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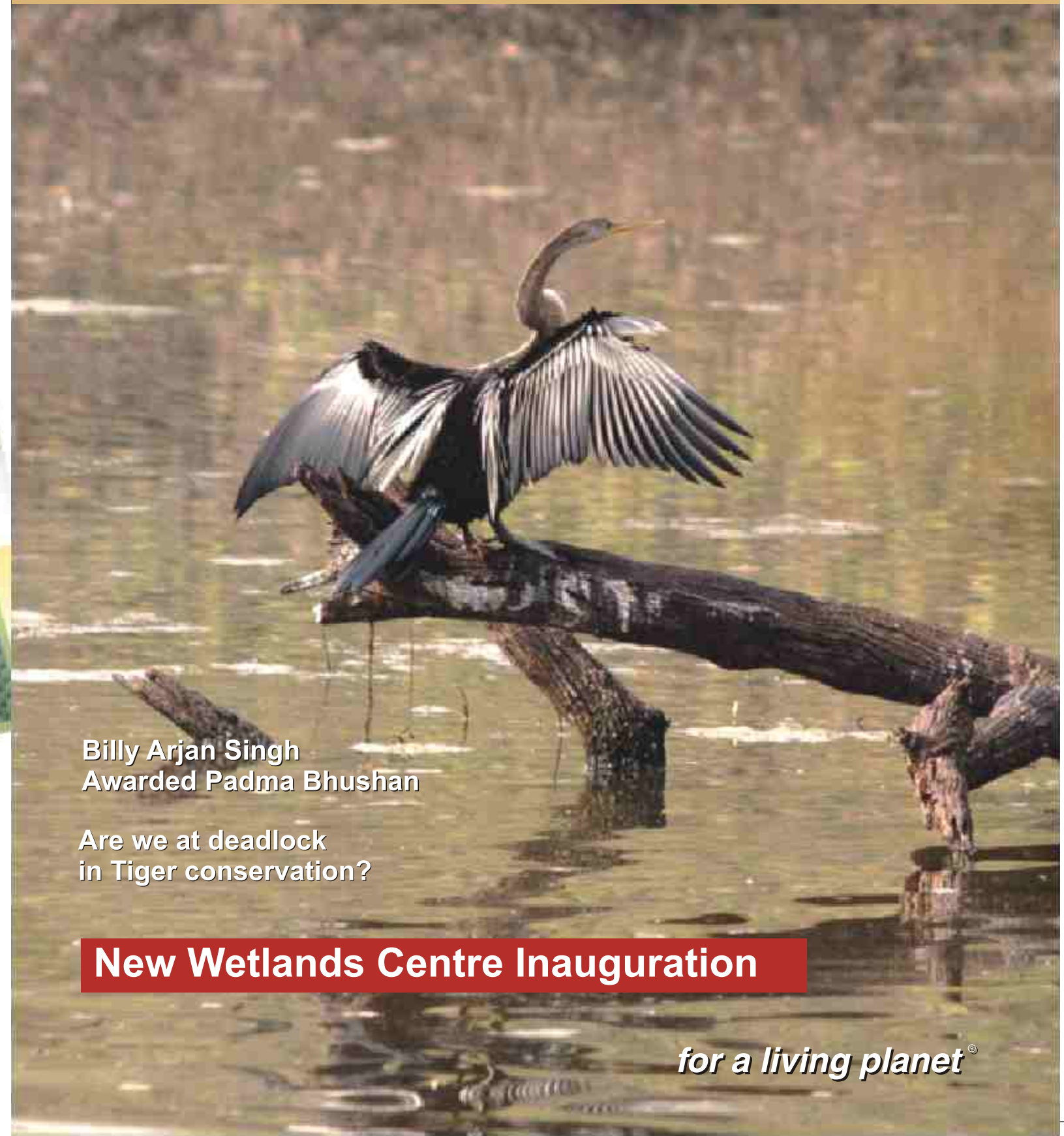


PANDA

WWF-India Newsletter

www.wwfindia.org

Issue I-2006



Billy Arjan Singh
 Awarded Padma Bhushan

Are we at deadlock
 in Tiger conservation?

New Wetlands Centre Inauguration

for a living planet®

From the SG & CEO's Desk

Dear Friends,

In this issue of PANDA, we cover some recent conservation milestones. We highlight the inauguration of the new wetlands Centre at the Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur that is dedicated to eminent ornithologist Dr. Salim Ali. The Centre is the result of many years of hard work and partnership with the Government of Rajasthan and Swarovski & Co, Austria.

We are also delighted by the recognition conferred to "Billy" Arjan Singh – the great tiger conservationist – of the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India. Such awards always serve as an inspiration to those who work for the cause of conservation, highlighting as in the case of Billy Arjan Singh, the work and recognition of a lifetime.

We also highlight Planet Action – the all-new eco-reality show on Animal Planet that showcases the tough work of conservation to the diverse global audience. Our work with Animal Planet is a great example of active media partnership and such ventures are critical in spreading awareness about our conservation work.

Welcome also to the new look PANDA – our quarterly newsletter that shares the work of WWF-India. We bring to you a revamped layout, attractive and interactive segments and a diverse selection of interesting stories. We hope you enjoy going through the PANDA just as much as we did in producing this!

Best wishes



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KID'S ZONE

WWF Quiz

As a global conservation organisation we have eight key values. These values represent what we stand for, what we believe in. In the puzzle below we have highlighted one of our key value (optimistic). Can you find the other seven core values that guide us in our conservation work?

A	D	E	L	I	V	E	R	I	N	G	E	D
G	R	U	O	N	Y	R	E	S	U	L	T	S
P	U	I	P	S	B	M	W	Q	I	L	C	A
I	A	E	E	J	L	E	T	H	A	H	G	O
N	D	S	R	G	A	E	A	P	A	C	H	P
S	Z	R	S	E	S	A	A	L	K	R	I	T
P	U	U	E	I	E	U	L	E	I	E	E	I
I	V	O	V	B	O	E	B	I	D	D	T	M
R	H	N	E	U	N	N	S	R	J	I	M	I
I	R	A	R	G	G	W	A	R	D	B	E	S
N	L	E	I	U	L	T	S	T	E	L	T	T
G	L	N	N	E	S	U	L	T	E	E	I	I
C	G	O	G	M	I	R	I	P	S	N	G	C
A	C	C	O	U	N	T	A	B	L	E	O	I

Match the column

Match the name of the animal with its
collective noun:

- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| 1 Mice | a Murder |
| 2 Vulture | b Colony |
| 3 Crows | c Stuck |
| 4 Jellyfish | d School |
| 5 Ants | e Swarm |
| 6 Flies | f Pride |
| 7 Dolphins | g Litter |
| 8 Lions | h Herd |
| 9 Pups | i Nest |
| 10 Elephants | j Venue |

Answers: Mice-Nest, Vulture-Venue, Crows-Murder,
Jellyfish-School, Ants-Colony, Flies-Swarm, Dolphins-
School, Lions-Herd, Pups-Litter, Elephants-Herd.

For more interesting quizzes please visit
www.wwfindia.org

PANDA mail box

Dear Editor,

I really liked the December issue of Panda. It was really educating and informative especially the article on coral reefs. Coral reefs have always attracted my attention and I always like knowing more about them.

Best regards/ Saurav Shastri

Respected Sir,

The December issue of Panda was very educating and informative. I really like the good work that you are doing for our environment, keep it up!

