

Wildlife Times



Saving the Tiger is a Kind of a War
Dr. Hemanta Mishra page 3

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Editorial

Last chance' to save Tiger in the wild

Leaders of the few remaining countries where tigers are still found in the wild are preparing for a make-or-break summit in Russia, which they believe offers the last chance to save the critically endangered animal.

The Global Tiger Summit in St Petersburg in November will bring together the 13 countries that still have wild tigers with the hope to reach agreements that will lead to a doubling of tiger numbers by 2022. Britain and the US also being urged to attend. But there is also fear it is already too late and the summit will be another talking shop that fails to deliver results.

The situation is so critical that four of the 13 countries attending the summit – China, Vietnam, Cambodia and North Korea – no longer have viable breeding population, according to a study released last month.

The study produced by researchers from Cambridge University, the World Bank and the US-based Wildlife Conservation Society have found there had been a "dramatic decline" in tiger numbers in the Russian far east over the past five years – understood to be about a 15% drop – which it associated with a decline in anti-poaching enforcement.

The Siberian tiger, also known as the Amur tiger, nearly went extinct in the middle of the last century, when numbers fell below 50, but there are now thought to be more than 400 left in the wild. Suggestions that numbers have dipped again will not have pleased Russia's Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, who will be hosting the summit and who has been keen to portray himself as a rugged protector of the animals.

In 2008, he accepted a tiger cub as a birthday present and in the same year was at the centre of an extraordinary drama when it was claimed that he shot an Amur tiger with a tranquillizer dart to save the lives of a television crew. But not only Russia is struggling to save the tiger, India's tiger population remained in decline too, with some conservationists estimating that only 800 remained in the wild, significantly fewer than the official claim of 1,411. India will only be sending a ministerial-level delegation to the meeting with the absence of the Prime Minister. World Bank has been keen to get India on board, as it would be odd to sell a global project to save the tigers when the country with the largest tiger population is unwilling to be a part of it. However, the Indian government has informed the GTI that conservation of tiger is a sovereign issue, and it would not accept that the WB dictate terms to it.

In Indonesia, a hidden camera shot footage of a rare Sumatran tiger in the forests of Bukit Betabuh. Later, the same camera filmed a bulldozer clearing the area, apparently for a palm oil plantation and then recorded the tiger returning to the scene of devastation.

Conservationists worry that the summit is more about politicians wanting to be seen to be doing something, rather than tackling the issues on the ground, such as the encroachment into tigers' traditional territory by poor farmers in search of land.

Saving the Tiger is a Kind of a War



Q. You recently trekked in Mustang and roamed in Chitwan National Park, what were the objectives and impressions?

A. I was on a holiday with some of friends from the United States and Nepal. Thus, the objectives were purely recreational and spiritual. My impressions are three folds. First, if the natural beauty, the biological diversity, and the assortments of cultural heritage of Nepal were measures of economic wealth, Nepal would rank among the richest country on earth. Second, I am amazed by the resilience of the people of Nepal, despite the harrowing happening of a decade of a bloody and gruesome civil war. Third, there is much awareness for the cause of conservation even in remote corners of Nepal such as the Upper Mustang.

Q. You have been traveling to tiger range countries to help them prepare National Tiger Recovery Plan; will NTRP be tool to realize TX2?

A. The key strengths of the National Tiger Recovery

Dr. Hemanta Mishra, a notable biologist and conservationist, has been working in the field of wildlife conservation for more than four decades. Being a veteran in this field, he dedicated his whole life for wildlife conservation of Nepal. He helped to establish Chitwan National Park, which marks the beginning of his career and then continued his journey in saving tigers and rhinos. He has worked with Smithsonian Institute, World Wildlife Fund, Asian Development Bank and World Bank. He has made extensive scientific studies of large Asian wild animals. He was a key player in the international team that preserved and stabilized the habitat of rhinos and tigers in Nepal. He has published two books, 'Soul of the Rhino' which was selected as one of the best books of 2008 by Publishers Weekly and 'Bones of the Tiger' both depicting his journey full of challenges and opportunities to save the endangered animals of Nepal. Dr. Hemanta Mishra residing in the US frequently visits Nepal and still has the same zest and enthusiasm concerning the issues of wildlife of Nepal. He spoke with Wildlife Times about the global and national scenario for wildlife conservation and about his experiences during his recent visit to Nepal.

Plans (NTRP) are that it is country driven. The Tiger Range Countries are in the driver's seat. And it is they (and not international donors) who formulated their own NTRPs. The NTRPs were formulated after an exhaustive and transparent process of the consensus building among the Tiger Range Country's (TRC's) best and the brightest.

Thus, I am confident that the overall goals of Tx2 i.e. double the number of tigers globally by 2022 (the next round of the Year of the Tiger) will be realized. However, not all Tiger Range Countries or sites (i.e. Tiger Reserves) within each countries may reach this target. Many of these reserves are constrained by their ecological parameters. These limitations include

small size of existing reserves with no possibilities of their expansion, lack of adequate habitat, and low prey base. Thus, doubling the numbers of tigers in some sites within the next ten years is far beyond their current ecological carrying capacity. Yet, on the overall, the number of tigers worldwide can be doubled by 2022, assuming there is a political will to do so.

Q. The combined NTRPs are supposed to be presented in forthcoming Tiger Summit as for of GTRP, how GTRP will ensure the future of tiger in the world?

