

TRAFFIC POST

the wildlife trade monitoring network

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TRAFFIC INDIA'S NEWSLETTER ON ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE IN INDIA



TRAFFIC INDIA
UPDATE



OUTPOST



TRAFFIC
'ALERT'



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- **Indian Tiger's survival under threat**- Illegal wildlife trade one of the major driving factors



© MKS Pasha

South Asia commits to regional co-operation in controlling wildlife trade

The first Regional Workshop on the South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI), organised by the Nepal's Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, SACEP, WWF-Nepal and TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 31 January - 1 February 2008.



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The workshop was attended by participants from all eight South Asian countries - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, who agreed to a series of joint actions as part of a South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI), including the establishment of a South Asia Experts Group on Wildlife Trade and the development of a South Asia Regional Strategic Plan on Wildlife Trade (2008-2013). They also called upon the international community to support action in South Asia by providing financial and technical assistance in the implementation of the regional plan.

Following SACEP's (South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme) Governing Council Decision, participants in Kathmandu agreed that the South Asia Wildlife Trade Initiative (SAWTI) and its South Asia Regional Strategic Plan on Wildlife Trade will focus on a number of key areas of work. These include co-operation and co-ordination; effective legislation, policies and law enforcement; sharing knowledge and effective dissemination of information; sustainability of legal trade and livelihoods security; intelligence networks and early warning systems; and capacity building.

SACEP Director-General Dr Arvind A. Boaz emphasised that regional co-operation can provide the best solution for regional problems. "The agreement reached on SAWTI puts in place the foundations for a co-operative effort to crack down on illegal trade and to improve the management of wildlife species that can be legally traded under national laws in the region," Boaz said.

TRAFFIC's Global Programme Co-ordinator, Roland Melisch said that international co-operation and, in particular, regional co-operation is absolutely essential in tackling the challenges of wildlife trade.

The Senior Officer, Anti-smuggling, fraud and organized crime, at the CITES Secretariat, Mr John Sellar, very much welcomed this Initiative. "We look forward to co-operating with SAWTI, which we believe offers considerable potential in combating illegal trade in wildlife, whilst also working to ensure that legal trade in wildlife is

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sustainable and benefits local communities in this part of the world."The decisions taken at this workshop will be presented for endorsement at the Ministerial level at the Eleventh Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP taking place later this year in New Delhi, India.

For more information, please visit: www.wwfindia.org/traffic or www.traffic.org

'Don't buy trouble' - TRAFFIC India launches new awareness campaign



TRAFFIC India has launched its latest awareness campaign with the release of four eye-catching posters that advise tourists to be careful of what they buy as souvenirs during their travels. These have been designed with support from WWF-India and show models handcuffed next to confiscated wildlife goods. The four posters are: **Shawls of Shame** (Crime Wearing a Shahtoosh shawl without an ownership certificate); **Blood Ivory** (Crime Buying ivory products); **Skinned Fashion** (Crime Carrying a reptile skin handbag made from a protected species in India); **Marine Plunder** (Crime Possessing protected marine products such as Giant Clams, seashells, corals etc. that are illegal in India.)



Targeted mainly at domestic and foreign tourists, the posters convey a clear message that it is not only the poachers and traders who are liable for punishment under India's Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, but also those who purchase and use such products. The end consumer is as much a partner in wildlife crime as the trader or the offender is liable to hefty imprisonment.

If found guilty, the fines and up to seven years of imprisonment. Ignorance of the law can not be taken as an excuse.

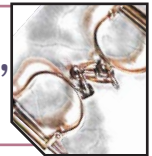


The campaign has received extensive media support and the posters have appeared on the front pages of national newspapers. Currently, TRAFFIC India is in the process of disseminating these posters through various state tourism offices across the country.

TRAFFIC India plans to put these up at strategic locations for better visibility and high impact.

To download the posters, please visit www.wwfindia.org or www.traffic.org

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Corals worth INR 25 lakh seized

In January 2008, a CID officer raided a marine products business house in Bangalore and recovered reef-building corals weighing 180 kg worth INR 25 lakh or approximately USD 62 000.

The business house raided was Amity Aquatech Pvt. Ltd. in BTM Layout. The caretaker Jimmy George (27) was arrested while the owner Sabastian John is still at large. The head office of the company is in Kochi.