Thanks/ Pooja Tyagi

Did you like something about the Panda? Or dislike? We are eager to hear from you! Send your comments, suggestions and criticisms to us at communications@wwfindia.net

-The Managing Editor

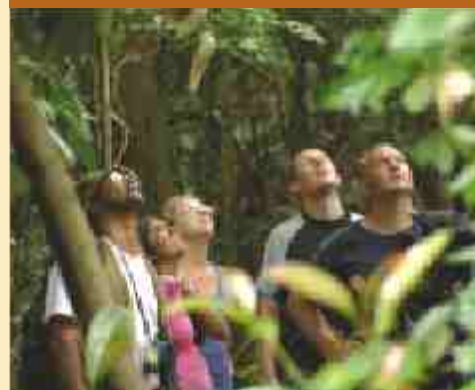
New Wetlands Centre Inauguration



IOSEA Year of the Turtle 2006



Planet Action



OTHER HIGHLIGHTS: Buzzing Away to Freedom 3 **Are We At A Deadlock In Tiger Conservation?** 5 Billy Arjan Singh Awarded Padma Bhushan 10 **From Aqua Disaster To Eco-friendly Aquaculture: A Journey of Hope** 16 Bird Flu: Intensive Farming Link 18 **Are we winning the race to stop biodiversity loss?** 20 Conservation of Wetlands: An analysis of Indian laws, Policies and International obligations 21 **Kid's Zone** 27

Smt. Partibha Patil,
hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan,
speaking at the inaugural
ceremony.



“The realisation of this Centre is a result of a united effort of many hands towards one aim of conservation of KNP. The partnership between the Government of Rajasthan, WWF-India and Swarovski can serve as a model for future collaborations between different stakeholders of society in the preservation of the environment.”

Reinstating Swarovski's commitment to global conservation, Dr. Christoph Imboden, Environmental Advisor to the Board of D. Swarovski & Co. said, “Swarovski's Global Environment Programme chose the Keoladeo National Park to be a part of its water conservation programme as it is one of the most important wetland sites in South Asia. Although small in size, it is of enormous biological significance, as well as an important tourist attraction for the region.”

He added, “Swarovski's continued global commitment to support environmental programmes has helped us set measurable targets in this programme. The development of a comprehensive and integrated visitor and information system for this national park has been an extremely rewarding experience for all participants. We hope that the model of a partnership between the Government, a civil body and corporate should be the future of all conservation efforts.”

The Visitor Interpretation Centre is divided into four halls and emphasizes on water as a source of life to help establish a link between

water, Keoladeo National Park and wetlands conservation. The first hall displays exhibits describing the importance of water and wetlands in the eco-systems and how KNP is an important wetland in India. The second hall elucidates the importance of KNP as a man made and modified wetland. This hall talks about the relevance of water to KNP and relevance of KNP to conserving water for the surrounding areas. The concluding theme of the hall introduces biodiversity as part of the Park. In the third hall, the emphasis is on KNP as a Bird Paradise. The whole flavour of the hall is on Birds, their life cycles, behaviours, and diversity. With illustrative and interactive exhibits, this hall defines the rich biodiversity of the park. The fourth hall of the Centre focuses on conservation and touches upon the problem, the solutions and the contributions needed from society and each individual to ensure the long-term sustainability of the park and the surrounding region.

Conceptualised and developed by WWF-India which has been involved with conservation activities in KNP for more than a decade now, this Interpretation Programme has been developed keeping in view the very unique as well as very diverse requirements of the wetland reserve including its location, the characteristics and the importance.

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Photo Credit: Ansar Khan /WWF-India

projects. It also sees ecology as a priority area with respect to water allocation.

There is also a huge gap between the various sectoral policies exist in India. Indeed, wetlands find no mention in these various sectoral policies. The fact that any policy does not work in isolation is ignored. The policies governing fisheries, agriculture etc. has absolutely no provisions for conservation and wise use of wetlands. These policies have a deep impact on the ecology and economy of wetlands without even giving recognition to wetlands. From the perspective of wetland conservation and use, coordination between various policies is missing.

International Conventions and India's Obligation

India joined the Ramsar convention on wetland in 1981. The mission statement of the Convention is conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local regional and national actions and international cooperation as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development. Even though twenty-four years have passed, there is a lot left to do for the conservation of wetlands in India. As noticed above, the mission statement of Ramsar embodies two principles in it. We may have taken certain action towards the first objective but the second aim i.e., the wise use of wetlands has still been ignored largely.

Towards India's obligation for conservation of wetland of international importance, the MoEF has identified 66 wetlands in the country covering 7.6 mha in 21 States for conservation and management. Of these, 19 sites are enlisted as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. Of the nineteen Ramsar sites, two are listed under the Montreaux Record (Loktak & Keoladeo National Park). Another wetland area under the Montreaux list till 2002 was Chilka Lake. Not only was it removed from the list, but also awarded the International Ramsar Convention Award for 'outstanding work in the field of conservations and wise use of wetlands involving local communities'. A blend of integrated approach and existence of appropriate institutional mechanism has led to this achievement. We need to learn from this experience and develop a comprehensive and inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral strategy for conservation and management of wetlands.

Moreover, India is also a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). CBD addresses concerns related to water

ecosystems through its international programme of work on Inland Waters Biodiversity. At the COP-4 meeting a Joint Work Plan between the CBD and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was endorsed. It was suggested in decision IV/4 that CBD Parties requesting Global Environmental Facility funding for projects related to inland water ecosystems take into account the criteria for Wetlands of International Importance as adopted under the Ramsar Convention. In the recently concluded 11th meeting of Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical And Technological Advice of CBD held in Montreal, wetland also finds mention on the provisional agenda.

Suggested Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Wetland Policy

Thus, in view of the immense value that wetland has, the threat it faces from biotic and abiotic factors and India's obligations under international Conventions, it becomes absolutely essential that India develop a National Wetland Policy. Following are some of the suggested TOR that should be taken care of while formulating any regulatory, legal or policy framework for an effective conservation and management of wetlands:

- Evaluation of existing scheme in terms of SWOT analysis (strength, weakness, opportunities and threats)
- Identification of unique wetlands with incomparable value.
- Identification of proximate threats, proposed policy and legal measures.
- Assessment and evaluation of environmental and economic services
- Multi Stakeholders participation and Capacity building
- Monitoring and enforcement with legally enforceable mechanism
- Classification of wetlands according to their ecological and economic value
- Integration of cross sectoral policies and plans
- Analysis of customary practices and customary laws for wise use of wetlands
- Eco sensitive areas under the EPA and amendments to WLPA and EPA.

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Nidhi Srivastava



Photos Credit: Sandeep Behera/WWF-India

Rajesh Sehgal and Nidhi Srivastava are working with Centre for Environmental Law, WWF-India. The authors remain thankful to the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India for providing financial support on the project “National Actions for Conservation of Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Pursuant to CBD and Synergies with other MEAs”. The views expressed in this paper are entirely the author's view and should not be attributed either to WWF or MoEF.

Honey bees play a very significant role in our ecosystem by pollinating crops and forests. A threat to the honey bees is a threat to the agribusiness, the native plants and animals and the ecology of the forests. Besides this, honey collection in India encourages villagers to venture deep into the forest



Photo Credit: Dilpreet B. Chhabra

which disturbs its peace and tranquility. It also increases the cases of accidental encounter with the wild animals which usually results in increased anguish among the villagers against the wildlife. By implementing new honey retrieving methods WWF has attempted to handle these perplex issues to a large extent.

In the new technique, no smoke or fire is used. Alternatively, the honey collectors wear sting proof dress which covers their body including their face. After wearing the dress, the collector climbs onto the top of the tree with a rope and slowly brushes away the

bees without hurting or killing them. He then slices off the honey chamber that contains the surplus honey and forms only one-third portion of the entire honey comb. The rest two-third portion with residing colony of the queen bee, eggs, larvae, young ones and other members of the family is left intact. After the man climbs down with the honey chamber he moves on to another tree and the bees slowly return back to their beehive. Immediately, they start their process of building back the honey chamber that has been removed and collecting nectar to make honey. Within thirty days of labor they build back their honey chamber. This method is not only ethical but also discourages villagers to go deep into the forests since their requirements are met from the same honey combs. The quality of honey in this chamber is much better since it is not adulterated and helps them to fetch a higher price in the market. Since no fire or smoke is used, there are no chances of forest fire which is a major hazard while using the traditional method of honey collection.

WWF-India along with the Centre of Bee Technology has been conducting training programme for villagers in the Saitpuda Maikal landscape (SML) which is a key conservation priority area for WWF-India in the Central India. Through this initiative, we do not aim to encourage honey collection as a livelihood option but ensure that the villagers do not harm the honey bees who are the live wire of the forests. It is also an attempt to bring the forests fires under control.

