



भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान
Wildlife Institute of India

W.I.I. Newsletter

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News : Training Programmes and Workshops

XXIX P.G. Diploma in Wildlife Management concluded

The Management Term Paper Exercise field tour was undertaken to Kaziranga National Park on April 4, 2008. The officer trainees also participated in Management Planning Exercise in Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala from April 12 to May 8, 2008. This was followed by Management Plan writing. For the first time, the officer trainees prepared the Tiger Conservation Plan for Periyar Tiger Reserve as per the guidelines issued by the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

The Viva-Voce examination was held on May 27, 2008. Besides internal examiners, two external examiners - Dr. S. Kaul, Director, MoEF and Shri S.S. Srivastav, CCF (Wildlife), Orissa were invited for the examination. Several sports events were organized during May 28-29, 2008 in which the Institute's faculty, staff and officer trainees participated. The Valedictory Function was organized on May 30, 2008. Dr. Devendra Pandey, IFS, Director General, Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, was the Chief Guest on the occasion. He presented the Diplomas and various awards to the officer trainees.

All 15 officer trainees were awarded 'Diploma in Wildlife Management' on successful completion of the course. Of which, eight viz. Shri Thomas Varghese (A&N Islands), Shri Uttam Kumar Gupta (Chhattisgarh), Shri Sandeep Sharma (Himachal Pradesh), Ms. M. Geethanjali (Punjab), Shri Satender Kumar Sagar (Punjab), Shri Sugan Migmar Saring (Sikkim), Ms. Urmila Thapa (Sikkim) and Ms. Niranjita Mitra (West Bengal) were awarded the Honours Diploma. The Institute's Gold Medal for the 'Top Trainee' was awarded to Ms. M. Geethanjali. She also received the



Dr. Devendra Pandey, Director General, Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, presented the Diplomas and awards to the officer trainees.



Silver Medal for the 'Best All Round Wildlifer' and A.K. Chatterjee Silver Medal for the 'Best Management Term Paper'. Wildlife Preservation Society Silver Medal for the 'Second in Merit' was awarded to Mr. Satender Kumar Sagar. In addition, he also received the Institute's Book Prize for the 'Top



Shri P.R. Sinha, Director, WII presented the 'Best Foreign Trainee Award' to the officer trainee.

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Trainee' in Wildlife Biology. N.R. Nair Memorial Silver Medal for the 'Best Management Plan' was bagged by Ms. Niranjita Mitra. Mr. Sonam Zangpo from Bhutan was awarded the Director's Medal for the 'Best Foreign Trainee'.
Contact: anup@wii.gov.in

Two-month modular training programme on "Integrated Management Planning" for lateral entrants, Dehradun, April 1, to May 30, 2008. A two-month modular training programme on "Integrated Management Planning" was conducted for the first time for five lateral entrants belonging to officials of State Forest Departments concurrently with the XXIX Diploma Course from April 1, to May 30, 2008. The lateral entrants too prepared the Tiger Conservation Plan for Periyar Tiger Reserve and were awarded certificates in the valedictory function on May 30, 2008. **Contact: anup@wii.gov.in**



Director, WII presented the Certificate to the lateral entrant.

Two-week attachment training programme for the probationers of 58th batch of Indian Revenue Service (Customs & Central Excise) Group "A", Dehradun, March 30-April 11, 2008. As a part of ongoing initiatives of WII for capacity building of enforcement agencies and as per the request of National Academy of Customs, Excise & Narcotics, Faridabad, the training programme was organized by the Institute.

The main objective of this course was to sensitize the Indian Revenue Service Probationers about the unique biodiversity of this country and the problems of illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products. The course was attended by 53 probationers.

The participants were exposed to different initiatives of biodiversity conservation in the country and the problems of illegal trade in wildlife. They were provided inputs about various legal instruments available to deal with the problem and appreciate the role of different enforcement agencies in controlling the problem of illegal wildlife trade. The officers were taken



The probationers during the field visit to Rajaji National Park.



The participants being exposed to the problems of illegal trade in wildlife.

to Dudhwa National Park for a field visit so that they could get first-hand information about the strategies being adopted to deal with the protection issues particularly involving international borders. **Contact: anilbhardwaj@wii.gov.in**

Training Programme on Wetland Conservation and Management for Northern Region, Srinagar, June 16-20, 2008. The training programme was sponsored by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India and was organised by the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun in association with the Department of Wildlife Protection, Government of Jammu & Kashmir.

