



भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान
Wildlife Institute of India

W.I.I. Newsletter

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At the Institute

Shri Jairam Ramesh, the Hon'ble Union Minister

Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon'ble Minister for Environment & Forests, Government of India and President, WII-Society visited the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) on June 2, 2009. This was his maiden visit to Dehradun after assuming independent charge of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Shri P.R. Sinha, Director, WII welcomed the minister and gave an overview of the Institute and introduced the WII's scientists. The hon'ble minister also visited the facilities of the Institute.



Dr. Ashok Khosla, President, IUCN

Dr. Ashok Khosla, President, IUCN and Chairman, Development Alternatives visited WII on August 3, 2009. He delivered a talk titled 'Sustainable Management, Ecosystem Services and Climate Change' to a gathering, which consisted of faculty members, students, staff, scientists from sister organizations and IFS probationers from the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun. Dr. Khosla emphasized that the people working for nature conservation are key players in the service sector and would have a distinct place in history in the times to come. Dr. Khosla interacted with the WII faculty members on areas of future collaborations.



Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission

The Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Government of India, Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia visited the Institute on August 10, 2009. He launched the re-engineered Web site of WII on this occasion. He also visited the facilities of the Institute and interacted with faculty members.



XXX P.G. Diploma in Wildlife Management concluded

The Management Term Paper Presentation on Dudhwa National Park by officer trainees was held on April 8, 2009. On completion of a management planning exercise at Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala, the officer trainees were assigned the writing and submission of the management plan during May 11-25, 2009. The valedictory function was held on May 28, 2009. Shri S.C. Dey, Secretary General, Global Tiger Forum, New Delhi was the chief guest on this occasion. He presented the awards and prizes to the deserving officer trainees. Officer trainees were awarded the Diploma in Wildlife Management on their successful completion of the



course. Three trainees were awarded honours diplomas. The following officer trainees received awards and prizes:

The Institute's gold medal for the top trainee was bagged by Mr. Manoj V. Nair, Orissa. He was also awarded the silver medal for the 'Best All Round Wildlifer'; the N.R. Nair Memorial Silver Medal for the best management plan; A.K. Chatterjee Silver Medal for the best management term paper; and the Institute's book prize for being the top trainee in wildlife biology. The Wildlife Preservation Society Silver Medal for the second in merit was awarded to Mr. Gopal Prakash Bhattarai from Nepal. The



Director's medal for the best foreign trainee was also awarded to Mr. Gopal Prakash Bhattarai. **Contact:** pratapsingh@ssen@wii.gov.in

International Conference on 'Water, Environment, Energy and Society—2009', Firozabad, June 28-30, 2009. This conference was organized by the International Sociological Association and Dr. Pranab Pal, FTO attended the conference and presented a paper entitled 'Conservation Planning for India: Perspective for Future'. **Contact:** ppal@wii.gov.in



Celebration of World Environment Day

June 5, 2009. The Institute celebrated World Environment Day to renew its commitment to protecting the environment. It was an opportunity to create awareness in the younger generation and children. The theme for World Environment Day 2009 was 'Your Planet Needs You — Unite to Combat Climate Change', as declared by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).



The following activities were organized for school children at a summer camp at Vaishnavi International School, Dehradun and at Galaxian International School, Dehradun by the Institute on this day: (i) a puppet show; (ii) a drawing and painting competition; and (iii) paper craftwork. More than 200 children participated in these activities. **Contact:** bcs@wii.gov.in



Condolence Message...



It was extremely sad to hear the tragic news of the demise of Dr. William Alan Rodgers. He left this mortal world on March 31, 2009.

Dr. Rodgers came to the Wildlife Institute of India in 1984 as a FAO-UNDP expert and was instrumental in laying a very strong foundation, on which the Institute has grown manifold. He was a friend, philosopher and guide to the faculty members of the WII. In fact, after the first regular faculty recruitment, when a group of 15 scientists joined the Institute, he took it upon himself to train and guide all of them in the science and practice of wildlife management. The field techniques tour in Sariska, which he started in 1986, has been institutionalized over the years and now forms one of the most valuable components of the training programmes of the Institute. He was the key architect in developing wildlife science in the country, and his contribution in starting the M.Sc. course in wildlife science at WII was a significant one. This programme has produced a number of competent biologists, who are now significantly contributing to the cause of wildlife conservation worldwide. His pioneering work on 'Biogeographical Classification of India' is the most cited document in the field of wildlife conservation in the country.

The void that his passing away has created will be almost impossible to fill. The WII will always cherish, fond memories of Dr. Rodgers and will continue to recognize the significant contribution he made in developing the Institute.

In this moment of grief, the members of the WII family wish and pray that his soul rests in peace.

CONSUMING WILDLIFE

- Gopi G.V. and Sangeeta Angom

Disturbing? Stomach churning? Saddening! While surveying the remote and stunningly beautiful Apatani Valley near the Talley Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh, we felt a whole gamut of emotions when we saw numerous clouded leopard skins in hamlet after hamlet, where they were displayed as trophies. We learnt from locals that they usually hunt the cats at mid-day and that the pelts fetch them up to Rs. 6000 a piece.