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Photo Credit: Dilpreet B. Chhabra

such important commodities as Brazilian nuts. It is critical for local and indigenous groups to be part of the conservation process. Without them, biodiversity would surely be lost.

This large-scale conservation vision in Brazil, based on good science, strong public and private partnerships, and community involvement is a recipe for success and must be replicated elsewhere.

In fact, half way across the world, WWF is working with the governments of Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia to conserve 22 million hectares of inter-connected equatorial rainforest in Borneo — the world's third largest island — through a network of protected areas and sustainably-managed forests.

And in Africa, WWF helped bring together African heads of states to sign an agreement to protect and sustainably manage over seven per cent of the Congo Basin, the second largest area of tropical forest in the world after the Amazon. These forests are home to

more than half of the continent's animal species, including most of the forest elephants left in Africa and the entire world's population of lowland gorillas. They also provide food, materials, and shelter to some 20 million people.

The conservation and sustainable management of forests and the species that live in them are critical for the survival of local, rural and indigenous communities in the developing world, many of whom are poor and have been marginalized by poorly designed development strategies of the past. Bold commitments and ambitious partnerships are the secret to achieving successful conservation.

As diplomats and environmentalists gather in Brazil this week at a meeting of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to address the rate at which the world's natural resources are being degraded and destroyed, they should look to large-scale, multi-partner conservation initiatives as a way to make it to that 2010-targeted finish line.

Conservation Of Wetlands: An Analysis Of Indian Laws, Policies And International Obligations

Lakes, floodplains, marshes and deltas: Indian wetlands are not only the home of a wide variety of plants and animals but it also provides livelihood to the thousands of communities with a wide range of ecological services. Freshwater ecosystems, when scored on the area they cover and the number of species they harbour, are in fact the most species-diverse habitats on earth. In India, despite having unique ecosystem value and ecological services, wetlands suffer from over-exploitation, overuse of their resources, drainage and pollution. India, till date, does not have specific legislation for the conservation of these wetlands. Neither do the wetlands find specific mention in any of the numerous environmental legislation/statutes that our country has. However, there are certain laws that have an indirect bearing upon the country's wetlands. In this brief article, we have reviewed the existing Indian laws and policies and how

they are supporting towards the conservation of wetland in the country.

Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972

WPA provides for notification of certain areas of ecological, faunal, floral or geomorphologic value as national parks and sanctuaries. There are certain wetlands that are included in these National Parks and Sanctuaries. However, such protection is only incidental and takes place due to the fact that these wetlands are inhabited by endangered species. It further prohibits any exploitation or removal of any wildlife from a sanctuary except under a permit granted by Chief Wildlife Warden. Such a provision on the one hand keeps any person, even the local communities away from the threatened ecosystem and on the other hand leaves a scope for misuse and exploitation by way of obtaining permits. These permits are to be granted only when the State Government is satisfied that it is

Indian tiger
Panthera tigris tigris



Photo Credit:
(c) WWF-Canon / Martin HARVEY

Tiger population has been dwindling

It does not make any difference if the camera-trap method or the pug-mark method is used for recording because the results of both can be manipulated, and are largely dependent on the capabilities and integrity of those conducting the estimation. The problem is that everyone is scared to speak out the truth and therefore, the issue fails to get the attention it needs.

Loss of habitat

The tiger habitat at the time of independence was 300,000 sq km and now it has been reduced to less than half of the earlier.

Felling of trees for timber, agricultural expansion, and development of extractive industries such as mining, power plants, hydroelectric dams, highways and other type of human interference with the ecosystem has almost driven the tiger to extinction. India needs to gauge its developmental plans as humans and tigers cannot co-exist in the same forests. Furthermore, it is surely saddening to see the industries' indifference to environmental protection.

Also, the peripheral communities living on the fringes of the forests put extra pressure on the land of the tiger. These villages are dependent on the forests for fuel, fodder and sometimes food. Their economic condition is usually so poor that conservation becomes least of their priority. WWF has intervened in the key tiger conservation areas to help villagers explore alternative livelihood options in order to reduce their dependence on forest reserves.

Rampant illegal trade of tiger parts

Poaching has been constantly increasing. The tigers in our country are more vulnerable to this due to the lack of an adequate support system to protect them. Moreover, the media reports specifying the exorbitant price that the tiger parts fetch, indirectly encourages many to venture into these unscrupulous activities. The demand from various neighboring countries has also posed a serious problem.

Lack of use of genuine scientific research in tiger conservation

There is neither much emphasis at the

national level nor sufficient funds to use scientific research for better management of the parks. There is not much emphasis on understanding the clear picture of the status of tigers and their habitat without which it becomes impossible to take adequate steps.

Forest departments are understaffed and under budgeted

Conservation repeatedly fails to get necessary attention. Most of the forest departments do not have adequate number of people to monitor and protect the forests. Most of the field staff is old and untrained. Moreover, they also do not have the required infrastructure. WWF has been providing direct assistance to the forest officials in the form of jeeps, motor cycles, building anti-poaching camps and providing radios to protect the forests.

Although WWF-India has been working to help conserve the tiger and wildlife of India by providing direct assistance to equip the forests guards, sensitize the villagers and help them explore alternative sources of livelihood, there is much more that needs to be done. There are many issues that cannot be solved by an NGO alone, such as those related to developmental policies of the country, improving socio-economic condition of the villagers around the national parks and implementing strict legal proceedings to curb illegal wildlife trade.

Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh is one of the most successful tiger conservation efforts in India. It has fought against all odds to protect and conserve its flora and fauna. The success can largely be attributed to the infrastructure created by the Forest Department to protect the tigers. There are over 100 anti-poaching camps in the forests and efficient means of mobility and connectivity for the forest guards and trackers for patrolling. Monitoring is undertaken on an hour-to-hour basis. Under such circumstances, protection of the forests becomes much easier. This model needs to be replicated immediately in various other tiger reserves if we want to save the remaining tigers.

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emerging diseases such as the H5N1 strain of avian flu are causing a crisis of public health.

Mr Daszak, who helped connect Asian bats in China with SARS, Ebola, BSE, CJD HIV/AIDS, and H5N1 bird flu are entirely driven by environmental change, which is almost always caused by humans. Because humans share so many pathogens with animals, humans' impact in driving wildlife diseases, in turn threatens public health.

The SARS virus which killed at least 700 people emerged from the trade in wildlife for food and was spread by air travel. It is similar situation with bird flu, Mr. Daszak says.

"All these diseases are driven by human activities like road building, agricultural changes, population movements, and people moving to cities. Environmental change, linked to demography and the unprecedented speed at which environmental change is taking place are responsible.

"The global poultry industry is clearly linked to Avian influenza. It would not have happened without it. There has been an explosion in the global poultry industry. There has always been a close link between people and poultry," he says.

Once an emerging disease such as H5N1 avian flu breaks out, he says, globalization in the form of greatly increased world trade and the growth of the aviation industry can spread it fast. "We are certain to see more and more of these diseases emerging with very high impacts on health and the economy."

Keeping forests and other eco systems intact could be the best protection against new diseases. Intrusions into the world area of high biodiversity disturbs biological reservoirs and exposes people to new forms of infectious disease, says Diversitas, a group of scientists exploring biodiversity.

WWF-India Meritorious Service Award

The first-ever WWF-India Meritorious Service Staff Award was conferred on Mr. Rajpal Bakshi, Subscription officer, WWF-India

Mr. Bakshi has completed 26 years of

By diluting the pool of virus targets and hosts, biodiversity reduces their impact on humans and provides a form of global health insurance. "Biodiversity not only stores the promise of new medical treatments and cures; it buffers humans from organisms that cause disease, Says Anne Larigauderie, director of Diversitas.

This week she urged doctors and ecologists to share knowledge more. "The medical community should invest more in understanding the environmental origins of viruses, and what can become diseases. Viruses are always there, in the forests or the fields. As the environment is disturbed, people have become closer to them and they become diseases.