Corals were also seized in Bangalore city in August from two marine stalls at Sringar Complex on MG Road and another shop in JP Nagar.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

All reef-building corals Scleractinians, Black corals Antipatharians, Organ Pipe coral *Tubipora musica*, Fire coral Millipora and Sea Fans Gorgonians are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Under this, any form of extraction, exploitation or trade of these species is prohibited. All reef building corals, Black corals, Organ Pipe coral and Fire corals are listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

Despite the legal protection, such reports suggest that the trade in many coral species continues in India. The hard corals are exploited for use in construction, production of lime and for other industrial purposes while soft corals are sold as curios and for making ornaments and other decorative items. Besides the clandestine market for corals in India and other countries, many protected species are also sold openly at beaches especially in south India.

Coral exploitation and trade can be very hard to curtail because corals are often collected in offshore areas seldom patrolled by national authorities.

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Indo-Bhutan 'Wildlife Enforcement Training Workshop' organised by TRAFFIC India



TRAFFIC India with support from WWF-India, Bodoland Territorial Council and the Assam Forest Department organised an Indo-Bhutan 'Wildlife Enforcement Training Workshop' at Manas Tiger Reserve from 7-9 January 2008. The main aim of the workshop was to enhance skills of the enforcement agencies working to curb illegal wildlife trade and to improve cross-border co-operation and co-ordination between the two countries on such issues.

Participants included officials from the Manas Tiger Reserve and the various Forest Divisions of Assam in India. From Bhutan, there were officials from the Forest Divisions, Royal Manas National Park, Jigme Singye Wangchuck National Park and their Nature Conservation Division.

Training was given on the legal and technical aspects of fighting wildlife cases and curbing illegal wildlife trade through a series of case studies, group discussions and presentations. Mr. Sangay from the Nature Conservation Division-Bhutan, shared information about the nature and scale of wildlife trade issues in his country.

Such joint training programmes are an important means to strengthen regional co-operation and collaboration to fight the trans-national illegal wildlife trade in the region.

Peacock tail feather trade study conducted by TRAFFIC India



A boy selling fans and other products made out of peacock tail feather

On behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, TRAFFIC India undertook a short study on the trade in Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* tail feathers in India. This survey was conducted between August - October 2007 in Delhi, some parts of Rajasthan and Agra in Uttar Pradesh. An additional one-week survey was undertaken in January 2008 in Ahmedabad and Bhuj in Gujarat. The principal investigator was Abrar Ahmed, a well-known ornithologist. The detailed report was submitted to the Ministry in March 2008.

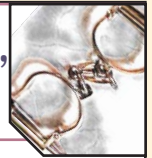
The main focus of the study was to identify the source of peacock tail feathers in trade in India. Many reports across the country had suggested that peacocks were being killed for their feathers which

were then used to make fans and other decorative items. There were also reports of poaching of the species for meat.

The Indian Peafowl is the national bird of India and is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Under this, poaching of the species is prohibited but there is an exemption on the domestic trade in naturally shed peacock feathers and articles and trophies made from them. However, export of feathers or articles made from them is completely banned.

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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



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When raw coral enters the market, it is difficult and sometimes impossible to identify particular species. Once the coral is dried and processed, identification becomes even more difficult. They are often combined with other goods or marine products (especially shells) in official customs statistics. Mixed consignments of shells and corals might be labeled as "shell" on trade permits and documents.

Presently, there is no concrete information on the level of coral trade in India and much research is needed to understand the latest trends and trade routes.

Source:

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Bangalore/Corals_worth_Rs_25_lakh_seized/articleshow/2744724.cms

21 Trade in Corals by Fahmeeda Hanfee ; <http://www.fao.org/docrep/X5627E/x5627e0r.htm>

Alleged Tiger poacher arrested for smuggling 600 Tiger skins

Abdul Khader Chaudhury (69) and two other wildlife traders from Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, were arrested by the Karnataka State CID Forest Cell in February 2008 in Hyderabad for allegedly smuggling around 600 Tiger skins outside the country over a 20 year period.

Prabhakar Keshav Gajakosh, a politician and timber contractor, earlier registered with the Forest Department from Hubli, was arrested for alleged wildlife crimes last year. Gajakosh said he used to visit Chaudhury to buy or sell wildlife pelts and had known Chaudhury for 25 years. Chaudhury is one of India's oldest wildlife traders along with Sansar Chand.