The major objectives of the training programme were to: (i) provide basic understanding to the participants about the wetland level process including problems and threats; and (ii) develop skills for conservation planning and management of wetlands. A total of 22 participants from the North India States of Uttarakhand, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh Administration and Jammu and Kashmir attended the programme. The programme was inaugurated by Ms. Meena Gupta, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

During the training programme a Panel discussion followed by an open house discussion was held. The session was chaired by Shri B.S. Parsheera, IAS, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India. Based on the discussions following major recommendations were proposed:

- (i) The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India should provide adequate expertise at the State level for effective implementation of wetland conservation programme.
- (ii) Scientific and Technical Advisory Committees need to be constituted in every State consisting of subject matter specialists at national

level to review and take mid-term corrective measures, if necessary.

- (iii) Regular training programs need to be organised on research, development and wetland management planning aspects so as to generate appropriate baseline information for effective management planning of wetlands at site specific levels.
- (iv) As the fundamental unit for water issues is normally the river basin (or catchments), the term 'Integrated River Basin Management' (IRBM) has developed into a broad concept that takes a holistic approach. Wetland site management planning should integrate with IRBM.
- (v) The protection of the features of the ecological character of the wetland is the prime concern for a Ramsar site, and should not be considered negotiable.
- (vi) In order to protect a wetland, the precautionary approach should be applied where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage.
- (vii) Set up a legally enforceable regulatory mechanism for identified valuable wetlands, to prevent their degradation and enhance their conservation.
- (viii) While planning wetland conservation at site specific level emphasis should be given to implement wise use concept and legitimate use of wetlands by



Panel discussion during training on wetlands.

local communities, however, smaller and biologically rich wetlands need to be brought under the Protected Area Network.

- (ix) While developing livelihood options for local communities the possibilities of making use of aquatic weeds for income generation schemes such as preparation of compost, biogas and other domestic and ornamental use should be explored.
- (x) Formulate and implement ecotourism strategies for identified wetlands through multi-stakeholder partnerships involving public agencies, local communities, and investors. **Contact:** hussain@wii.gov.in.

Two-day training workshop on "Strengthening Wildlife Enforcement: Issues related to Illegal Wildlife Trade and Wildlife Crime Investigation", Dehradun, May 13-14, 2008. The training workshop was organized by TRAFFIC-India in collaboration with Wildlife Institute of India. Eleven trainee officers from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Department of Forests, Govt. of Nepal participated in the workshop. The aim of the workshop was to provide training to officers about Wildlife Forensics and tools and techniques needed for strengthening conservation. Trans-border co-operation in curbing illegal wildlife trade was also discussed. **Contact:** goyalsp@wii.gov.in



The trainee officers were taught about the latest advances in the Wildlife Forensics.

WII in the Field

Ranthambore Tigers find new home in Sariska National Park

- Parag Nigam

Ranthambore National Park (RTR) situated on the junction of Aravalis and the Vindhyas in Rajasthan holds a considerable population of Tigers (*Panthera tigris*). Contrary to Ranthambore, Sariska Tiger Reserve (STR) had been depleted of tigers since 2004, though good potential tiger habitat still existed. In an effort to build population of tigers at STR, Govt. of India entrusted responsibility on Wildlife Institute of India and Rajasthan Forest Department for the re-introduction operation. This was based on report entitled "Assessment of Status of Tigers (*Panthera tigris*)" in Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan by Wildlife Institute of India in 2005 and subsequent 'Recovery Plan (Revised)' developed by the Field Director, Sariska Tiger Reserve. In this context, a team comprising WII faculty Dr. K. Sankar, Dr. Parag Nigam, Dr. P.K. Malik, Shri Qamar Qureshi, and researchers Shri Randeep Singh, Shri Kuldeep Bharwal, Shri Peter Prem Chakravarthi and Shri Vinod Thakur under the leadership of Shri P.R. Sinha, Director proceeded to Ranthambore to carry out the translocation operation.

The course of action for carrying out the operation was to capture the tiger through chemical sedation, put satellite

collar and shift the animal to Sariska by air. Alternatively, other possibility of travel by road was also worked out.

As the operation was first of its kind ever attempted by any tiger range country, due concern was given to every procedures involved starting from selection of individuals to immobilization drugs and equipment, collars, transport cages and its design, loading and off-loading techniques and the ultimate release of animal into the wild.

Prior to the main operation, three tigers (two females and one male) were chemically immobilized and radio-collared. This gave opportunity in animal handling and provided necessary experience and confidence in managing animal and predicting animal responses, necessary for management of animal in an immobilized state.

