

# PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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unseasonal downpours accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning.

The victims were mostly old animals and the infants and were said to have died due to heart failure on account of shock experienced because of the thunderstorms and lightning.

Source: Rakhee Roy Talukdar. 'Storm shock kills 50 black bucks', *The Telegraph*, 02/06/09  
PJ Joychen. '70 blackbucks die of shock in rain-hit Tal Chappar', *The Times of India*, 02/06/09

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## SIKKIM

### Forest fires across the state in March



The continuous dry spell in Sikkim led to widespread fires across the state in the month of March. Areas affected by fire include the following:

**East Sikkim:** Khesay, Gangyap, Sichey, Ganseh Tok, Daragaon, Nam Nang, Gangyap, Sang, Nazitam, Rongli, Basmey, Ranka Lingdum, Rongey, Namnang; Sang RF, Singchyel RF, Nimthang RF, Syari RF, Rangpo, Rhodong Khasmal forest, Kopibari (private holding), Central Pandam Khasmal area, Basmey RF, Fambong Lho wildlife sanctuary.

**West Sikkim:** Nethang, Malbasey, Pipaley, Tatopani, Sakyong, Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary, Achalay RF, Tatopani RF, Reshi RF, Sakey RF, Sakyong RF, Burung RF, Raksang RF

**North Sikkim:** Dikchu, Lower Phodong (private holding)

**South Sikkim:** Melli Tribeni RF, Malbasey RF, Rabongla RF, SumbuRF, Tumin RF, Sadam Tareybhair, Salghari, Ralong.

Source: 'Outbreak of forest fires across Sikkim', *Panda Newsletter 2009*

## PANDA Newsletter from ENVIS Sikkim

The Sikkim ENVIS, Forests, Environment and Wildlife Management Department, Govt of Sikkim have recently published the PANDA Newsletter 2009.

It is a bi-annual news magazine which was initially published in 1993 but had gone into hibernation after that. It was re-launched on June 5, 2009 by the Sikkim Forest Minister. It can be accessed at the following weblink <http://www.sikenvs.nic.in/Newsletter.htm>

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## TAMIL NADU

### Field Guide to the plants of the Northern Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

The 'Field Guide to the plants of the Northern Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve', the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the series - Forest Plants of the Nilgiris, was launched on June 5, World Environment Day. The launch was organized at the Theppakadu Interpretation Center, Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and was attended by the Field Directors of both the Mudumalai and the Bandipur Tiger Reserves.

The pictorial guide includes the dominant plants of the Bandipur, Nagarhole and Mudumalai Tiger Reserves and has been published by the Kotagiri based Keystone Foundation.

Information on each plant was compiled using secondary sources and indigenous uses of the plant have been recorded in consultation with the Irula people of the region. Field staff of the three tiger reserves were given a copy each of the guide during the program.

The price of the book is Rs. 450.

Contact: **Anita Varghese**, Keystone Foundation, PB 35, Groves Hill Road, Kotagiri 643 217, Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu. Telefax: 04266-272277, Email: [anita@keystone-foundation.org](mailto:anita@keystone-foundation.org)

## Nature Interpretation Centre in the Sathyamangalam WLS

A Nature Interpretation Centre was recently inaugurated at Hasanur in the Sathyamangalam Wildlife Sanctuary (SWLS) in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The centre was conceptualised by the DFO, Mr S Ramasubramanian and jointly implemented by the Kotagiri based Keystone Foundation and local Village Forest Councils. The center is called the Elephant Valley Nature Interpretation Center and is located along the main highway that connects Coimbatore and Bangalore.

It has a wide range of photographs that portray the people, landscape and wildlife of the region. The center will be managed and run by the Village Forest Councils of the area and also has a coffee and souvenir shop.

The sanctuary itself was created in December 2008 and covers an area of a little over 524 sq. kms. It includes the Thalavady range (Palayam, Belathur, Gettavadi) and Bhavani Sagar range (Thengumarahada, a part of Thalamalai, Gejalatti, and Peerkadavu, entire Kothamangalam and a part of Bannari), which are spread over 22, 325.63 ha.

The second part is the Guthiyalathur and Guthiyalathur extension, which comprises Sathyamangalam range (Thimbam, Vadavalli, Chickarasampalayam, Kondappanaicken Palayam and Kembanaiken Palayam) and T.N. Palayam (a part of Kadambur forests, Vilankombai, Kongarpalayam, a part of Kovilur, entire Bungalow Pudur, Kanackampalayam and a part of Kundri).

Contact: Anita Varghese, Keystone Foundation, see above

## UTTARAKHAND

### Rs. 8.5 crore security plan for Corbett TR

The Union Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr. Jairam Ramesh is reported to have cleared a Rs 8.5-crore Comprehensive Security Plan for the Corbett Tiger Reserve, which will be implemented over the next six years. The plan includes purchase of microlight aircraft for surveillance and installation of sensors all over the reserve for monitoring purposes. Funds are

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also likely to be made available for a new museum in Ramnagar.

In another move the minister has also proposed to include Van Gujjars in the Special Tiger Protection Force (TPF). The creation of the TPF is the outcome of the budgetary allocation of Rs. 50 crores made last year for the same (*PA Update* Vol XV, No. 2). The TPF for Corbett is slated to have 110 people and the Minister has suggested that the Gujjars who have a good knowledge of the place would be far better suited for the purpose than anyone thrust from the outside.

The Minister also suggested that the microlight aircraft like the one to be introduced to Corbett will also be considered for other tiger reserves like Namdapha in Arunachal Pradesh where there is a serious problem of connectivity.

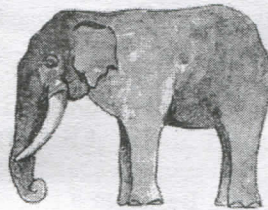
Source: 'Minister spots tiger, clears aircraft and sensors for Corbett', *The Indian Express*, 16/06/09

Contact: **Field Director**, Corbett Tiger Reserve, Ramnagar -244715, Nainital, Uttaranchal. Tel: 05947 - 285489. Fax: 285376

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## WEST BENGAL

### Nepal police fire at elephant herd



In a repeat of incidents that have occurred over the last couple of years (*PA Update* Vol XIV, No. 4) the Nepal police allegedly fired at a herd of elephants near the Mechi river on the India-Nepal border. A herd of around 60 pachyderms is said to have entered Dhapa and soon reached Bamondangi village and started raiding homes and fields. The Nepal police opened fire and the firing went on for around two hours. A team of Indian forest guards from the Kurseong division was also shot at when it

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