

PROTECTED AREA UPDATE

News and Information from protected areas in India and South Asia

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granted, it would encourage growth of more encroachments in the area.

Source: Jangveer Singh. 'Don't transfer land in Harike to farmers, dept. tells DCs', *The Tribune*, 27/02/09.

Contact: Wildlife Warden, Harike Lake WLS,
Near Police Station, Harike, Dist.
Firozpur, Punjab. Tel: 0181 - 248409
Chief Wildlife Warden, Punjab, SC No.
2463-64, Sector 22-C, Chandigarh -
160022. Tel: 0172-2705828(O),
2675661(R). Fax: 2705828

RAJASTHAN

Expedition to study status of gharial in the National Chambal Sanctuary

The 2nd Gharial Expedition to study the status of the critically endangered Gharial in the National Chambal Sanctuary was held from December 17 to 26, 2008. Organised by the NGO, Tiger Watch the expedition covered a 100 km stretch of the river from Pali to Rhondhai in Rajasthan.

The expedition identified four High Population Estimate Areas (HPEAs) as stretches where the gharial population was higher than in other parts of the river surveyed.

A total of 123 gharial including 11 males were spotted during the expedition while the number of muggers that were seen were 73. A number of other species of wildlife including birds like skimmers, ospreys, and terns and mammals including hyenas, jackals, and sloth bear (pugmarks) were also seen.

One dead gharial was also reported from near Banjari Village during the expedition.

A subsequent summer survey was conducted in April 2009 and it reported one dead gharial from Pali on the Madhya Pradesh side and a mugger at Tongni village also on the MP side. The animals were found wrapped in fishing nets; evidence that the activity which is illegal here is continuing unabated.

(Also see *PA Updates* Vol. XV, No. 2 and Vol XIV, No. 2)

Source: Apoorva Joshi on email dated 27/04/09.

Contact: **Apoorva Joshi.** Tel: 0-9011515579
Email: apoorvanature@gmail.com
DCF (Wildlife), National Chambal WLS, Dist. Kota, Rajasthan. Tel: 0744-2321263(O). Fax: 0744-2322074
CWLW Government of Rajasthan, Van Bhavan, Vaniki Path, JAIPUR - 302 005.
Tel: 0141-2380832 / 2540531. Fax: 2380496/ 2380832

TAMIL NADU

Conference on Bees, Biodiversity and Forest Livelihoods in Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

□A three day International Conference on 'Bees, Biodiversity and Forest Livelihoods'(BBL) was held in Coonoor in March 2009. It marked the conclusion of a three year project to elucidate the interdependencies between bees, biodiversity and forest livelihoods in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR).

The conference was attended by social scientists, biologists, ecologists and economists from India and abroad. The BBL project was funded by the Darwin Initiative, UK and was implemented by Kotagiri based Keystone Foundation in collaboration with the Overseas Development Group/School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia, Bees for Development and the Centre for Agri-Environmental Research, University of Reading, UK.□□

The indigenous bees of the mountainous NBR are known to play an important role in local indigenous livelihoods (honey hunting is part of the culture), yet the bees have not been scientifically identified or classified, their populations and distributions under natural conditions relatively unknown, and their vital role in pollination and the maintenance of forest biodiversity under studied.

The BBL Project was aimed at combining scientific data about the status of these indigenous bees and their ecology, with participatory livelihoods analysis. It was executed over sixteen field sites in five locations in order to capture contrasts of biogeography, distribution and honey collecting practices of major tribal groups, as well as

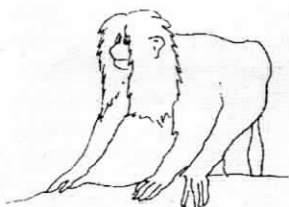
respond to practical and strategic considerations of coverage across the three Indian states (Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala) that are contained within the NBR. □□

A detailed proceedings of the conference is being compiled and will be made available shortly.

□□

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

Increase in wildlife numbers in Srivilliputhur WLS



A recently conducted census has reported increased numbers of many wildlife species in the Srivilliputhur

Wildlife Sanctuary. These include the Nilgiri tahr, the Lion-Tailed macaque (LTM) and the Giant squirrel.

Wildlife officials said that the Nilgiri Tahr has been sighted in the entire division starting from Kottamalai in Rajapalayam to Perumal Malai in Sadhuragiri hills near the Sundara Mahalingam temple in Saptoor. While a group of 30 LTMs had been sighted in the sanctuary in the census last year, this year more than 45 animals including a sizeable number of young ones were sighted in a single group between the Nagariyar and Periyakavu part of the sanctuary.

Source: P Oppili. 'Wildlife numbers up in Srivilliputhur sanctuary', *The Hindu*, 23/03/09.

Contact: **Wildlife Warden**, Srivilliputhur WLS, No.8 Kallikulam Street, Srivilliputhur – 626129, Tamil Nadu. Tel: 04563-60565

Field guide on flora and fauna of Gulf of Mannar BR

The Centre for Environment Education (CEE) and the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve Trust (GoMBRT) have jointly produced a field

guide on the flora and fauna of Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve. The guide covers all the plants and animals found in the Gulf of Mannar region and took about two years to produce.

There is also a plan to bring out the guide in Tamil that will also include colour photographs.

Source: Guide on flora and fauna of biosphere reserve released, *The Hindu*, 17/04/09.

Contact: CEE Tamil Nadu. Tel: 09443194272.

Email: ceetamilnadu@ceeindia.org

UTTARAKHAND

Proposal to increase area of Corbett TR

A proposal is being mooted for the increase of the area of the Corbett Tiger Reserve. Under the new plan, the reserve would comprise of the 521 sq km Corbett National Park, the 301 sq km Sonanadi WLS and 466 sq km of the buffer areas of Landsdown and Ramnagar Forest Division. The total area of the reserve would then be 1,288 sq km.

A high-level meeting of top officials, including Union Cabinet Secretary KM Chandrasekar, State Chief Secretary IK Pande and other forest officials, was held at Corbett recently to discuss the modalities of the same.

The State Chief Wildlife Warden Mr SK Chandola has said that consultations would be held with all the stakeholders and the inhabitants of the Ramnagar and Landsdown forest division before the decision on increasing the area of the reserve was taken. The plan is to be executed in two phases. The first would be the consultations to chalk out a concrete action plan that would then be implemented in the second phase.

Source: 'Centre plans to increase Corbett Tiger Reserve area', *The Times of India*, 12/04/09

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