28th June 2008

Before the operation, two sub-adult male and female aged between 3-4 years were identified in RTR for final translocation. Fortunately, on 28th June early morning, the identified male was located on a kill in a forest patch near Anatpura Chowki (Bagda in Kundera range) and provided good opportunity for darting from the distance of about 10 m from the vehicle.

The Hellabrun mixture (HBM) comprising Xylazine hydrochloride and Ketamine hydrochloride was remotely injected employing Tel-inject Mod 4V.310 equipment. As the animal had



Tiger container being loaded inside the helicopter.



Cage being offloaded at Sariska and shifted to the enclosure site.



Male tiger soon after release inside the enclosure. Animal was calm, fully recovered and alert.

just made the kill, it was empty stomached and came down on sternal recumbency by 14 minutes. After ensuring that the animal was in the perfect plane of anaesthesia, suitable for handling, it was approached. The physiological parameters including temperature, pulse and respiration were checked. After ensuring normalcy, the ARGOSE satellite radio-collar was fixed. The animal was then shifted on to a stretcher and carried on the Gypsy towards Canter (with transport cage) placed on the main link road. The tiger was then shifted into the transport cage and the vehicle moved to the helipad. The helipad had been created inside the park and was about 3.5 kms from the site. Due to heavy rains, the vehicle got stuck on the kucha forest road and even after much effort, it could not be taken

out, the cage was offloaded and shifted to a tractor trolley and taken to the helipad. Due to inclement weather the Indian Air Force helicopter (MI-17) that was stationed outside the Park at Sherpur helipad could not take off and the animal had to be further maintained under sedation at the field helipad. It was after about 4 h following darting that the helicopter finally landed. The cage was secured inside the helicopter and the journey to Sariska commenced. The flight time was around 45 minutes and the helicopter touched Sariska by noon. The cage was off-loaded from the helicopter and shifted to the small truck (Cantar) to be taken to the enclosure site at Nayapani.

The cage was again off-loaded adjacent to the enclosure gate and after ensuring

that the animal had regained reflexes, the door of the cage was opened. The tiger leaped out of the cage and walked into the thicket. The entire episode took around 6 hrs. The animal had recovered fully from sedation and made a kill on the same day in the evening. Tiger movements inside the enclosure were monitored intensively. As the animal was quite active, it was finally released from the enclosure on 6th July 2008 into the wild.

4th July 2008

On the similar plans, the identified tigress popularly known as Lakardah female was located on the Hi-point near Lakardah chowki in the early morning of 4th July 2008. The tigress was darted with HBM mixture, radio-collared, shifted to the transport cage and taken



Animal sighted post-release in the forest on 7th July 2008 relaxing in a mud pool.



Darted tigress at Hi-point near Anatpura chowki.



A satellite collar being placed on Tigress.



Tigress being loaded into a transport cage.



Tigress cage being positioned inside the helicopter.

to the Sherpur helipad from where she was flown to Sariska. The animal landed in Sariska by noon and released into the enclosure. The animal behaviour was monitored for another three days inside the enclosure and was finally released into the forest on 7th July 2008.



Tigress cage being shifted to small truck for transportation to release site at Sariska National Park.



Tigress moving into the enclosure soon after release.

Both the animals are being monitored jointly by the WII research team and Forest Department team and it is heartening to know that the animals have adjusted well to the new home. The introduction of Tigers in Sariska is a beginning of new era in the field of reintroduction and lot of efforts need to be made for the long-term survival of the animals in the new home.

The coordinated efforts put in by the Forest Department officials especially Shri R.N. Mehrotra, Chief Wildlife Warden; Shri R.S. Shekhawat; Shri Someshekar; Shri Rajesh Gupta; Shri Sudarshan Sharma; Shri Sedu Ram, and field staff and crew of the 107 Helicopter unit of the Indian Air Force were extremely important for the entire operation and without a synchronized teamwork such an operation would not have been possible. Efforts put in by Dr. Rajesh Gopal, Member Secretary, National Tiger Conservation Authority in shaping the entire project were commendable. **Contact: nigamp@wii.gov.in**

On the Move

2008 NAI International Conference, Sokcho city, Korea, May 11-15, 2008.

Bitapi C. Sinha from the Institute participated in this International Conference. The Conference had nearly 100 concurrent sessions. A day's field trip was also organized to the Seoraksan National Park. She presented a paper titled "Evaluating effectiveness of interpretive facilities in Tiger Reserves in India".