Rarely seen in the wild, the secretive clouded leopard represents tropical rainforests and evolutionary success. When Charles Darwin wrote that it is not the strongest of species or the most intelligent but the one that is most adaptable to change that will survive, he possibly did not expect the relentless persecution we humans are capable of. No animal, including the clouded leopard, can adapt to the kind of intensive hunting that they are subjected to, especially in Northeast India. Globally, a species or a landscape is conserved either by designating protected areas or by having legislations and regulations to protect them. India has successfully enhanced its protected area network and has a vast legislative framework for wildlife conservation. However, these efforts seem to have had little effect on wildlife conservation in Northeast India due to the strong traditional natural resource use practices of indigenous communities. Resource constraints available to the conservation agencies also limit the government's ability to run successful conservation programmes here.

Silent forests

In Arunachal Pradesh, hunting has been practiced by 26 major indigenous communities and 110 minor ones for food and medicine and as a part of traditional rituals and customs for aeons. Hunting is a source of cash income and continues to thrive. Almost every species is hunted. Large mammals, birds and reptiles, including the endangered and vulnerable species such as tiger, clouded leopard, wild dog, snow leopard, takin, barking deer, Malayan giant squirrel, wild pig, great hill barbet, pheasants and the green rat snake—the list is endless—

are hunted for sustenance and commercial purposes. The state has a large extent of its land under traditional tribal ownership, and the communities' dependence on natural resources has affected most of the designated protected areas, which in reality are just protected on paper.

The continuing hunting practices will have a negative impact on species and the ecosystem as a whole. The effects will vary from species to species, depending on their natural traits. Studies conducted elsewhere in similar tropical rainforests suggest that extensive hunting will result in reduction of numbers and lead to local extinctions. Some studies have demonstrated that large animals with low reproductive rates are most susceptible to over-exploitation, particularly primates and felids, compared with more productive species, such as rodents and smaller ungulates, that show a greater tolerance for relatively intensive hunting. It is also well known that almost all species have a role to play in the ecosystem. For example, primates account for a bulk of the medium-sized mammalian biomass in many tropical forests, and they play a vital role in seed dispersal and germination.

How do we address this critical issue of wildlife hunting? What are the research, management and developmental interventions required to tackle this issue? A multi-pronged approach that links human prosperity and conservation is vital. In Arunachal Pradesh, wildlife is primarily hunted for sustenance since it provides daily dietary protein to the rural communities. The weak economy of the state encourages a dependence on wildlife for income as well. The first step is to collect much-needed basic ecological data (status, distribution, density and rates of change) for the species that are being hunted while continually monitoring exploited species to prevent further declines and possible extinction. Studies on the level of dependence on different species by various communities, behavioural responses of wild animals to hunting, documentation of hunting techniques, investigation on the market linkages and examination of harvest patterns to assess their sustainability and socioeconomic circumstances are also essential. Law enforcement should be carried out cautiously but very strictly, beginning with the protected areas.



Garnering local support for conservation should be the utmost priority. Previous conservation efforts such as convincing the Nyshi tribes to wear fibreglass hornbill beaks have borne fruit and stemmed the hunting of the birds for their beaks. Hornbill populations have bounced back in those areas where efforts have been undertaken. Working and convincing the locals is time consuming, but with sustained good science and efforts, we can address this challenge effectively. Tackling wildlife hunting should be addressed from both the conservation and development perspectives and will require an interdisciplinary approach incorporating social, economic, ecological and political components. WHAT WE NOW HAVE IS A TOOL BOX. No one tool is going to fix the car!

Welcome Guests

- ♦ Forest Range Officer trainees (2008-2009 batch), accompanied by one faculty member from the State Forest Service College, Coimbatore on April 15, 2009.
- ♦ Forest Guards accompanied by their Officer and staff from Corbett Wildlife Training Centre, Kalagarh on April 29, 2009.
- ♦ Students of the B.Lib. and I.Sc. course, accompanied by two staff members, from the Department of Library & Information Science, Central Library, Kumaon University, Nainital on April 30, 2009.
- ♦ A group of e-governance students from the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi on May 4, 2009.
- ♦ Range Forest Officer trainees from the State Forest Service College, Burnihat on May 19, 2009.
- ♦ Students from the College of Veterinary and Animal Science, Rajasthan Agricultural University, Bikaner on June 4, 2009.
- ♦ IFS Officers of the 2000 batch of the Advanced Forest Management Training Course at IGNFA, Dehradun on June 9, 2009.
- ♦ Newly recruited Assistant Commandants GD from ITBP on June 11, 2009.
- ♦ Participants of the ISRO-sponsored NNRMS course from the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehradun on June 11, 2009.
- ♦ Participants of a training programme on 'Spatial Referencing of MIKE Data' for field coordinators of Project Elephant reserves at Forest Survey of India, Dehradun on June 24, 2009. **Contact: oao@wii.gov.in**



IFS Officers of 1959-62 batch from Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy, Dehradun, May 4, 2009.

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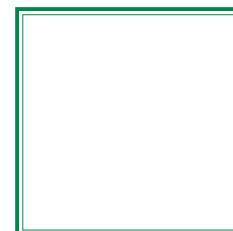
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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or of the Wildlife Institute of India.

BOOK - POST

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