"The best security against (diseases like H5N1 bird flu) is conservation, and awareness by governments and the medical community that these diseases are not medical problems to begin with. Nature keeps them in check. Once they are in humans then it is almost too late."

"As the human population continues to grow, our need for space and resources result in further encroachment into a diminishing natural world," says Andrew Cunningham, a reader in wildlife epidemiology at the institute of zoology in the British medical journal.

"Through emerging infectious diseases, the medical, veterinary, and the wildlife conservation professions share a common agenda. The problem is not small, and tackling it will not be easy, but recognizing a common problem is a start."

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In The Next Issue of Panda



- Sunderbans: An enigmatic experience
- Mountain Quail
- Earth Day Celebrations



Photo Credit: Anshuman Atroley

take this forward to other major cities such as Bangalore and Mumbai.

On this occasion, a special Reader's Digest issue on 'Conservation, wildlife and animal stories' was jointly released by Mr. Jamshyd Godrej, President, WWF-India, and Mr. A.K. Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism. This special issue is a joint effort of WWF-India and Reader's Digest, supported by Ministry of Tourism.

The Indian Rhino Vision 2020 aims to attain a population of 3000 wild rhinos in Assam distributed over seven of its Protected Areas by the year 2020. Poor law and order situation and ethnic conflicts in Assam have exposed these rhinos to renewed threats of poaching. Mr. Tariq Aziz, Head, Asian Rhino and Elephants Action Strategy (AREAS), WWF-India, in his address mentioned that rhinos have already vanished from three Protected Areas in Assam. This leaves over



Photo Credit: Janardhan/ Photographix

Top Right Photo: Jamshyd Godrej, President WWF-India, Ashok Mahadevan, Editor Readers Digest and A.K. Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, releasing the special edition of Reader's Digest.

Left Photo: Ashok Mahadevan, Editor, Reader's Digest; Piyush Pandey, Chairman and MD, Ogilvy and Mather advertising; Amitabh Kant, Under Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Ravi Singh, Secretary General and Chief Executive Officer, WWF-India and Taljinder Singh, Resident Manager, Taj Hotel addressing the media.



80 percent of the Indian rhino population in Kaziranga alone. The rhino needs to be taken back to its old homes within Assam ensuring long-term survival of the population.

Mr. Amitabh Kant, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism; Mr. Ashutosh Bishnoi, Publishing Director, Reader's Digest; Mr. Ashok Mahadevan, Editor, Reader's Digest; Ms. Deepti Dang, Marketing Manager, Hewlett Packard; Mr. Piyush Pandey, CEO and Chairman, Ogilvy & Mather and Mr. Taljinder Singh, Resident Manager, The Taj Mahal Hotel were also present to show their support. Mr. Vir Das, India's youngest celebrity stand-up comedian conducted the proceedings of the exhibition.

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proper scientific management during the culture period

3. Lack of feed (except for a few foreign companies) and proper additives
4. Absence of hatcheries
5. Lack of disaster management plan to combat sudden death in shrimps.

6. Intake of inferior quality water for the purpose.

The list of negatives can be never ending, so we must turn the light of attention towards Chotomollakhi and Bali islands of Indian Sunderbans from where the journey of hope began.

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All Photos Credit:
Kakoli Banerjee/ WWF-India



New WWF Presence in Singapore

In the presence of WWF's President Emeritus, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, WWF officially opened the doors of its newest office in the Asian city-state of Singapore, adding to its presence in Asia.

The WWF office in Singapore will undertake education and outreach environmental programmes, facilitate dialogue on corporate social responsibility, and explore innovative financing for environmental sustainability.

WWF President Emeritus HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, with WWF Asia Pacific Director Dr. Isabelle Louis, discussing an exhibition display on WWF programmes in the Asia Pacific region.



Photo Credit: (c) WWF-Canon / WWF Intl.

WWF-India Staff Member Conferred With Prestigious Award

Dr Jagdish Chandra Puneetha, director of the Maharashtra state office of WWF-India, was conferred the prestigious Indian Heritage Society Award for his contribution to the conservation work.

The awards were announced by the Indian Heritage Society - Mumbai Chapter at its annual presentation ceremony at Fort Campus in Mumbai University this February. As a part of this ceremony, two awards were given for the heritage

conservation work done by organizations, two to the individuals who have conserved their ancient homes and one to the person, directly responsible for Environment Conservation.

Dr. Puneetha was honoured with the prestigious Citizens Award for the year 2005 for his work in developing the Mahim Nature Park, Bombay port Trust Garden (Sagar Upvan) and INS Shivaji.





Photo Credit: Anshuman Atroley

Billy Arjan Singh Awarded Padma Bhushan

Renowned tiger conservationist, Arjan Singh, was awarded the prestigious Padma Bhushan, one of the highest civilian recognition of the country, for his exemplary work in the field of wildlife conservation. The award is conferred by the Indian government in recognition of extraordinary work in the field of arts, education, industry, literature, science, games, sports etc. To do the honours, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam walked up to Mr. Singh to felicitate the award amidst thunderous applause.

Arjan Singh or “Billy”, as he is popularly known, has devoted more than 60 years to wildlife conservation in the country. He was instrumental in establishing the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in 1988, and his love for tigers is reflected in the fact that his house is named as “Tiger Haven”. Today, Dudhwa is the only tiger reserve in Uttar Pradesh and forms a vital link between Nepal and Terai Landscape allowing tigers and other wildlife to move freely across the area.

Ravi Singh, SG & CEO, WWF-India, in his congratulatory message to Billy said, “It is a great moment for all of us in the conservation

world. We are honoured by the government’s decision to recognise one of the pioneers of tiger conservation in the country”.

In another award ceremony, earlier this January, Billy was conferred the Yash Bharati award by the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav. The award includes five lakhs in cash; a citation and a shawl, which were presented at a ceremony in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh. A true conservationist, Billy, in his brief speech at the award ceremony, called upon the state government to provide more financial assistance to the Dudhwa National Park.

In 2004, Billy received the coveted Getty Award which is administered by WWF on behalf of the Getty family. The award recognises innovation in the field of conservation and in creating public awareness. The Getty Award, which carries \$ 100,000 as the award money, was shared with Tony Larocci, a commercial fisherman from Florida and one of the leading advocates for sustainable fishing world-wide.

Have you checked out the all-new website of WWF-India?

- New sections ■ Easier navigation
- Hundreds of interesting downloads like wallpapers, screensavers and more

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Episode 3: Our international team’s mission takes them on an incredible journey into the heart of Borneo’s rainforest. There, the “man of the forest”, the Orang-utan is fighting for its survival as new development threatens to take over its native habitat. Due to logging, vast swathes of the rainforest have been laid bare-making it impossible for the Orang-utans to cross from the remaining small pockets of forest that have become cut off. If they have any chance of survival, tree paths through the jungle have to be restored and our team has to do it. With 100 trees to plant and the area’s first-ever double rope-bridge to build, it’s going to be a fight. But the jungle is fighting back - with monsoon rains, 80% humidity and a variety of very unfriendly jungle bugs. The team’s morale is in shreds as they face the prospect of failure. It looks like they’ve finally met their match.

Episode 4: The international team faces their most difficult and dangerous journey yet. They’re heading for an untouched area of Malaysian rainforest, which can only be reached by rough local canoes. Their aim is to see if they can turn this wilderness into an eco-tourist hotspot in a bid to save it from devastation by logging. The area is home to some of the most rare and impressive animals on earth - it should be an eco tourist paradise. But there’s a catch. After negotiating a perilous six-hour canoe journey up river the team arrives exhausted, soaked to the skin and demoralized. How can



they convince anyone that the toughest journey of their lives is the ideal start to a vacation?

Episode 5: The eco-volunteers travel to Jeli, in northern Malaysia, where they discover a community in fear of its life. Many of the last few Malayan tigers live in the nearby jungle - but the jungle is being lost to increasing development. Now the tiger and human populations are being forced to live side by side-and no one is coming out as the winner. Our team gets to work, building a tiger-proof paddock for livestock and snare tigers the safe way - using camera traps. But as the challenge nears its end, exhaustion and homesickness take their toll. As friendships unravel, Dawn in particular has reached the end of the line. The team thinks things can’t get any worse - but a trip to see some captured tigers proves them wrong.