Bitapi received the NAI scholarship for the third time in a row. Her travel was supported by the Wildlife Institute of India. Bitapi was also invited by the Suncheon University, Korea to be a guest speaker in the one-day Symposium on "Regional Culture and Utopian Society". She presented a paper titled "Empowering youths, living around protected areas, how to provide meaningful interpretation for enhanced visitor experience". **Contact: bcs@wii.gov.in**

National Conference on "Climate Change and Impact on Health", New Delhi, May 22-23, 2008.

Dr. Pranab Pal, Field Technical Officer participated in the conference, which was held at India International Centre, New Delhi. This National conference was jointly organized by International Development Centre Foundation; Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health; Ministry of Earth Sciences; Department of Science and Technology; Council of Scientific and Industrial Research; and Central Pollution Control Board. The theme of the conference was "Global climatic changes due to the large scale environmental degradation". More than 50 participants shared their views and discussed various issues related to the theme.

Dr. Pal presented a paper on "Establishing Extension Set-up for Biodiversity Conservation & Ecosystem Management in Kaziranga National Park, Assam". **Contact: ppal@wii.gov.in.**

Campus News

Celebration of the World Environment Day

The Institute celebrated the World Environment Day on June 5, 2008 to renew its commitment to protect the environment from devastation. It was an opportunity to create awareness in younger generation and children. The World Environment Day slogan for 2008 was Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy as declared by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The World Environment Day highlighted resources and initiatives that promote low carbon economies and life-styles, such as improved energy efficiency, alternative energy sources, forest conservation and eco-friendly consumption. Last year's efforts of the Wildlife Institute of India in collaboration with the Eco Task Force find a place in the inspiring examples of UNEP. The following activities were organized by the Institute in collaboration with 127 Infantry



Battalion (TA) Eco GARH RIF in the Bhal village of Aglar Watershed Area, Mussoorie: (i) Puppet Show for children & villagers in Bhal Village; (ii) Drawing & Painting Competition for school children; and (iii) Film Shows for school children and villagers. More than 300 children and villagers participated in these activities. Col. Vijay Jaswal, Commanding Officer of the Eco Task Force and Smt. Bitapi C. Sinha of the Institute addressed the gathering on the theme of the celebration. External resource persons from NCERT, New Delhi and the Institute's staff organized the puppet show, which was based on conservation of trees. **Contact:** bcs@wii.gov.in



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The Pheasant and the Lotus: An American's Interpretation of Indian Conservation

- *Jennie Miller, U.S. Fulbright Scholar*

My heartbeat echoed loudly in my ears as I gasped deeply for breath. Sleet stung my cold cheeks while I struggled to place one numb foot in front of another. I channeled my remaining energy into my raw fingers and pulled my straining body up the steep cliff face. Every cell in my body screamed in agony. Yet when I reached Rekundi Top at an elevation of 4,000 meters, my protesting body calmed and I fell to the earth in awe of the scene before me: snow-peaked mountain caps kissed the darkened sky, their bases submerged in a swirling mist that wove through the lush Tirthan Valley below. Humbled, I recalled that this was why I had left America and come to India, to help preserve the forests of the Western Himalayas and the creatures that call this majestic mountain range home.

As a biologist, the Himalayas with their physical and ecological extremes have always intrigued and intimidated me. When Dr. G.S. Rawat informed me that a researcher was needed to study the effects of an eco-development program on pheasants in the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP), I jumped at the opportunity and applied for a U.S. Fulbright Scholarship. My project is an assessment of whether abundances of the Western tragopan, Himalayan monal and koklass pheasant have altered after ten years of management changes in GHNP, and is a complimentary study to the Ph.D. work of Dr. Ramesh. During the pheasant breeding months of April and May, I backpacked through the park, camping in week-long increments at a series of study sites with a team of three local men. Each day, we rose before dawn and listened for Western tragopans and koklass pheasants, recording the male territory calls that rang through the valley, while the rising sun painted the sky. In the later mornings, we walked winding trails and counted Himalayan monal as they swept down the slopes around us.

Every day during my time in the Park, I witnessed signs that the wilderness of GHNP is thriving. I counted the tree rings of naturally fallen conifers that showed long lives of 100 years and longer. Monal rained down on me in large groups and often dominated the forest with their shrill calls. I saw yellow-throated martin and red giant flying squirrel, Royle's pika and goral, rhesus macaque and Hanuman langur. My thrills at these sightings turned to nervous excitement, when I also encountered the scat and foraging sites of larger predators. My assistants fed me stories of villagers, who returned from the forest with limbs mutilated by leopards and bears, and of men and women, who never returned at all.