Chaudhury's name also figured when the Special Task Force, Uttar Pradesh, arrested Shabeer Hasan Qureshi along with his sons Siraj and Sarfaraz, from Allahabad in December last year. Qureshi was trading skins with Gajakosh and Chaudhury.

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Based on data emerging during the study and from other relevant literature and reports it was learnt that Agra, being the centre of the trade in peacock tail feathers in India, has an entire community involved in this trade. Peacock feathers were however on sale in every location surveyed. It was estimated that around 20 million peacock tail feathers are in trade annually in the areas surveyed.

No evidence was found to suggest that peacock tail feathers were being collected for trade through poaching of birds. Three distinctive communities, the Harries, Kanjars and Khatkis, are associated with the trade in peacock feathers and are said to be dependent on it for at least part of the year.

This study concluded that the present trade in tail feathers of Indian Peafowl in India is not a threat to the species. However, there is a need to undertake detailed investigation into the poaching of the species for meat and other

TRAFFIC India launches 'International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants' in Uttarakhand



On 28 February 2008, TRAFFIC India organized a workshop to introduce the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) at Dehradun in Uttarakhand. This was the first initiative of its kind in the country to standardize collection and utilisation of medicinal and aromatic plant species from the wild. The workshop was attended by a diverse audience of over 80 people, including key policy makers; Forest Department officials both serving and retired; officials from the Indian Forest Research Institute, State and National Medicinal Plants Board; MAP cultivators and collectors, traders, WWF-India and other NGOs.

As an important source of valuable medicinal plants, Uttarakhand in the Western Himalayan region was identified as one of the first five target areas for the implementation of the project. The others are Karnataka in India, Nepal (Eastern Himalayan region), Cambodia (Greater Mekong region), Brazil (Amazon region) and Lesotho (Southern Africa).

The ISSC-MAP wild collection standard has been drawn up following extensive consultation with plant experts and the herbal products industry worldwide and was developed by WWF Germany, in co-operation with the IUCN/SSC Species Survival Commission Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG), TRAFFIC and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN).

ISSC-MAP promotes appropriate management of wild plant populations to ensure those used in medicines and cosmetics are not over-exploited. ISSC-MAP is based on six principles: maintaining wild MAP resources, preventing negative environmental impacts, legal compliance, respecting customary rights, applying responsible management practices, and applying responsible business practices.

Speaking at the project's launch, Samir Sinha, Head of TRAFFIC India, commented: "Now that a standard for sustainable use of valuable wild plants has been established, TRAFFIC India is delighted to be at the forefront of putting its recommendations into practice.

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TRAFFIC 'Alert'



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Chaudhury, an iron worker and a dealer of skins of domestic animals, is a resident of Indiranagar, Mushrafabad, Hyderabad.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

If convicted, Chaudhury's arrest could prove to be a breakthrough in combatting illegal wildlife trade rackets operating across the country. The enforcement agencies are to be commended for taking wildlife crime seriously.

Source:

<http://deccanherald.com/Content/Feb192008/state2008021953047.asp>

Five rare Clouded Leopard skins seized in West Bengal

The Wildlife Division- 3 of the West Bengal Forest Department, seized five skins of the endangered Clouded Leopard on the Indo- Bhutan border on 25 February 2008. The illegal haul comprised skins of three adult Clouded Leopards and two cubs.

Acting on a tip off, the District Forest Officer Cooch Behar, Manindra Biswas, conducted the raid and arrested a resident of Jaigaon while he was on a bus to Siliguri, from where he intended to slip into Nepal. According to senior Forest Department personnel, the accused is said to be one of the most wanted wildlife traders on the Indo-Bhutan border.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa* enjoys the same protection status as the Tiger in India. It is also listed in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). All domestic and international trade in the species and its derivatives is prohibited.

Kristin Nowell & Peter Jackson in their report 'Status Survey & Conservation Action Plan: Wild Cats' released in 1996 reported "Clouded Leopard pelts were the most commonly available felid pelts in a survey of black market wildlife traders in southeastern China (Low 1991).

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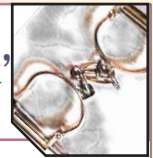
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Sri G.A. Kinhal of the Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) and a Member of the Decision Group of the ISSC MAP explained the ISSC MAP guidelines in detail and the key steps forward for its field level implementation.

Sri B. S. Sajwan, CEO-National Medicinal Plants Board, Govt. of India described the new project as an important initiative not only in Uttarakhand, but also for the whole of India.