Episode 6: It’s the final challenge for our team as they head to Cambodia in search of the elusive Irrawaddy river dolphin. With less than a hundred dolphins left in the Cambodian stretch of the Mekong River, the team has to find a way to alert both locals and tourists to the seriousness of their plight. They need to rope in the help of the local Buddhist temple and find an innovative way of spreading the word to tourists. With everyone feeling the pressure of the last few weeks, the team has to muster all their creative energy to get them through.





for a living planet®

IOSEA YEAR OF THE TURTLE 2006



All Photos Credit: Michael Peters WWF-India

March 1 kicked off 2006 as the official 'Year of the Turtle' within the Indian Ocean and South-East Asian region by IOSEA (the Indian Ocean South-East Asian Marine Turtle MOU for conservation of marine turtles and their habitats).

Today, six of the seven living species of marine turtle are classified as "Endangered" or "Critically Endangered". Concerted conservation efforts have seen turtle populations recover in some areas, but without urgent global action, the future of these animals looks increasingly grim.

Marine turtles have swum in the world's oceans for over 100 million years. They are the only widely distributed marine reptiles, and many species migrate for thousands of kilometres-and even across entire oceans-between feeding and nesting grounds. Regional cooperation is essential to ensure that turtles are protected at different stages in their life cycles.

For more interesting wallpapers and other downloads, please visit www.wwfindia.org

Planet Action Episode Descriptions

Episode 1: Our international team travels to Panama, to one of the most remote beaches on earth. There they join a select few people who, in their daily work, come face to face with the severely endangered leatherback turtle in the wild. For the first time ever in this location, a state of the art satellite transmitter will be fitted to a turtle. There's a lot of work to do and not enough people to do it - the local conservation workers desperately need help. With never before granted access to the critically important turtle-nesting beach, our team has only four days to make a difference. But to succeed, they need to put themselves through a punishing test of endurance. To track and find turtles, they'll have to stay awake day and night, in high humidity and sweltering heat, living in the most basic conditions. None of them know if they can go the distance. But there's one thing they do know - they're a long way from home.

Episode 2: The swamps and mangroves around Belize's coral reef are home to one of the country's most endangered predators - the American Saltwater crocodile. This week, our intrepid international team find themselves trying to hold back a deadly tide, which is threatening to wipe out the crocodile in Belize forever. Pollution and illegal waste are turning the Caribbean paradise into one of the world's garbage dumps, and the area's unique wildlife is paying the price. It's only the team's second week working together, and the stakes are high, but they're already starting to fall apart. When builders Dawn and Ryan find they've been left to complete the most difficult task of the week all on their own, tempers start to fray. The only way the team can possibly complete their mission is to work together - a rift in the group could mean the difference between success and disaster.

Animal Planet in association with WWF presents an eco-reality Series - Planet Action

PLANET ACTION takes a unique approach in addressing some of the current issues facing wildlife and eco-systems today. The series follows an international team of seven enthusiastic amateur environmentalists as they are immersed in six different conservation projects. Working under the pressure of strict deadlines and tight budgets in remote locations, the team must work together to accomplish each mission. Over six weeks, we see conservation in action as the team tackles projects to make a real difference. The journeys range from saving endangered Leatherback Turtles in Panama to planting 100 trees in the heart of Borneo's rainforest to help the Orangutans fight for survival.

Raja Balasubramanian, Brand Director - Animal Planet said, "Animal Planet has presented many entertaining programmes, both from India and abroad, to increase the understanding on wildlife extinction and environment deterioration. Planet Action is an eco-reality programme that, besides informing, will entertain viewers by presenting them all the emotion and drama of a group of amateur environmentalists tasked with real-life challenges."

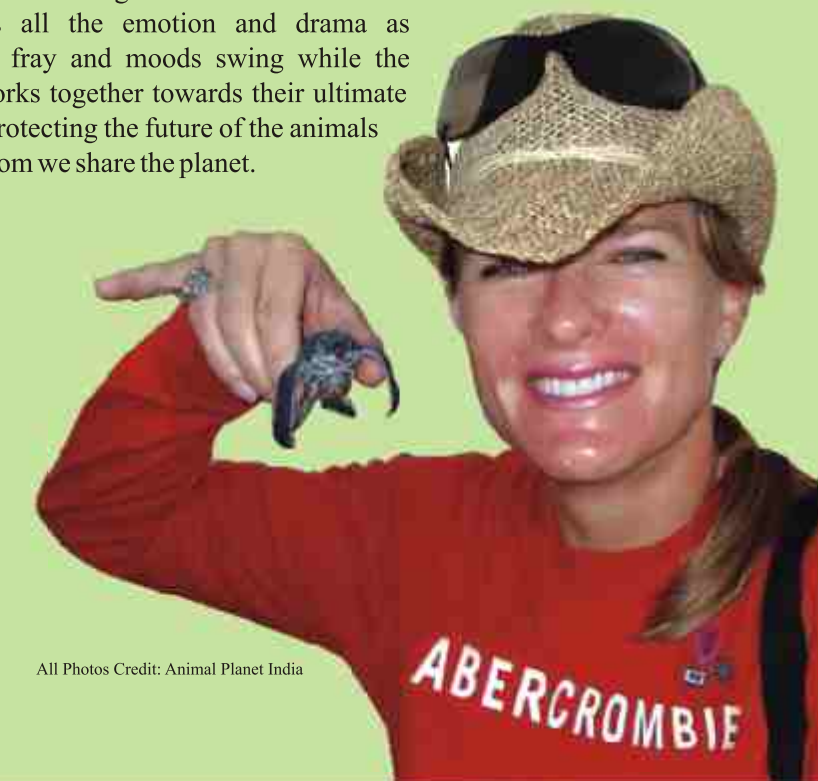
Speaking at the press conference, Ravi Singh, SG and CEO, WWF-India, said,

"Planet Action is a great example of active media partnership to showcase the tough work of conservation to the world. I am hopeful that more and more people will be sensitized about the threats to the environment and to its species and the urgent need to conserve the same."

The diverse group of participants came together from around the globe to pursue a common cause. Team members hail from Venezuela, Vietnam, Sweden, Australia,

Brazil, UK and USA. WWF experts are on hand as 'mentors' during each challenge, as the team learns firsthand about the realities of conservation while at the same time coping with extreme conditions, unfamiliar cultures and the pressures of protecting wildlife.

Can the team put personal issues aside and cooperate as a group to undertake these important challenges? PLANET ACTION captures all the emotion and drama as tempers fray and moods swing while the team works together towards their ultimate goal - protecting the future of the animals with whom we share the planet.



All Photos Credit: Animal Planet India

From Aqua Disaster To Eco-friendly Aquaculture: A Journey of Hope



Shrimp culture is an important economic activity in the coastal areas of many tropical and sub tropical countries which reduces poverty and enhances employment, community development and foreign income. The global production of farmed finfish, crustaceans and mollusks was 35 million mt. in 2000 while production of three main shrimp species (*P.monodon*, *P.chinensis* and *P.vannamei*) was only 2.6 percent of the total quantity. Development of coastal aquaculture and shrimp farming has generated considerable international debate in the recent years over the actual environmental and social costs and benefits. The major environment issues are:

- Ecological consequences of conversion and changes in natural habitats, such as mangroves, associated with construction of shrimp ponds and other infrastructure.
- Discharge of pond effluents leading to water pollution in farming and coastal areas.
- Seepage and discharge of saline pond water that may cause salinity changes in ground water and surrounding agricultural land.
- Use of fish meat and fish oil in shrimp diet.
- Improper use of chemical leading to health and environmental concerns.
- Spread of shrimp diseases.
- Trans-boundary movements concerning

the spread of genetic materials, exotic species and diseases.

- Biodiversity issues primarily arising from the collection of wild seeds.

Although shrimp industry has a dark side to it, it is one the most profitable and fastest growing segments of the aquaculture industry. Global farmed shrimp production has grown 100 fold (by weight) in less than two decades from under 10,000 mt produced by fewer than a dozen countries in the early 1970's to over one million mt by the late 1990's.