A. It is really up to the Tiger Range Country's (TRC) as to how they would like to present or articulate their NTRPs at the Summit. However, the global communities at the Tiger Summit in St. Petersburg is anticipating pledges and commitments from the leaders of each TRCs and demonstrate their political will to save the tiger in perpetuity in their respective countries. The GTRP evolves from the NTRP. It is a tool to generate global awareness and global commitments to help the TRCs to reach their mission and goals as articulated in the NTRPs. But the TRCs would have to decide how best to use the GTRP to ensure the future of the tiger in the world.

Q. Since the beginning of the seventies billions of dollar spent to save tiger from the brink of extinction, billions more probably will be budgeted during tiger summit. However, the tiger continued in the list of endangered, why?

A. This question haunts all of us – the Tigerwallahs — all the time. Yet, I feel that question to ask may be - What would have been the fate of the tiger – if these efforts or investments were not made since the seventies? In 1994 – Time Magazine – one of the world's most prestigious international weekly predicted, that the tiger was “Doomed.” Asia Week and the Far Eastern Economic review were not far behind in forecasting the fate of the tiger. Back in the late 1980s, we were told that wild tiger would be extinct by the end of the 20th Century. Yet, tigers are still around us. Ironically, it was the Asia Week and the Far Eastern Economic Review that went bankrupt and became extinct in the media markets. Therefore, to my mind, the question we must ask is - Would the tiger have survived this far without the efforts of national governments that began in the 1970s?

The tiger is a resilient animal. It is also a good breeder. All it needs is a bit of space, cover, water, and adequate prey base. Yet, why the tiger continues

to be an endangered species aptly raises several questions. Did these efforts of the last forty years merely delay the inevitable extinction of tigers in the wild? Did it only help us the Tigerwallahs to buy time? Or do we need a radical game change and a radical change in strategy and action plans to blend tiger conservation with the emerging social, economic, and political issues of the 21st. Century. Clearly, the tiger is in a crisis now. And this is not the time to relax but to strengthen and enforce rigid protection, particularly anti-poaching and fighting against the illicit trans-boundary trade on tiger body parts.

The harsh social, political, and economic realities in the Tiger Range Countries in the 21st Century indicates that we need a three-pronged strategy. First, how can we help tigers and humans to live as good neighbors in the tiger land where human habit and tiger habit? Second, how can we make a living wild tiger more valuable than a dead tiger to the local people and the governments who own the real estate designated as tiger sanctuaries? Third, how can we make tiger conservation not a barrier but a catalyst to reduce poverty and bring about a betterment of human life in the tiger countries?

The key lessons I learned from four decades of my involvement to save the tiger indicates that designing a right plan is not good enough. Doing the smart thing is what is needed to deliver results on the ground. Being smart means linking the survival of the tiger with human welfare. The smart thing dictates that we fight for our cause holistically not with rhetoric but taking into the harsh realities on the ground with war-quality mentality. Saving the tiger is a kind of a war, a war where we have won some battles and lost a few. But the war continues. It is a war on poverty and hunger. Indeed, it is a war on population growth and lack of opportunities to make a decent living for those who live next to the tiger's habitat.

Q. If GTRP fails, do you think captive breeding will be the solution for survival of tiger?

A. It is too early to predict the outcome of the GTRP. It is still on the process of being developed and endorsed by the Tiger Range Countries. But hard scientific evidence demonstrates that captive breeding is no solution to saving tigers in the wild. In fact, there are more tigers in captivity than in the wild including some 5,000 in the United States and almost the same numbers in China. Yet, there is no program or evidence that

captive breed and captive raised tigers have been successfully rehabilitated into the wild.

Q. Being a WB insider for longtime, what were the reasons behind WB launching GTI, is it pure environmental or economical or political?

A. In the changing environment of modern times, I am not sure if I can be called a World Bank (WB) insider, particularly as I left the bank a decade ago. Nevertheless, the evidence so far indicates that the effort of the Bank to bring the tiger back from the brink of extinction is sincere. There is a deep realization in the Bank, that there are values in human life beyond the conventional paradigms of economic growth at any costs. In addition, a number of people in the Global Tiger Initiative (GTI), both within and outside the World Bank are also realists. They see the linkage between ecology, economy, and politics. After all, saving tiger preserves forests that reduces and sequestered carbon and helps fight climate change. Saving the tiger also saves soil and water – a lifeline of humanity—and a baseline for social and economic development and sustaining infrastructures.

I have not met or had any lengthy discussion with Mr. Robert B. Zoellick,

the President of the World Bank. However, my conversation with senior officials of the Tiger Range Countries who have met him indicates that he is deeply concerned on the plight of the tiger. And it is his political will that has been instrumental for the Bank to initiate the Global Tiger Initiatives, even when talking about a single wild species like the tiger is not fashionable in much of the international development agencies. Those, who have met Mr. Zoellick have urged me to visit his office. Apparently, it is totally decorated with photographs—not of bridges, road, hydro projects funded by the by the Bank—but with pictures of tigers in the wild. Indeed, the personal interests and commitment for the World Bank's President has been instrumental for the birth of the Global Tiger Initiatives to be led by the World Bank.

Q. What is your thoughts on Nepal's current political chaos and its ramifications to wildlife and protected areas?

A. It has been almost two decades since I have been living outside Nepal. Thus, it would be presumptuous for me to make any judgment on the current political chaos. Nevertheless, my travels outside the capital city of Kathmandu indicate that a majority of the denizens of

Nepal appear to be apathetic to the political games played in the Capital. They seem to be preoccupied on with their normal chores and struggling to make a honest living. Nevertheless, turmoil in other countries indicates wildlife that suffers most when there is political instability. Yet, I was pleasantly surprised that in Nepal, I did not find the situation in the ground as bad as I had anticipated.