In India, ISSC-MAP is being implemented by TRAFFIC India in co-operation with the Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT). The National Medicinal Plants Board, Govt. of India is overseeing the implementation. The project is funded by the German government's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



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Taiwanese were the main buyers. In Taiwan, where Clouded Leopards are now either very rare or extinct, Nowell (1990) reported that small numbers of imported pelts are sold to aborigines to make traditional ceremonial jackets. Pelts have also been reported on sale in urban markets from Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, and Thailand (Salter 1983, Chazee 1990, Humphrey and Bain 1990, MacKinnon 1990, Van Gruisen and Sinclair 1992; R. Salter, TRAFFIC Southeast Asia in litt. 1993). Clouded Leopards have been featured on the menu of restaurants in Thailand and China, which cater to wealthy Asian tourists (Anon. 1988)".

In India, the Clouded Leopard is found in north Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. Given the low density of the species in India, it is shocking to learn that five Clouded Leopard skins were seized from a single trader.

Sources:
http://www.headlinesindia.com/state/index.jsp?news_code=71398

Four hundred live mongooses sold at a fair in Orissa

The illegal trade in mongooses is continuing unabated in Orissa, and 16 were seized from a fair in Bhubaneswar in March 2008.

Forest officials seized the animals close to a Shiva temple at Paramhansa village near Cuttack town. The sale of wild animals and birds is at its peak in the area around the festival of Shivratri.

As in previous years, around 400 live mongooses were sold at Paramahansa fair in March at prices ranging from INR 50 to INR 60 each. Traditional bird and animal trappers known as 'kelas' were found with stocks of live mongooses, Grey Hornbills and parakeets that were being sold as pets.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

It is disturbing to learn that live mongooses are being sold in such large numbers in a fair in Orissa every year.
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OUTPOST: Indonesia tightens tortoise trade regulations



© Chris R. Shepherd/TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

Indian Star Tortoises

In response to TRAFFIC's report- An overview of the regulation of the freshwater turtle and tortoise pet trade in Jakarta, Indonesia released early this year, the Indonesian Government acted swiftly to tighten up regulations on import of exotic species of tortoises and turtles into the country.

The report highlights the rampant illegal trade in tortoises and turtles in the pet markets of the nation's capital, Jakarta. TRAFFIC investigators found 48 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises for sale, more than half of them exotic species, and the vast majority illegally obtained, including five non-native species listed in Appendix I of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). Incidentally CITES Appendix I listing prohibits commercial international trade in a species.

Following the revelations, Indonesia has written to the CITES Management Authorities (those government agencies responsible for implementing CITES regulations) in India, Madagascar, China, USA, Brazil, Peru, Chile, Equador, Guatemala and to the CITES Secretariat.

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From 1 March 2008, all specimens of CITES-listed freshwater turtles and tortoises exported to Indonesia will require an import permit and those without will be disposed of. Under CITES, no import permit is needed for Appendix II-listed species unless required by national law. Countries of origin will also need to notify Indonesia before issuing export permits.

“This is the kind of swift and decisive action that is needed to stamp out the illegal trade in threatened tortoise and turtle species,” said Azrina Abdullah, Director of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia. The government has also announced the introduction of a CITES Management Authority registration scheme for privately owned tortoises and turtles already in Indonesia.

One of the commonest exotic species at the Jakarta market is the Indian Star Tortoise *Geochelone elegans*. Although listed in Appendix I of CITES, it is completely protected in its range States of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and therefore specimens sold in Jakarta are likely to be ones illegally smuggled from these countries.

The full report can be downloaded at <http://www.traffic.org/home/2008/2/14/indonesia-tightens-tortoise-trade-regulations.html>

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



Thirty eight kilograms of ivory seized in Karnataka

A forest mobile squad comprising officials of the Sakleshpur Forest Department and Sakleshpur police arrested three people on 11 January 2008 and seized two elephant tusks together weighing 38 kg, in Hassan district in Karnataka. Two others escaped as the police stopped the vehicle. The ivory was reportedly being transported to Bangalore. The accused appeared before a court in Hassan and were remanded in judicial custody.

TRAFFIC India adds.....

This is one of the many seizures reported from across the country over the last few months. In February 2008, a shopkeeper was arrested in Delhi for openly trading in ivory products. Similarly, two full-sized tusks were seized in Dahisar, Mumbai, in March 2008 from individuals who were searching for prospective customers at a bus depot.