The disaster hit shrimp culture in the early nineties with a microbial attack. The issue aggravated in the mid-nineties when several environmental problems like salinization of water, deterioration of water quality, etc cropped up. The late nineties witnessed the total failure of the Blue Revolution in the Indian coastal waters after the Supreme Court verdict Dec 11; 1996. This is the three-staged story of Blue Revolution in India.

West Bengal was no exception to this trend. The decline is rather steep in West Bengal because of the absence of any tiger prawn hatchery in the state. The entrepreneurs therefore have to depend on wild collection of prawn seeds from coastal and estuarine waters which had its own drawbacks .Huge amount of juvenile fish were lost (about sixty species of finfish and twenty five species of shellfish) through this destructive practice of trapping and segregating the PL of tiger prawn from the wild. A critical analysis of the failure highlighted few facts which may be hard to digest but difficult to step aside. These are:

1. Extremely poor policy on the part of the Government to allow the private sector to enter this lucrative aqua-business without any restriction
2. Absence of any treatment plants and

WWF- India Organizes the 11th Kailash Sankhala Memorial Lecture

WWF-India and the Tiger Trust Foundation organized the 11th Kailash Sankhala Memorial Lecture on March 16, 2006 at the WWF-India auditorium in New Delhi. The speaker of the lecture was an eminent personality, Dr. M.S. Swaminathan-Father of Green Revolution. Dr. Swaminathan is a renowned agriculture scientist, well known for his contribution to develop food security systems in India while he served as a Secretary in the Food Ministry. He was also a Trustee and the President of WWF-India for over a decade. On this date his discourse was focused on, "Wildlife Wealth, Sensitive Index of Ecological Security".

The lecture is organized every year in the honor of Late Kailash Sankhala who established an organization called Tiger Trust for sensitizing masses and for supporting tiger conservation programmes.

Given below is our attempt to take you through the sermon and to share with you the key messages:

Dr. Swaminathan began his session by quoting, "The civilization that does not care about the generation yet to be born and does not secure natural resources for them will eventually exterminate itself. Humanity has to prepare itself for living with unavoidable change and develop methods for management of the life support systems in such a way that these systems do not lose their integrity but continue to provide in perpetuity essential support for human well being and economic activities." He persistently emphasized that while ensuring eco-security of our nation we shall ensure bio-diversity security, food security and above all, long term human security.

He also shared his insights on how the loss of each gene, species, plants, and habitat has a large economic value but it is the human tendency to conveniently ignore it. He emphasized again and again on the problems

threatening our wildlife and forests today, such as habitat destruction and deforestation, human-animal conflict, invasive alien species, pollution, climate change and poaching. All of us are already aware of the affects of global warming. He also quoted the Prime Minister of Maldives who said that while most of the world continues to talk about endangered species, we are an endangered nation because as the sea level rises we will be engulfed in the rising waters. Later, he also numerated the indicators that determine the health of the ecosystem and concluded with the key communiqué to the audience that there is a need to strengthen eco-security in order to safeguard our long term interest of survival.



Photo Credit: Anshuman Atroley

WWF-India and the Tiger Trust are thankful to Dr. Swaminathan for sharing his thoughts and experiences with us. There is a need to involve everyone including the coming generations who will grow up to carve the future. Each one has a responsibility and we must do our best to fulfill this responsibility.

Bird Flu: Intensive Farming Link

Animal farming and man's intrusion into the environment are the major factors in the spread of new disease.

John Vidal

Ten years ago next month the United Kingdom government first reported a link between the disease Bovine Spongy Form Encephalopathy (BSE) and its human equivalent Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD); five years ago this week the cull began of millions of sheep and cows suspected foot and mouth disease; three years ago severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) threatened global health. Now poultry farmers around the world are on full alert as country after country reports the virulent H5N1 Avian influenza virus in wild birds, which it is feared could cross to humans. As dead swans are found with H5N1 and Europe locks up its poultry a consensus is emerging among scientists, ecologists and human health experts that this strain of Avian Flu as well as disease such as Monkey Pox and HIV-AIDS, West Nile Virus, Ebola, SARS, BSE and Lyme disease by emerging and crossing more easily to humans because of the environmental changes taking place and the intensification of farming disease are then spread rapidly around the world with the globalization of trade and aviation.

Diseases are spread from wildlife to humans throughout history but we now interact with animals in a very different way says Danielle Nierenberg, a researcher with the US World Watch Institute. "In the last 40 years the world has gone through a livestock revolution not unlike what happened to the crops with the Green Revolution," she says.

Since 1961, she explains, worldwide livestock has increased 38 percent, to about 4.3 billion today the global poultry population has quadrupled in that time, to 17.8 billion birds and the number of pigs has roughly trebled to 2 billion. As the number of animals bred for food has vastly grown in a very short period, humankind's relationship with them has changed.

"Raising animals has morphed into an industrial endeavor that bears little relation to landscape or natural tendencies of the animal. Wherever (industrial farming) is introduced it creates ecological and public disaster", she says.

Others argue that intensive confinement of animals promotes emerging viruses, stokes the development of antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria and can transform animals into disease "factories". According to Hans Gerhard Wagner, an officer of the US Food and Agriculture Organization based in Thailand, the "intensive industrial farming of livestock is an opportunity for emerging diseases".

SUSCEPTIBILITY TO DISEASE

Caroline Lucas, Green MEP (Member of the European Parliament) for south-east England, says intensive farming now plays a major role in the spread of the diseases, "there is a reduction in the diversity of breeds in order to have fastest growth, are becoming more susceptible to disease because of the way they are bred and kept. The search for profits leads to animals and then humans becoming more vulnerable. Our current policies are encouraging farmers that overlooks basic husbandry".

Ecologist Vandana Shiva says: "food hazards have increased with industrialization of food production and processing. On a global scale, new diseases are emerging and more virulent forms of old diseases are growing as globalization spreads factory farming and industrial processing and agriculture. Disease epidemics and food hazards are the outcome of food production methods based on hazardous inputs and processes."

Peter Daszak, director of the Consortium for Conservation Medicine, which strives to understand the link between human alterations to the environment, wildlife disease, public health and conservation, says



Call Of The Wild - Joining Hands For A Common Cause

In India, the changing economic scenario has thrown a lot of challenges in the path of Indian corporates. In a more liberated and competitive environment, staying in business is perhaps the biggest concern for all businesses in India.

Despite such pressures, the outlook of Indian corporates towards the environment is not so encouraging. They need to be made aware that economic and environmental objectives are not necessarily divergent. Good environmental performance is seen to enhance economic bottom line, create goodwill among local communities, and make businesses more sustainable in the long run.

The challenging task to bring the corporates to endorse and pro-actively partner the causes of conservation, gave birth to "Call of the Wild"-a vibrant event campaign that saw the beginning of a unique partnership where Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Hewlett Packard, Reader's Digest, Ogilvy & Mather and Taj Mahal Hotels, as a part of social responsibility, joined hands with WWF-India in its efforts to raise funds and spread awareness for the project Indian Rhino Vision 2020.

Held on December 17, 2005, in New Delhi, 'Call of the Wild' helped in raising 20,000 US dollars through exhibition of breathtaking photographs, posters and sketches on

wildlife and conservation, contributed by renowned photographers and local artists of Sawai Madhavpur, Rajasthan, and attracted more than 300 visitors.

The contributors to this exhibition included Mr. Raghu Rai, Mr. N.C. Dhingra, Mr. Mahesh Nair, Mr. Achal Kumar, Mr. Soumendra Singh, Mr. Mohit Midha and T.N.A. Perumal, Mr. Jagdeep Rajput, Mr. Gopi Gajwani to name a few.

Welcoming the efforts of the partners on supporting the cause of conservation, Mr. Ravi Singh, SG & CEO, WWF-India, acknowledged that such partnerships help in increasing the support towards conservation in India.