For example, within a period of two hours in one afternoon, we counted 19-rhinoceros from the back of an elephant around the Tiger Tops in Chitwan. While I did not encounter any tiger, I did see many fresh pugmarks. Likewise, we saw six rhinos, in an hour at the other end in Saurah, in the Island of Itcharni. I also felt that the prey density of the tiger was stable and the park is relative well managed and protected in comparison to other tiger reserves. However the problems stemming from the proliferation of the South American invasive species of *Miconia micrantha* is very serious than the last five years. Unless, solutions to stop its proliferation are found soon, it will strangle all the rhinos, tiger and other wildlife species not only in Chitwan but also throughout the Nepalese Terai. But, then this is a scientific problem and not

a political issue. But it does needs serious attention of our political decision makers.

Q. What is your observation on Nepal's periodical wildlife count? Whether it is ritual or standard?

A. Without probing deep into the methods and statistical norms of the rhino and tiger census, it would not be fair for me to make a judgmental call. However, personal communications with many working in the field, mostly outside the government, indicated that the count is as good as it can be. In addition, many feel that the numbers are reliable.

Q. Turning back to your two books the soul of rhino and bones of tiger, how's its sell, feedback from those who you know and those whom you don't?

A. Both of the books *The Soul of the Rhino* (2008) and *The Bones of the Tiger* were published in the United States (Lyons Press). Both have received excellent reviews. The former was even selected as a must read for 2008 by the Publishers Weekly. However, non-fiction books on Nepal and wildlife normally have a limited and small niche market – rarely a raving commercial market. But then, money was not the motive. Writing is my hobby.

Q. After these two books is third book is under writing?

A. Yes, my friend Jim Ottaway Jr. and I are doing a young adult fictional book based upon the *Soul of the Rhino*. We also have a third non-fiction, *The Tears of the Elephant in the pipeline*. Jim is pressurizing me to do an autobiography.

Q. What is your assessment of current conservation leadership in Nepal both at governmental and nongovernmental level?

A. I thought that there would be a big vacuum after the tragic helicopter crash on 23 September 2006 in Gunsha. However, I am finding that the legacy of Nepal's heroes of conservation, who lost their lives in the line of duty, lives on. Many of them were my near and dear friends. Thus, I find it heartening that a new corps of equally dedicated people have emerged to build upon the works of my late band of brothers in conservation. I was also heartened to see a close and collaborative partnership between the Government and NGOs particularly the NTNC, WWF, and the Government of Nepal. The Nepal's NTRP is but an example of this partnership.

Q. Why, in your opinion, Nepal's wildlife apart from Rhino and tiger, other critically endangered species such as gharial are not able to garner sufficient international support?

A. I would not say that Nepal's wildlife has not been able to garner sufficient international support. Obviously, political news sucks most of the oxygen out of Nepal. Consequently, the perception of Nepal is shaded by pessimism in international arena. The good news such as creation of a new protected area in Banke or the fact that the rhino numbers are gaining momentum again, rarely gets the news it rightly deserves.

Q. What do you think Nepal's greatest success and failure of conservation efforts?

A. I would say sound policy backed by solid programs with good leadership, particularly at the field levels has been the underpinning cause of the successes. The creation of a network of National Parks and wildlife reserves with a solid legislative tools and pragmatic administrative structures in Nepal has been the best in Asia and elsewhere. Furthermore, the emphasis on good science since the inception of Nepal's national parks and wildlife conservation program had led to good management practices. Finding new homes for the Chitwan rhinos in Bardia and Suklaphanta has been an outcome of such practices. Likewise, the extension of Chitwan



National Park and the creation of Parsa Wildlife Reserve, the Gharial Conservation Program are other examples of blending good science with good management practices. In addition, Nepal's effort to involve the local community and community participation in conservation has been an example to the developing countries. Nepal also has a cadre of well-educated, well trained, and globally exposed people. Many of them have solid practical and pragmatic experiences in the field.

On other side, the lack of or diminishing political will for conservation has been flagged out as Nepal's failures at the current times. Furthermore, I am told

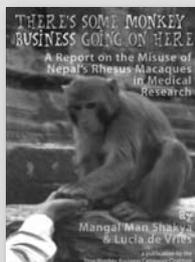
that the role and leadership of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation have been weakened. I was also told that there are serious gaps between the policy or decision makers in capital city of Kathmandu and those that implement these decisions in the field. Threats from any reemergence of rampant poaching and wildlife crime particularly continue to be a major challenge. In addition, I have read in the newspaper about the widespread logging and destruction of forests in the Churia Hills. These will have severe consequences in soil erosion and land degradation in the watershed.



Wildlife Watch Group Publication

Wildlife Watch Group has been publishing books on the issues of wildlife and conservation. Following books can be bought from WWG office at Pulchowk or Saraswoti Book Centre at Harihar Bhawan, Lalitpur.