My wildlife encounters culminated during my final trip into the Park. One day, as I climbed the mountain to Koilipoi camp-site, I found the fresh paw prints of a bear that had walked along the entire 2km trail downhill to the lower camp-site, Basu. When two days later I returned to Basu with my assistant, I stumbled upon the likely owner of the prints, a massive brown bear digging only 10 meters away from me. As I froze in fright, the animal lifted its shaggy head and galloping away, crashing through the underbrush in front of me. That same day after we had completed a trail walk, I heard a leopard growling several hundred meters away down slope. Moments later a koklass pheasant call erupted upslope from the growls and then, a little higher, the alarm snort of a goral; the leopard was moving toward us. We bolted uphill to our camp, defying all laws of gravity and human physiology but arriving with our limbs intact.

Between trips into the forest, I resided in the rural village of Kharongcha. Located near the GHNP entry gate, Kharongcha is isolated by an 8 km footpath that winds through steep mountain slopes and serves as the village's only access to groceries, medicine and public transportation. Cut off from mainstream society, I was immersed in the daily life of a rural Himachali villager. From the window of the mud and wooden house in which I lived, I watched the hardworking residents of Kharongcha wrestle daily with the land for survival, cutting grass from the fields for their cows, chopping wood for their fires, pushing goats and sheep along narrow pathways to graze, and scouring the forest floor for gucchii mushrooms. My relationships with the villagers allowed me to gain invaluable insider information particularly on gucchii collection, which is thought to negatively impact pheasant populations. More importantly, my intimate perspective on the locals' lives gave me a deeper understanding of their connection to the forest land. I learned first-hand that conservation solutions must delicately interweave ecological as well as social factors. I no longer describe the villagers' situation as "socio-economic dependency on forest resources" because these objective terms fail to convey the exhaustion of a woman, who spends a day climbing through vegetation in search of palm-sized vegetables that will earn half her family's yearly income. The word "ecotourism" similarly omits visions of a middle-aged man with a fourth-grade education bent over an English phrase book, struggling to memorize a language that will qualify him to work as a tour guide. Many of the villagers around GHNP may lack formal education and bathroom facilities, but they are not as "simple" as many urban Indians believe. My friends in Kharongcha are hardworking individuals with a complex social and religious culture, who labour intensely every day of their lives for survival. The GHNP requires a conservation strategy that considers their well-being as a fundamental component of the ecological balance of the Park.

When asked me about my research in GHNP, I struggle to verbalize a concise reply. Human-wildlife dimensions of conservation in India are far too complicated for a foreigner such as me to fully comprehend, let alone solve. I wrestle daily with how I can contribute to the protection of precious wilderness amidst a culture that I greatly appreciate but hardly understand. And yet, the most profound lesson I have learned during my Fulbright to India is reflected in the country's most prominent symbol, the lotus, despite the murky depths of pollution, nature prevails.

Welcome Guests

- Newly recruited Scientists from ICFRE, on April 9, 2008.
- Students accompanied by their teachers from Bombay Scottish School, Mumbai on May 5, 2008.
- Students of M.Sc. (Forestry) of 2nd Semester accompanied by their faculty on May 7, 2008.
- Students of B. Tech in Environmental Engineering accompanied by their one of the faculty members from Department of Environmental Science & Engineering, Indian School of Mines University, Dhanbad on May 16, 2008.
- Class XII students from Police Academy, Jalandhar on May 27, 2008.
- B.Sc. (Forestry) students accompanied by teachers from Birsa Agricultural University, Faculty of Forestry, Ranchi on June 5, 2008.
- Students of Class VIII to X accompanied by their staff members from National Museum of Natural History, Ministry of Environment & Forests, New Delhi on June 9, 2008.
- Participants (University faculty in Botany, Environmental Science & Forestry) undergoing the ISRO sponsored NNRMS Course accompanied by Dr. I.J. Singh from IIRS, Dehradun on June 9, 2008.
- Students from DAV Public School, Jalandhar, Punjab on June 16, 2008.
- Students (Class XI) participating in the 4th Vacation Program of Natural Resources organized by the Aravali Foundation for Education, New Delhi in collaboration with the National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources National Museum of Natural Resources, Lucknow on June 26, 2008.
- Officer trainees from SFS College, New Forest, Dehra Dun on June 27, 2008. **Contact: oao@wii.gov.in**

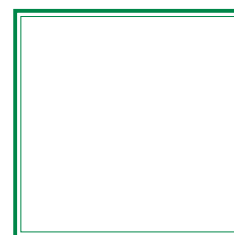


Graduates from the University of Texas, USA accompanied by Dr. David Eaton, Prof., LBJ School of Public Affairs, Austin, Texas on May 22, 2008.

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