Mrs. Madhur Das, Director- Business Development, added that in order to broaden the reach and bridge the gap between the corporates and the non-government organizations, it becomes imperative to devise special campaigns like 'Call of the wild' to sensitize, influence and inspire millions across the globe. She also pointed out, that a few dedicated corporates, trusts and private organizations have been supporting conservation in India for decades. Good business practices, corporate social responsibility and support for social and environmental causes are strongly emerging. Work on the second phase of this campaign has already begun with the team planning to

Vir Das, celebrity stand-up comedian, auctioning the photographs



Photo Credit: Janardhan/ Photographix

Are we winning the race to stop biodiversity loss?

James P. Leape

With the natural forest loss rate at 13 million hectares a year — about 25 hectares a minute — the race is on to protect what's left of the world's forests.

If the world's governments want to significantly reduce the current rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, as they have signed up to do under the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity, they are going to have to stem the tide of deforestation, and increase protection efforts and sustainable uses, such as certified forest management.

Forests are the lungs of the earth, regulating the earth's climate, and are our storehouses of biological diversity, hosting over two-thirds of known terrestrial species and numerous plants and herbs, some of which may hold the secrets to curing cancer and other diseases. It is estimated that some 1.6 billion people worldwide depend on forests, including 60 million indigenous people who call them home.

But, only about 12%, or 480 million hectares, of the planet's forests have been formally protected. WWF, the global conservation organization, has been part of the drive to increase protection, helping to safeguard large tracts of forests and pristine landscapes in the Amazon, Borneo, the Congo Basin, Russia, Canada, China and beyond. WWF aims to see another 75 million hectares of the world's most outstanding forests brought under protection by 2010.



James P. Leape is Director General of WWF, based in Switzerland. This international feature was released on the eve of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity held in Brazil.

With such a timeline just several years away, the only way to accomplish these ambitious — but achievable — goals is through creative partnerships.

The single most ambitious partnership to date is the Amazon Region Protected Areas initiative, led by the Brazilian government in collaboration with the World Bank, Global Environment Facility, the German Development Bank (KfW), WWF and together with local communities. Through this initiative, some 50 million hectares of the Amazon's diverse habitats and species will be protected in a system of well-managed and well-financed parks and reserves — surpassing the size of the entire US National Park system.

Protecting the Amazon from high rates of deforestation and land clearing is no easy task, but the multi-stakeholder initiative has been living up to expectations and delivering extraordinary conservation results. Nearly 16 million hectares of protected areas have already been created. And, just last month Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva signed a decree creating new protected areas in the Amazonian State of Para. Comprising an area of 6.4 million hectares — twice the size of Belgium — the designation includes two new national parks and the major expansion of a third, four national forests, and an environmental protection zone where development is strictly regulated. This mosaic of new protected areas opens genuine prospects for halting deforestation, conserving biodiversity, and promoting sustainable local and regional development.

Hundreds of indigenous communities living in the Amazon account for the region's rich, cultural diversity. Protecting forest areas helps these communities protect their land and culture from external threats and development, and in some areas, allows them access to the forests to sustainably harvest

Are We At A Deadlock In Tiger Conservation?



Photo Credit: (c) WWF-Canon / Homo ambiens / R. Isotti - A. Cambone

While we spend a significant amount of time arguing about what is going wrong with the tiger conservation strategies and blaming each other for the gaps and delays, the hard truth still remains that our country has lost a significant number of tigers in the last couple of years. They have either fallen victim to the poachers or to the affects of human interference with their habitat. Given below is our attempt to present a clear picture on the tiger crisis and the odds that stand in the way of its conservation.

It is a common belief that in the past, the population of tigers was equally divided into three categories- 33% of the tigers lived inside the Tiger Reserves, 33% lived in Protected Areas (PAs), but outside the Tiger Reserves and the remaining 33% lived both outside the Tiger Reserves and the PAs. Today, the numbers which lived both outside the Tiger Reserves and the PAs have crashed in comparison with the numbers in the last two decades and what remains today is declining very rapidly.

Previously, there were nine Tiger Reserves comprising of 14000 sq. km area and now there are twenty-eight Tiger Reserves with a total area of 28000 sq km. But the few larger

Tiger Reserves have either no tigers or less than a viable population. These Tiger Reserves are Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem, Namdapha, Indrawati, Buxa, Palamau, Manas, Sariska, Valmiki and Panna.

What went wrong? Why are the numbers declining despite all the efforts by various conservation groups? It appears that the tiger has become a victim of its glamour where everyone is trying to either make money out of it or completely ignore its suffering and plight. Listed below are some important issues that need to be addressed in the country's conservation policies if it wants to save the tiger—

Is tiger conservation a priority of our country?

Tiger is our national animal and under the Indian constitution, Art.51A (G), "It is the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for all living creatures."

If this is true then why are there no efforts directed to create anti-poaching facilities in tiger reserves? Why are enough funds not being allocated to protect and conserve the wildlife of India?

Indian tiger, *Panthera tigris tigris*, young resting. Bandhavgarh National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India

Indian Tiger, *Panthera tigris tigris* Kanha National Park, Madhya Pradesh.



Photo Credit: WWF-Canon / Roger HOOPER

essential for better management of the wildlife. However, in absence of any guidelines the doors are open for exploitation.

Indian Forest Act, 1927

Similarly, under the Indian Forest Act certain areas can be declared as protected forests. In most of these protected areas, sanctuaries etc. local population's interference is either restricted or reduced to minimum and certain activities like grazing are banned. But what one fails to take into account is the fact that wetlands constitute an ecosystem that can very much flourish with humans provided it is done in a judicious manner.

Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1986

EPA confers on the Central Government the power to take all such measures, as it deems necessary or expedient for protecting and improving the quality of environment. EPA is the umbrella legislation, which takes within its ambit, air, water, land, and the interrelationship that exists amongst them and with human beings or other living beings. Ecologically fragile or sensitive areas can be notified and restrictions on certain activities can be imposed under the EPA. Coastal wetlands falling under the coastal zone are covered by the CRZ Notification, 1991. The CRZ Notification proposes graded restriction in coastal areas including coastal wetlands on setting up and expansion of industries, operations and processes including pressures from human activities.

Indian Fisheries Act, 1897

Indian Fisheries Act though is an old act it regulates certain matters relating to fisheries and water bodies. Fisheries although is a State subject and hence certain rules are to be made by State governments in this respect. The 73rd amendment of the Constitution vests the management of common lands and water bodies with the Panchayat. Even under the provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA), no State Government shall make laws which are not in



Photos Credit: Sandeep Behera/WWF-India

consistency with the planning and management of minor water bodies to Panchayats at the appropriate level.

Thus, wetlands are not governed by any single or specific legal statute but fall within the ambit of above mentioned legislations. These laws influence wetland conservation and management indirectly and at different levels. As a consequence, despite having various laws the wetland remains a threatened ecosystem due to factors such as jurisdictional overlapping and non recognition as a separate ecosystem.

Review of Existing Policies and Conservation of Wetlands

India so far does not have a national wetlands policy yet. Due to this absence and the nature of wetlands and its ecological value, other policies such as agriculture, water, fishing etc. have an impact on them. However, the draft National Environment Policy, 2004 does recognize wetland as an important fresh water resource providing numerous ecological services. It also observes that these natural and manmade, freshwater or brackish wetlands are a threatened ecosystem today

The Draft National Environment Policy lists following action points for the conservation of wetlands:

- Set up a legally enforceable regulatory mechanism for identified valuable wetlands to prevent their degradation and enhance their conservation. Develop a national inventory of such wetlands.
- Formulate conservation and prudent use strategies for each significant catalogued wetland, with participation of local communities, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Take explicit account of impacts on wetlands of development projects during the environmental appraisal; in particular, the reduction in economic value of wetland environmental services should be explicitly factored into cost-benefit analyses.
- Consider particular unique wetlands as entities with "Incomparable Values", in developing strategies for their protection.