The lists of books available at Wildlife Watch Group are:

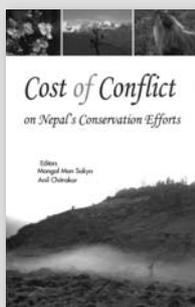


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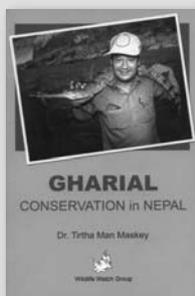
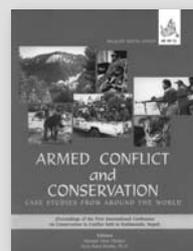


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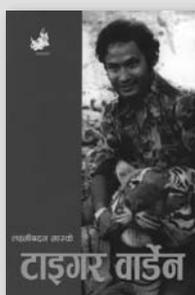
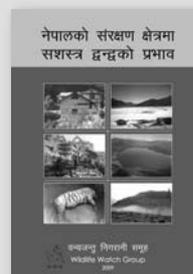
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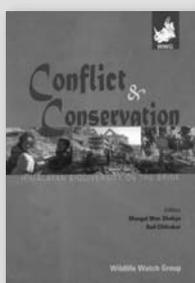


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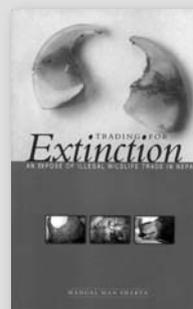


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Biodiversity Areas in Danger

Kaski, October 3. The nation is losing millions of rupees due to negligence in conservation of valuable herbs in Panchase region of Kaski, Parvat and Syanjha. Due to lack of scientific investigation and proper use in highly bio diverse area like Panchase, it has just become a mere play land for cattle.

The government has not done any research on this region but Panchase was declared as Conservation Area on National Conservation Day on 23 September 2010. The local people of Tamagi village are requesting government to establish herbal processing centre where the government has ignored a region full of such valuable floras. These valuable herbs have become food for cattle, said Rupesh Gurung, member of Forest User Committee.

According to him, out of 307 valuable herbs found in the world, 159 are found in Panchase region. The Machapuchhre Development Union had done a study fifteen years ago on this. The area of this jungle is 5500 hectares ranging from 784 m to 2517 m from the sea level. Many flora and wild animals of the

Himalayan region are found in this area.

The most abundant flora of this region is Sunakhari (*Orchids*). Other common species are Chiraito (*Swertia angustifolia*), Jamane Mandro (*Mahonia nepaulensis*), Lot Salla, Uku Dina, Satuva (*Paris polyphylla*), Kurilo (*Asparagus officinalis*), Pakhan bhed (*Bergenia ciliata*), Ban Lasoon (*Amaryllidaceae*) according to Machapuchhre Development Union. According to Senior Program Officer Ramsharan Sedhai, there are 12 types of jungles here. In these jungles, there are 589 flowering plants, 150 medicinal plants, 113 species of Sunakhari, 98 types of Unyu (*Dryopteris filix-mas*) species, 56 species of mushrooms, 18 species of commercial flowers.

According to Awishkar Subedi, who is doing an intensive research on the project, said that there are two species of Sunakhari that are not found elsewhere in the world. Sunakhari is used to prepare Cetamols. The villagers use this herb as medicines but they are not used commercially. The locals use these herbs for medicinal purposes to cure headache, fever, stomachache and high blood pressure.

Millions of rupees are wasted due to lack of management and utilization of Sunakhari, said Subedi. 'Instead of using our own Sunakhari for medicine, we are taking cetamols that are imported from India', he added. A local teacher and a businessperson Ash Bahadur Gurung, the cattle are stronger than the humans are as they feed upon these floras. Due to lack of proper techniques and management skills, the people are not able to utilize such valuable resources.

If grazing is managed and the valuable herbs are well utilized, it will not only benefit people but will also benefit the entire nation. The animals from the other villages are also brought here for grazing. The region having such high tourism potential and economic viability is still a backward and rural area.

In the upper Western side of Pokhara, there are 15 VDCs under this area. The ninety percent of the water body of Phewa Lake falls under Panchase region. There are five rivers flowing through Panchase region as watershed area. They are *Adheri*, *harpan*, *Rati*, *Jare* and *Seti* Rivers.



Two new bird species found in Nepal



Long-billed Wren Babbler



Grey-necked Bunting

Kathmandu, Oct 12: Two new species of birds- Long-billed Wren Babbler and Grey-necked Bunting, have been found in Nepal. With the discovery of the two new species, the number of bird species in Nepal has reached 867.

According to Himalayan Nature, an international conservation research institute, Long-billed Wren Babbler, known as Rimator Malacoptilus, was first sighted in 1995.

Ornithologist Jack H Cox Jr. had described this rare species on the basis of descriptions provided by his field assistant Chundak Sherpa. However, his description could not be validated.

Later on June 3, 2009, Cox Jr. himself sighted the bird in Makalu Barun National Park. This time around, Nepal Rare Birds Committee accepted his descriptions and enlisted Long-billed Wren Babbler as the new bird species found in Nepal.

Similarly, Grey-necked Bunting, discovered by Anish Timsina and Dheeraj Chaudhari in Shukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve, has been enlisted as another new species.

Timsina and Chaudhari, who managed to take photos of the bird they spotted, consulted ornithologist Dr Hem Sagar Baral. Nepal Rare Birds Committee has officially accepted Baral's identification of the new bird as Grey-necked Bunting.

Long-billed Wren Babbler is nearly 12 cm long from beak to tail-tip and weighs between 18-21 grams. It is brown in color and slightly smaller than other wren-babblers.

Grey-necked Bunting is 15 cm (6 inches) long and weighs between 17 to 26 grams with pinkish orange beak, plain head and white ring around the eye.

