird Race was attended by 65 bird watchers and the gathering at Hotel Pankaj in the evening was attended by 85 people. About 139 species of birds were reported from seven different sites in and around Thiruvananthapuram. Sri.Binoy Viswom, Hon. Minister for Forests and Housing was the chief guest in the evening function. The team sighted maximum number of birds, eldest bird watcher, youngest bird watcher and the most important sighting were awarded.

Forest Certification Meeting

The State Director attended the function in WWF-India Secretariat, New Delhi organized on 25\textsuperscript{th} November to announce the 10 GFTN Partners for 2010 as part of the Switch Asia Programme on Responsible Wood Trade and Forest Certification sponsored by the European Commission. This includes Atheena Exports from Kerala also.

Kottayam Round Table Quiz

Kottayam Round Table over the last twenty years has been regularly conducting a ‘Quiz Programme on Wildlife and Environment’. This year was the 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary and the State Director was invited as a guest in the programme organized at Hotel Arcadia, Kottayam on 18\textsuperscript{th} November. Mr.A.V.George, Chairman sponsored a laptop as prize to the winners.

Inputs to KFD Modernisation Workshop

A workshop on ‘Modernisation of Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department’ was conducted on 20\textsuperscript{th} November. State Director attended on behalf of WWF-India and participated in the discussions and deliberations. Some of the other recommendations on behalf of WWF-India were submitted in writing.

Friday Forum in December 2010

The monthly interactive forum on environmental topics at Thiruvananthapuram was held on 3\textsuperscript{rd} December 2010 at the Museum Auditorium. Sri. Johnson of Energy Management Centre, Thiruvananthapuram led the session on ‘Energy Conservation’. Around 200 students from different schools attended the forum.

Student’s Biodiversity Congress

State Director and Education Officer was instrumental in leading various programmes, mainly quiz for school students as part of the Children’s Environment Congress organized by Kerala State Biodiversity Board in Thiruvananthapuram on 29\textsuperscript{th} November.
Seminar at TIM
A one day seminar on ‘Current Trends and Challenges in Environment Management’ was organized jointly by WWF-India and TKM Institute of Management for students in management programmes at the TIM Campus at Kollam on 4th of December, 2010.

Dr. B.Ekbal, Former Vice Chancellor, Kerala University inaugurated the function. Dr. Abdul Salam, Professor, Kerala Agricultural University, Dr.A.S.K. Nair, Senior Scientist, CESS and Shri. J.Murali, Fellow, TERI delivered the technical sessions. Shri. Jalaluddin Musaliar and Dr. Kevin, Director also spoke on the occasion. About 120 students and their faculty participated.

Internship from NUALS - 4 students
Ms. Krishna Santhosh, Ms. Bismi Parvin, Ms. Arabhi and Mr. Vishnu Devaraj, four students from National University of Advanced Legal Studies (NUALS), Kochi did their one month internship in WWF-India Kerala State Office in the month of December 2010. The interns were given different work of preparing relevant resource materials for the upcoming environment education programmes of the State Office.

Forest Certification Workshop
A one day workshop on ‘Responsible Wood Trade and Forest Certification’ was organized at Kochi on 14th December by WWF-India and GFTN-India as part of the Switch Asia Project supported by European Commission. Dr. B.S.Corrie, CCF (Biodiversity), Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department inaugurated the workshop. The technical presentation was led by Dr. T.R.Manoharan, Head, Forestry Programme, WWF-India. The workshop was attended by wood and related traders from Kochi and surrounding areas.

Workshop on Climate Change organized by EMAK
A three days workshop was organized in Thiruvananthapuram at Hotel Mascot from December 14 - 16 by Environment Management Agency Kerala on ‘Climate Change and its various implications in Kerala’. The State Director attended the workshop and contributed to the proceedings.

Workshop on Human Wildlife Conflict
A one day workshop on ‘Human Wildlife Conflict and Application of Geoinformation Technology for its Assessment and Analysis’ was organized in Thiruvananthapuram on December 20th by Department of Zoology, University of Kerala. Mr. Sivakumar, Education Officer and interns attended the workshop.

Class on Participatory Forest Management
The State Director led a session on ‘How to improve Participatory Forest Management’ at the training programme organized on 20th December at the PTP Nagar Social Forestry Complex by the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department for EDC/ VSS Members of Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts.

Exhibition at IBC 2010 & GFTN Workshop
WWF-India, Kerala State Office was part of the team in organizing the First Indian Biodiversity
Congress held from 27th to 31st December 2010 at Thiruvananthapuram. WWF-India put up a stall with panel exhibits of 24 endangered species of India titled ‘Dark Future’ and 12 panel boards on ‘Biodiversity of Kerala’. Sale of posters and other products were also arranged. A side event was organized on ‘Forest Certification and Biodiversity Conservation’ as part of the ongoing project run by GFTN-India and supported by the European Commission.

OISCA Silver Jubilee celebrations

OISCA South India Chapter celebrated their Silver Jubilee with a full day programme at Kanakakunu on 31st of December. The State Director and Education Officer attended the programme. The Vriksha Bandhu award was also given to Shri. Binoy Viswam, Hon’ble Minister for Forests and Housing, Government of Kerala.

Posters on Birds and Butterflies of Kerala

WWF-India, Kerala State Office prepared and published two posters on common birds and butterflies of Kerala, each describing 12 species with text and images. The posters are intended to educate the students on the richness in biodiversity, especially that of birds and butterflies, even around human settlements. By making the students interested in watching the birds and butterflies, they will ultimately be able to observe the small and big changes that happens in the environment around us.

Publication - India’s Forests and the Judiciary/ Conserving Protected Areas and Wildlife

WWF-India has brought out two publications titled ‘India’s Forests and the Judiciary - the Godavarman Story’ and ‘Conserving Protected Areas and Wildlife - A Judicial Journey’. This has been brought out especially for use by lawyers who are interested in environmental, forests and wildlife cases. Copies of these publications have been given to relevant persons and the feedback shows high appreciation for the same.
NEAT AND CLEAN PREMISES ARE ACHIEVABLE

Segregate degradable and non-degradable wastes and store separately at source (houses, office, shops, markets, institution, auditoria etc.)

Avoid throwing waste on roadsides, public places, water bodies, drains etc.

Recycle/reuse plastic, rubber, glass, metal, paper etc.

Compost or make bio-gas out of degradable waste or hand over to collection service engaged by local bodies.

The care we give to our State,
Our beautiful, bountiful State,
Will be returned to us manifold.