Another policy bound to have an impact on wetlands is the water policy. India's National Water Policy of 2002 recognizes water as a part of a larger ecosystem and thus calls for a multidisciplinary approach to planning, formulation, clearance and implementation of

India Highlights New Ramsar Sites On World Wetlands Day

India has designated six new wetlands to the Ramsar Convention on Wetland's list of wetlands of international importance. The wetland areas include : Hokera Wetland and Surinsar-Mansur Lakes in the Northwestern Himalayan province of Jammu & Kashmir; Chandertal Wetland and Renuka in Himachal Pradesh; Rudrasagar Lake in the northeastern state of Tripura; and Upper Ganga River in Uttar Pradesh.

The Convention on Wetlands, signed in

Ramsar, Iran in 1971, is an inter-governmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

The designations, announced on World Wetlands Day, bring the number of Ramsar sites in India to 25. WWF wants to see 250 million hectares of global wetlands be protected and sustainably managed by 2010.



Photo Credit: Ansar Khan /WWF-India

Buzzing Away to Freedom

WWF-India along with the Centre for Bee Technology is regularly conducting training among villagers, all across the Satpuda Maikal Landscape, to implement new and improved techniques of honey collection. This is an effort directed to abandon the local conventional practices which are crude and have a severe impact on the ecology of the forests.

For ages, villagers have used traditional methods of honey collection which were not only barbaric but also damaged the flora and fauna of the region. While practicing this, the villagers would enter the forests late at night or early morning, burn or smoke off the honey bees from the comb, cut off the entire beehive and carry it back only to squeeze

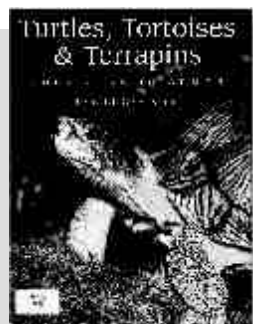
honey for trade. Sadly, this method involves destroying the entire colony of honey bees, including the queen bee, the young bees and the eggs present in the comb. An average sized beehive has approximately 30,000 honey bees. While smoking off the bees, many succumb to death by getting burnt or reach a state of shock. Under such circumstances, they are unable to collect nectar and build another beehive. Eventually, they die of starvation. The honey squeezed from this beehive is adulterated since it has the juice of the eggs, larvae, honey bees and also the wax present in the honey comb. More so, this method sometimes causes forest fires. It also involves cutting of the tree branches and sometimes the entire tree to reach the comb.



Photo Credit: Dilpreet B. Chhabra

From The Library And Documentation Centre

Some Recent Additions:



Turtles, Tortoises & Terrapins:

Survivors in Armor by Ronald Orenstein, Firefly Books, USA, 2001, 308 pages.

This book takes an in-depth look at turtles, tortoises and terrapins from around the world. Replete with compelling facts, stunning photography, rigorous research and informative commentary, it covers all aspects of turtle evolution, life history and conservation.

Divided thematically into three main sections, the book poses three important questions: What are turtles, tortoises and terrapins? How do they live? Will they survive? The last question is of particular importance and the last three chapters investigate this question in depth. In sometimes harrowing detail, the author explores the reasons behind the current crisis in the world's turtle population.

Over the course of the past century, turtle populations have been declining all over the world. Many factors have contributed to the decrease including the degradation and destruction of turtle habitats, the theft of eggs, and many more species that drown in fishing gear or are captured for their shells, for the pet trade or for the rapidly growing food markets in Asia. Fostering awareness about these threatened creatures is one of the main goals of this book.



The Last Tiger

by Valmik Thapar, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006, 274 pages.

This book comes at the heels of the recent tragedies of extinction of local tiger populations at Sariska Tiger Reserve and even smaller sanctuaries like Palpurkuno and Rani Durgawati, and the submission of the report of the Tiger Task Force constituted by the Prime Minister of India to deal with this crisis. The author pleads passionately for immediate and drastic action. Thapar fears that the issues of tribal land allocation and other inequities have diluted the mission focus, and that the recent tribal bill will even hamper all efforts to save the tiger, since tribal populations

in and around national parks are involved in most cases of poaching. This lies at the core of Thapar's disagreement with the Task Force Report. The use of tiger skins in Tibetan costumes has created a huge surge in demand, and hence, in poaching. Vivid colour plates depict the glory of the tiger, and at the same time, its grotesque renditions as skins for sale.

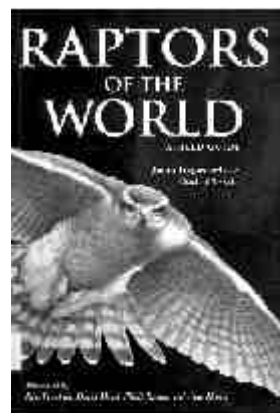
This book traces the history of the crises concerning the tiger and its survival in India, and the conservation efforts to battle them from the nineteenth century right up to the present crisis.

Raptors of the World:

A field guide by James Ferguson-Lees & David Christie, Christopher Helm, London, 2005, 320 pages.

This new field guide covers all of the world's kites, vultures, harriers, hawks, buzzards, eagles and falcons. Based on essential sections of the widely acclaimed handbook

Raptors of the World by the same authors, but with updated text, maps and plates, it shows every species in a selection of different plumages, with concise facing texts and distribution maps. It provides an easy-to-use and portable reference to one of the world's largest, most popular and most challenging avian groups.



Discovering Birds: The emergence of ornithology as a scientific discipline, 1760-1850

by Paul Lawrence Farber, The Johns Hopkins University Press, London, 1997, 191 pages.

This book is a case study of one of the first of the biological disciplines to emerge from the broader natural history. Although useful in understanding the origin of scientific disciplines, the book also carries wider value in demonstrating the complexity of science and scientific change.

Many factors contributed to the emergence of ornithology, and only by looking at several of them technical, empirical, social, cultural can we begin to understand its history.



Government of Rajasthan, WWF-India and Swarovski join hands in a pioneering effort to Conserve Wetlands Reserve

H.E. Governor Of Rajasthan Inaugurates First-of-its-kind 'Salim Ali Visitor Interpretation Centre' At Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur

H. E. Governor of Rajasthan, Smt. Pratibha Patil, inaugurated Dr. Salim Ali Visitor Interpretation Centre at the Keoladeo National Park (KNP). Government of Rajasthan, WWF-India and Swarovski, in a pioneering partnership, have conceptualised this unique Interpretation Centre aimed at implementing the conservation programme in KNP, Bharatpur. Dedicated to Dr. Salim Ali, this Visitor Centre has been designed to create awareness and encourage the conservation of wetlands. It aims to sensitise the local community and visitors about the need for conserving the wetlands to achieve long-term conservation of water in the region. This Centre will help communicate the importance of wetlands in securing the natural resources of India.

The other dignitaries present on the occasion included Mr. Von Staa, H.E. Governor of Tyrole, Austria, Shri. Laxmi Narayan Dave, Hon'ble Minister for Forest, Environment and Mines, Government of Rajasthan, Smt. Rukmani Haldia, Principal Secretary Forests & Mines, Government of Rajasthan, Mr. Jamshyd. N. Godrej, President, WWF-India and Gernot Langes Swarovski, President- D. Swarovski & Co, Austria.

The Visitor Centre is a part of the Interpretation Programme developed to address the extremely diverse target audience ranging from rickshaw pullers & guides, tour operators, tourists, park staff, the Royal family of Bharatpur and the local community. The Centre, which is the major infrastructure input in the project, comprises of four exhibit halls and an auditorium for screening of documentaries and audio-visual programmes. Signages, nature trails, resource material and a website on KNP are also part of this endeavour.

This was further emphasised by Shri R.N. Mehrotra, Principal, Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Forests, Government of Rajasthan. He said, "The Centre is the culmination of our efforts over the last few years to create awareness and educate all stakeholders about the importance of KNP. We believe that this wetland is a key natural resource for Bharatpur and the surrounding area. Through the Visitor Centre we aim to ensure long-term survival of this resource."



Photo Credit: Ansar Khan/ WWF-India

Dr Parikshit Gautam, Director, Freshwater and Wetlands Programme at WWF-India said, "Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world and there is an urgent need to conserve them. Through this Centre we hope to be able to educate communities on the importance of Wetlands and their absolute necessity for the people who depend on them." He further added,