India Updates Wildlife/CITES Law: Soon, Rs 1 crore fine for killing tiger

New Delhi, October 20, 2010: Wildlife poachers can soon be jailed for a minimum of seven years and fined at least Rs 30 lakh for killing endangered species, and the country will have two bodies to regulate international wildlife trade. The law ministry on 19 October approved over 100 amendments in the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, bringing it in tune with wildlife protection laws across the world by including regulation of species not native to India, a requirement under a global convention on wildlife.

Environment minister Jairam Ramesh said the bill, which strengthens the powers of forest and enforcement agencies, will be introduced in the winter session of Parliament after getting the cabinet's approval.

One of the biggest changes in the law is constitution of

two bodies — scientific and management — to implement its provisions and regulate trade. The management authority will be responsible for issuance of permits for trade of scheduled species on advice of the scientific body. The two bodies will also be to enlist the exotic species found in India, which are not covered by global wildlife convention, and ways to regulate them.

"Protecting the country's indigenous species would be another role of the authority," an official said.

The proposed law for the first time speaks of using other laws such as Forest Rights Act, 2006, and Biological Diversity Act, 2003, for conservation of wildlife habitats. "It has been done to make wildlife laws compatible with each other," the official said.

To provide the highest degree of legal protection to the most vulnerable animals against poaching, the amendments have put tigers, whose population is said to be less than 1,411, in Category 1. Other endangered animals in this category include lions, elephants, rhinos, crocodiles and antelopes.

Killing an animal in Category 1 could attract a minimum jail term of five years and maximum of seven. The fine prescribed ranges from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 1 crore. For species under Category 2, including endangered birds, the jail term suggested is between three to five years and fine of up to Rs 3 lakh. Teasing an animal will also be an offence.

Wildlife Trade Issues of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, October 16, 2010: Ministry of Environment on October 15 2010 expressed strong reservation on allocation of Houbara Bustard hunting area with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A meeting of the National Council for Conservation of Wildlife (NCCW) held here on 15th October, which was presided over by the Federal Minister for Environment

Hameed Ullah Jan Afridi, who is also the Chairman of

the Council. Several issues about wildlife conservation in Pakistan were discussed in the meeting.

During the meeting, it was observed that Ministry of Environment and Provincial Wildlife Departments are responsible for allocation of hunting areas for Houbara bustard, so the matter has already been taken up with the Inter provincial co-ordination committee (IPCC).

Council also decided to draft standards/guidelines for trophy hunting programme in consultation with the stakeholders. The wildlife trade issues including import of big cats, commercial export of wild mammals and reptiles, export of parrots/parakeets and export of medicinal plants were discussed in the meeting. It was also decided to constitute technical committees for consultation and preparation of recommendations for the next meeting of the council.

The issue of nominating a focal institution for wild flora/plants for ascertaining their status was also discussed.

A sub-committee was constituted to co-ordinate with all plant taxonomists and institutions and give recommendations before the next Council meeting. It was also decided that an officer of Pakistan Customs would be formally made member of the Council to give suggestions for its decisions at entry and exit points. During the meeting, progress of community based trophy-hunting programme from which local communities

are benefited with 80 percent income for their conservation programme and social uplift was reviewed.

The Council appreciated the joint action of Sindh Wildlife Department and Customs to curb illegal trade of wildlife and their derivatives. On this occasion, Sindh and Balochistan governments were directed to take appropriate action to ensure survival of these endangered species. Federal Minister urged that wildlife is national asset and there is need to respond appropriately for its conservation.

The Secretary Environment, Muhammad Javed Malik, Inspector General Forest Syed Mehmood Nasir and members including representatives of the Federal Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Food and Agriculture, Livestock and Dairy Development and Health, also attended the meeting of the Council. Leading conservation NGOs and Advisor to Ministry of Environment also participated in the meeting.

Japan's Trade in Wildlife

Tokyo, 12 October 2010 - TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, has released a report analyzing the status of Japan's trade in wild animal and plant species entitled *The State of Wildlife Trade in Japan*, to coincide with the holding of the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP10) in Nagoya, Japan.

Japan is one of the world's largest importers of wildlife and benefits greatly from global biodiversity. Japan's long history of trade in ivory, fragrant agar wood and other wildlife products from around the world is on show in the Shosoin imperial treasure repository in Nara, where centuries-old cultural relics are displayed. Now, in the 21st century, the connectivity between foreign-

sourced wildlife products and Japanese consumers can easily be seen in the fishery products that dominate Japanese cuisine, the timber used in constructing homes and furniture, the medicinal plants relied on to support human health, the exotic pet trade and the ivory hanko (seals) in use in daily Japanese life.

The State of Wildlife Trade in Japan analyses the significance of Japan's trade in wild animal and plant species and their products, reviews this trade in the light of national and international regulations and provides critical insights into the nature of Japan's impact on global biodiversity. It provides, among other things, explanations of the current trends in topical issues involving Atlantic Bluefin Tuna, and the often-illegal trade in reptiles

as pets, while highlighting the importance of sustainable use of medicinal plants, an issue closely related to the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

"I hope that this report released on the occasion of Japan's hosting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP10) will help deepen understanding of Japan's use of a wide range of wildlife products", said Akiko Ishihara, TRAFFIC's Senior Representative in Japan, and a co-author of the report. "We hope this knowledge will encourage the Japanese government, private sector, and the general public to think about what we can do as a nation, and as individuals, to make choices that contribute to the conservation of biodiversity."

Hundreds of Birds Seized in Bangladesh

October 10, 2010: Officials from the Department of Forest, with the help of law enforcement agency, busted the illegal trade of wildlife and recovered huge number of Myna, Munia, Eagle and Monkey from the traders of Kataban pet shops in the capital. Wildlife officials and nature lovers busted the long-time illegal trade in wildlife at the Kantaban pet shops.