A TRAFFIC report released in 2003 indicated that illicit trade in Elephant ivory continues in India despite a national ban since the 1970s. In 2007, TRAFFIC India recorded more than 250 kgs of ivory seized from across the country.

The Indian Elephant *Elephas maximus indicus* is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 under which poaching of the species or trade in ivory is totally prohibited. The species have been declared Endangered by IUCN and international trade in elephant parts is banned under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

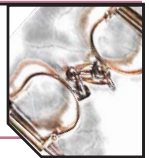
Sources:

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/2008/01/12/stories/2008011260640800.htm>

<http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?newsid=1155225>

<http://ads.indiatimes.com/ads.dll/clickthrough?slotid=1456> <http://epaper.timesofindia.com/Daily/skins/TOI/navigator.asp?Daily=CAP&login=default>

TRAFFIC 'Alert'



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This is despite the fact that all mongoose species found in India are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Mongoose play a significant role in the well-being of our ecosystem and this incident only confirms the threats they face today. Found both in forest areas and around open cultivated fields, mongooses prey on rats, mice, snakes, lizards, frogs, insects and other small animals. Due to their predatory diet, mongooses are considered the farmer's friend.

There are three species of mongoose recorded in wildlife trade in India - the Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus*, Striped-necked Mongoose *Herpestes vitticollis* and the Indian Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii*. Until 2002, slaughter of mongooses for their hair to make paint brushes, for meat to be eaten by tribes and for taxidermy, was extensive. However today, the taxidermy trade in mongoose species is believed to have declined.

Numerous evidence and reports indicate that mongooses continue to be killed for their hair. In December 2007, a CNN-IBN special investigation team went undercover to expose the on-going trade in mongoose hair paint brushes in the national capital. Based on their information, 2000 paint brushes made from the mongoose hair were seized from a shop in *Nai Sadak* and from a paint brush manufacturer in Delhi.

Furthermore, Indian Grey Mongoose is reported to be used by snake charmers and madaris for street performances.

Sources:

http://economicstimes.indiatimes.com/Planet_SOs/Flora_Fauna/Illegal_mongoose_trade_continues_in_Orissa/articleshow/2854897.cms

<http://www.wii.gov.in/envis/envisdec99/p113-115.htm>

http://www.wildlifetrustofindia.org/html/news/2002/021210_ban_mongoose.htm

IN FOCUS:

Indian Tiger's survival under threat- Illegal wildlife trade one of the major driving factors



© Samir Sinha

The long-awaited report on the status of tigers, co-predators and prey in India, released on 11 February 2008 by the Government of India, showed the country at high risk of losing its national animal. Surveys conducted in 2006/ 2007 indicate the Tiger *Panthera tigris* population in India is between 1165 and 1657. The current estimation appears to be more accurate than those undertaken earlier.

The Tiger today is threatened by a number of factors such as habitat loss due to agricultural and developmental activities, poaching for trade, Human-Wildlife conflict and others. However, illegal wildlife trade remains one of the main contributors for the declining Tiger numbers in the country. Reports have confirmed that almost every part of the Tiger's body is traded - Tiger skin is used to make robes and its head is used as trophies. Tiger bones and skull are used in traditional medicines in East Asian countries, particularly China and Tiger bones are also superstitiously used to scare away evil influences. Tiger bone wine is extremely popular in Japan, Tiger claws are used as talismans, Tiger fat is used in balms and potions, Tiger penis is used as an aphrodisiac and Tiger whiskers are thought to cure toothaches.

There is little demand for these products in India, so most of the poaching is done to supply to markets elsewhere. International markets for illegal Tiger parts exist despite the countries where the majority of the illegal trade occurs being signatories to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)..

Over the last year, TRAFFIC India recorded 27 seizures of Tiger skins from various parts of India, but given the clandestine nature of the trade, these seizures can only represent the tip of the iceberg. According to Samir Sinha, Head-TRAFFIC India, "Given the precarious number of Tigers left in the wild in India, it is necessary to step up protection measures and strengthen enforcement agencies to fight wildlife crime. It is also necessary to work with neighbouring countries to understand the trade routes and dynamics so that illegal trade in Tiger parts is curtailed."