The ugly face of the covert illegal trade in wildlife surfaced when forest department officials and wildlife lovers under police protection raided the shops. About a thousand birds, some of them critically endangered, and monkeys were rescued.

As soon as the rescue squad reached the spot, the traders started sneaking out their illicit booties. The Daily Star correspondent saw them quickly taking away at least one endangered slow Loris and several mynas.

The traders slipped two rare eagles--one gray-headed fishing eagle and a Bonelli's eagle--into a gunnysack and passed it to a street boy who started walking away. But the forest officials caught the boy and rescued the eagles, one of which later flew away.

There were at least 300 parakeets of different species like slaty-headed, plum-headed

and red-breasted parakeets, about 500 munias, 50-60 endangered hill mynas and some purple swamphens.

Prof Anwarul Islam of the zoology department in Dhaka University, and Tapan Dey, conservator of forests, who took part in the raid, later took the birds to Dhaka University and showed them to the vice chancellor. As the Kantaban pet shops belong to the university, the nature lovers demanded that these shops be evicted.

In response, Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique said he would tell the traders that if they continue this illegal trade in wildlife, their permission to run shops would be cancelled.

Later, the vice chancellor released some doves, munias and parakeets. The forest department took others to release them in specified forests that would give them proper habitat.

Prof Anwarul Islam said the illegal wildlife traders at Kantaban are influential and they must be stopped to save the wildlife of the country.

Tapan Dey said he would do everything to stop the illegal trade at Kataban and said his department would keep an eye on the situation there.



Officials from the Department of Forest, with the help of law enforcement agency, busted the illegal trade of wildlife and recovered huge number of Myna, Munia, Eagle and Monkey from the traders of Kataban pet shops in the capital. Photo: Shawkat Jamil

Call to Regulate On-line Wildlife Trade-Taiwan

Taipei, Oct. 7. A lawmaker of the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) said that there are no laws to regulate online trading in many wild animals, as some species sold on the Internet are not included on the list of protected species.



Legislator Ting Shou-chung said the current Wildlife Conservation Law only prohibits the sale of endangered animals, but some animals sold online are not considered endangered, which he said could result in a potential threat to the environment should such animals later be abandoned.

Ting said the government should provide an effective mechanism for animal trading, better quarantine conditions for all species and should pass laws on animal protection and online marketing.

Michelle Chou, a spokeswoman for the Life Conservation Association, said that the association has found 66 websites in Taiwan selling a total of 263 species of animals, of which only 71 are protected by law. Chou said reptiles are the most common pets sold online, followed by mammals and arthropods.

While stores have a policy of taking back abandoned pets such as hedgehogs, for which there was once a fad in Taiwan, Internet operators have no responsibility to face or deal

with the issue, she said.

Lee Tao-sheng, Deputy Director-General of the Forestry Bureau, said the bureau, which is responsible for regulating animal trading, has done its best with insufficient human resources, noting that it has cracked down on 25 illegal online trading cases, rescuing 113 animals and arresting 27 people since 2009.

Lee agreed to meet with experts in a month's time to further discuss the possibility of including species traded online in the conservation law.

He said the bureau would make a comprehensive review of the law and study how best to regulate animal imports and trading.

Smugglers, Poachers Generate US\$30 bil per Year- ASEAN nations

October 7, 2010. A whopping US\$30bil in black money is generated annually from the poaching and smuggling of endangered wildlife and animal parts in countries in South-East Asia, according to the latest figures compiled by regional and international wildlife agencies.

This shocking statistics is being tabled for discussion among wildlife enforcement agencies of ASEAN member countries, the US-AID, European Commission and ASEAN

Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) in Thailand.

Representatives are currently in Khao Yai National Park to attend the first ASEAN regional course on wildlife protection and enforcement, which began on 4 October 2010.

The course, which will last until Oct 16, is jointly organised by ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN), US-AID, EC and ACB. The main US-AID implementing partner with ASEAN is Freeland

Foundation.

The foundation is an international organization investigating the wildlife trade and it provides training to conserve natural habitats and build local capacity to protect critical ecosystems.

Freeland Foundation media liaison officer Pornvadee Piyakhun said that senior wildlife department officers from all ASEAN countries were at the course.

“This is the first-ever ASEAN operational training course for rangers throughout ASEAN countries and from Bhutan. The course is a mean to drastically improve the security and protection of our ecosystem in ASEAN.

“We are coming up with better patrolling and better environment management systems because the remaining natural ecosystems in South-East Asia is facing serious threats from poaching and illegal forest clearings,” he said.

“This region is a major source of animals for those involved

in the illicit trade of wildlife and animal parts. These illegal traders are supplying a global market and their trade is worth between US\$10bil to US\$30bil annually in the black market.”

Meanwhile, the ASEAN-WEN secretariat in Bangkok e-mailed to The Star the latest regional statistics concerning seizures in ASEAN countries. Last month alone, more than 1.5 tonnes of tiger and elephant parts, tiger and leopard skins, ivory tusks, gall bladders and other wildlife were seized in Vietnam.

In Cambodia, more than 500kg of endangered animal parts

were seized, more than 1,000 rare tortoises were confiscated alive in Thailand, 422 live-clouded monitor lizards rescued from poachers in Johor, and in Singapore, three men were arrested for auctioning tiger parts, tiger skins and hedgehogs via the Internet.

ASEAN-WEN also managed to stop an attempt to smuggle endangered oriental birds from Changi Airport in Singapore to Indonesia.

Sri Lanka to Farm Snakes for Export

5 October 2010: Environmentalists voiced their concern over the Export Development Boards (EDB) plan to set up reptile farms in Sri Lanka for the export of reptiles to European Union (EU) markets.

Senior Environmentalist Jagath Gunawardena said it was illegal to export reptiles because 95 per cent of the species in Sri Lanka were protected.

“Expect for five extremely poisonous snakes the others are classified as protected species because they aid in balancing the eco system,” he said. Mr. Gunawardena said since 1993 several attempts were made to export snakes. “EDB officials have claimed that the breeding

of non-venomous reptiles will be carried out with German assistance but Germany is a hub for the illegal trade in animals,” he said.

Galle Wildlife Conservation Society President Madhura De Silva said if the breeding-for-export plan was carried out it would have an adverse impact on the environment. “These exporters will begin by claiming that the species will be collected from breeding farms, but they will eventually resort to collecting the species from its natural habitats as most don’t breed in captivity,” he said.

Mr. De Silva said initially there might be a high demand for non-venomous snakes, but soon the demand would decrease as

the countries importing them would begin to breed them. “Our endemic species can be bred in other tropical countries or even in Europe if suitable conditions are provided,” he said and added that the EDB move to export the snakes would severely impact on the gene pool, which was unique to Sri Lanka.

The EDB announced plans to breed non-venomous reptiles with German assistance for export to EU markets. A 14-member German delegation including reptile experts visited Sri Lanka and expressed their willingness to extend their expertise to establish non-venomous reptile farms in rural areas and to explore opportunities to export them.

Rhino horn found in Ripponden garage fetches £14,000

7 October 2010: A rare rhino horn lost for years in a garage in Ripponden has been sold at auction for £14,000 after bids from across the world. The horn was originally from a rhino shot by wealthy philanthropist Walter Morrison who lived on Malham Moor.

Betty Barrett put the horn up for sale with no idea how much it was worth. She said, "It's a horn with a pedigree. It's over 100-years-old and I can remember as a child it was left in our garage to collect dust."

The antique rhino horn's existence became known during a talk by Leeds auctioneer Gary Don which Betty attended.

Gary explained, "I was doing a talk with the Elland Ladies Tangent Club. I don't know what made me say it, but I said, 'I bet nobody's got a rhino horn, have they?' and somebody put their hand up."

Millionaire businessman



Betty, who lives in Ripponden, explained that the rhino had been shot by millionaire businessman Walter Morrison around the end of the 19th

century. She said, "He was a very popular man who was known to all who lived in and around the Dales".

"He would travel abroad to many exotic locations and, when on safari in Africa, he shot and returned with this horn."

Living at Malham Tarn House in North Yorkshire, Morrison built a hotel nearby, The Buck, to accommodate coachmen and staff who worked for the guests he invited to his many shooting and hunting trips.

The Buck Hotel, which also served as a storehouse for Morrison's ever-increasing collection of hunt trophies, was taken over by Betty's family after the Second World War. Betty said, "In 1947, my grandfather Harry H. Beaumont bought The Buck along with all the contents for just a couple of thousand pounds.

"He put in my mother and father to run it as a business." After a while, and a few very harsh winters, my mother and father were struggling to get the cash. "Because they had a young family in tow, they decided to call it a day."

"When they left, they were asked what they wanted to take as a parting gift and mum chose the horn." "It was the only thing she could carry under her arm, me probably being under the other."

Winning bid

With bids coming into the auction room from Europe and as far afield as Asia, auctioneer Gary Don finally put the hammer down at £14,000 - with the winning bid coming from London.

Gary said the high price the horn finally realized came as a shock to Betty.

Rhinoceros

The trade in rhino horn from after 1947 is now closely regulated. He said: "I don't think she expected anything like that. I just started at £6000. "We had various phone lines going and it was all very exciting."

The import and export of rhino horn is now closely regulated, but pre-1947 big game trophies like Betty's rhino horn can still be traded within the UK.

Gary explained: "The problem is that rhinos are being killed for their horn and nobody agrees with that. It is illegal to do it.

"However, this item was from 1900 - maybe even 1880 - so it's an antique in its own right." Gary said he was happy Betty's unique auction lot had gone under the hammer for such a high price. He said, "I'm delighted because I think it is going to buy her a new roof."

Tortoise's smuggler caught for second time in Bangkok

Bangkok, 3 October 2010: A previous arrest for smuggling star tortoises into Thailand was not enough for one Pakistani who tried again, and was caught for the second time at Suvarnabhumi International Airport on 28 September.

The Royal Thai Customs Investigation and Suppression Bureau and CITES Management Authority of Thailand arrested the smuggler at 5pm last night after inspecting his baggage coming off a Thai Airways flight. Mr. Saeed Shaikh, 44, a Pakistani national, had packed *1,140 rare star tortoises and one rare gharial* into 4 suitcases on flight TG 322 from Dhaka, Bangladesh. The total value of the seized wildlife is estimated at more than \$100,000.

The suspect was arrested in 2008 for smuggling 778 Indian Star Tortoises and had even flown the same route he took this time - from Bangladesh to Bangkok. The suspect was released after he posted the 100,000 Baht (USD3,300) bail on 29 September.

The tortoises were destined for Bangkok's popular Chatuchak market that has a notorious reputation for the open sale of trafficked wildlife. They have been sent to the DNP rescue centre.