Sujoy Banerjee, Director-Species Conservation Programme, WWF-India added "Besides protecting Tigers inside reserves it is also necessary to protect Tigers outside Reserves, National Parks and Sanctuaries. If attention is not paid to their conservation, we will lose Tigers altogether. The time has come for the government and all other institutions and agencies to show serious commitment to Tiger conservation if at all we wish to see Tigers in the wild in India in the future".

SIGNPOST: Other significant news stories to read

Sixty one poachers surrender in

Manas - A group of 61 poachers surrendered to authorities in Assam in February 2008 and also handed in 26 homemade weapons. The poachers had been operating in the vicinity of Manas National Park, placing its wildlife under extreme pressure. To read more log on to http://www.telegraphindia.com/1080226/jsp/frontpage/story_8949335.jsp#

From Tibet to Kashmir, shahtoosh smuggle thrives - Shahtoosh, the world's finest wool, is still being smuggled from Tibet to Kashmir, in defiance of a worldwide ban aimed at saving the highly endangered Tibetan antelope. To read more log on to <http://in.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idINS2221101520080222>

Thirty trucks of red timber confiscated in Imphal - In January 2008, as many as 30 truckloads of red sander wood were driven across six states before being stopped at the last frontier the Manipur township of Moreh, bordering Myanmar. The entire consignment would probably have been smuggled out to China via Myanmar had Assam Rifles personnel not detained it and asked the civil administration to verify the validity of the documents the drivers were carrying. To read more log on to http://www.telegraphindia.com/1080111/jsp/northeast/story_8767689.jsp

74 leopards rounded up in '07 outside Gir forest area- In 2007, a total of 74 leopards were caught from the revenue area surrounding Gir forests following complaints from the general public. To read more log on to <http://www.indianexpress.com/story/256731.html>

Snake venom smuggling on the rise in Kerala - Kerala is fast turning into a hub of snake venom smugglers. In the last three months alone the forest officials have caught four gangs and they say this is just the tip of the iceberg. To read more log on to <http://www.ndtv.com/convergence/ndtv/story.aspx?id=NEWEN20080042565&ch=2/28/2008%208:38:00%20AM>

HEADLINES

Rhinos to find a safe home in Manas soon



By Mervin Duttay in New Delhi



There are plans to relocate 20 rhinos to the Manas National Park, Assam, a project set to conclude

Forest Act comes into force, green activists cry foul

By Anand Chakravarti in New Delhi

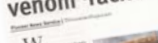
After 60 years, the Centre has restored the rights of tribal, but the new Forest Act, which is set to come into force on March 2, has been criticised by green activists.

Right decision?

After 60 years, the Centre has restored the rights of tribal, but the new Forest Act, which is set to come into force on March 2, has been criticised by green activists.

Tiger Tiger Fading Fast. Bitter Truth. The tiger population in India has fallen by 96% since 1973. The 2002 census figure of 1,411 tigers was a 96% drop from the 4,427 tigers reported in 1973.

Kerala hub of global snake venom 'racket'



Recently four pharmaceutical firms from the Private Sector Ministry to conduct a study on the global snake venom racket in Kerala.

50 jackals poisoned to death in Lakhimpur Kheri

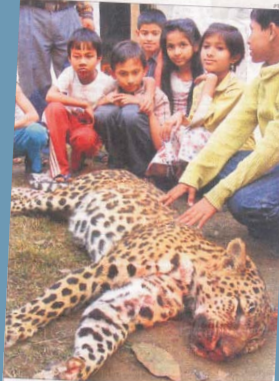
Around 50 jackals were allegedly poisoned to death in Keshwarpur village of the Bhojpur forest range over the last three days.

According to a forest department assessment, there are over 2,000 jackals in North Lakhimpur Kheri division.



WILD WORK: Dead Jackals in UP district

A PRECIOUS LIFE GONE WASTE



MAN VERSUS NATURE: Children sit near the body of a female leopard, killed by the local residents, in Guwahati on Monday

81 lions dead in 2 years

New Delhi, Feb. 28: A total of 81 lions have died across the country from January 2006 to 2008, with nine of them becoming victims of poaching.

Answering a separate question on declining population of endangered animals including lions, tigers and elephants, Rogupathy said fluctuation in wildlife population is a natural phenomenon.

Watery grave for gharialys. The famed Indian cousin of crocodiles are dying in scores in the Chambal Sanctuary to an illness that's not even known, leave aside having a remedy.

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