Indian Star Tortoises are native to parts of India, Pakistan

and Sri Lanka. Authorities in all three of these countries have banned trade in the species. Furthermore, the Indian star tortoise is listed in Appendix II of CITES (Convention on Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), which strictly regulates international trade in the species.

Prized as pets in Southeast Asia, they are packed in suitcases and smuggled mainly through the region's airports for the lucrative pet market, sold in places including Chatuchak Market.

Chatuchak Market is one of the most significant hubs for trade in illegally sourced tortoises in the world.

Surveys by TRAFFIC Southeast Asia have found that the majority of tortoises openly sold there have been brought into Thailand illegally. Tortoises from around the world can be found for sale in the Chatuchak market, many of them being from Madagascar.

All species of tortoise from Madagascar are Critically Endangered, with illegal capture for the pet trade being the main cause for their current decline.

The trade in the tortoises is devastating wild populations. A recent WWF survey reveals that



at least a thousand terrestrial tortoises are illegally extracted from the south of Madagascar every week.

“The illegal trade in wildlife in the Chatuchak market must be shut down”, says Chris R. Shepherd, Deputy Regional Director of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, and lead author of the 2008 report *Pet freshwater turtle and tortoise trade in Chatuchak Market, Bangkok, Thailand*. “The authorities need to show the traders that they are not going to tolerate these illegal activities anymore.”

If convicted, arrested smuggler face up to four years imprisonment and a fine of up to THB 40,000 (USD 1,250) for violating Thailand's Wild Animal Reservation and Preservation Act B.E.2535 (illegally processing protected animals and illegally importing wildlife) and Customs Act B.E.2469 (illegally importing smuggled goods).

Insurgent groups fuel poaching in East Africa



A herd of elephants walk in the Amboseli game park in Kenya. The species is now being targeted by insurgents.

Nairobi, Oct. 14: The seizure of elephant ivory in the Al Shabaab controlled area of Somalia has raised concerns the rebel group may be targeting Kenya's wildlife trophies to raise funds for its war activities.

Bonaventure Ebayi, the director of the Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), a regional anti-poaching initiative operating from Kenya, confirmed the seizure.

"We were able to use the Kenya security forces and with assistance of security forces from the Somali Transitional Federal Government to recover the ivory," Ebayi told Xinhua in an interview in Nairobi.

The ivory is suspected to have come from the Arawale National Reserve, a 533 sq

kilometer wildlife sanctuary managed by Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS).

The official said the seizure, the first of its kind in the region, has raised concern of increased poaching in the region, where areas near insurgent activities the most affected by wildlife crime.

"The challenge of poaching and illegal wildlife meat in eastern Africa is made worse by insecure patches especially along the shared borders," said Ebayi.

Several border points, rich in wildlife, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia, among others, are controlled by insurgents, Ebayi said.

"It is in such areas where lack of state presence, means illicit small arms like guns are available to criminals and can easily be used to kill wildlife."

In Great Lakes region, rebel groups often attack protected game parks and reserves to kill wildlife for food or trophies.

He said poachers are now using sophisticated technology to avoid detection by game rangers.

"Ivory and rhino horns poachers and traders have become so sophisticated that the pace of training our wildlife rangers in combat, intelligence gathering and analysis and the use of modern equipment must be improved.

"We require improved capacity building in intelligence collection, investigations and making follow-ups to defeat the trade because the consequences on animals, tourism and the environment are too high," said Ebayi.

The Lusaka Agreement Task Force is housed at the KWS offices in Nairobi. The director said the task force is focusing on four countries where the 28 tonnes of animal parts seized this year have been traced. He, however, declined to name the countries.

Police in Six Countries seize 25-Suspected Tiger Traders

France, October 13, 2010: An international law enforcement operation coordinated by INTERPOL against the illegal trade in tigers has led to the arrest of 25 individuals suspected of taking part in the illicit trade of one of the world's most endangered species.

The two-month operation in August and September involved national enforcement agencies in six tiger-range countries - China, India, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.

The entire operation was coordinated by INTERPOL's Environmental Crime Programme at its General Secretariat headquarters in Lyon.

INTERPOL worked in close collaboration with the participating member countries to provide a single platform to National Central Bureaus for the exchange and coordination of intelligence via INTERPOL's I-24/7 secure police communications system.

In Russia, criminal intelligence obtained by national authorities revealed key smuggling routes.

Direct enforcement action during the operation included the arrest by Indian authorities of 10 suspected wildlife criminals.

In Thailand, the Royal Thai Police arrested a number of alleged tiger smugglers connected to cross-border trade, including



Tiger skin for sale in herbalist shop in Yanji China that was not part of the Interpol enforcement action It may have come from Changbaishan a Biosphere Reserve in northeast China at the North Korean border.

at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok. Skins of tigers and other rare cats are openly displayed for sale in Cholon District, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

In a single raid in Hanoi, Vietnamese police seized six whole tiger skeletons and six tiger skulls, while in a separate case two tiger carcasses were seized along with 50 kilograms of tiger bone. As few as 30 wild tigers are believed to survive in Vietnam.

In June, Vietnam's Environmental Police launched a 24-hour Wildlife Crime Hotline as a new enforcement measure in the battle against the illegal wildlife trade and other environmental crimes. More than 150 Environmental Police officers have been trained handle reports.

"The Government of Vietnam

has strong laws in place to stop the illegal trade of protected plants and animals and the Environment Police is committed to enforcing these laws," said Capt. Luong Minh Thao, Vice Director of the Department of Environmental Police.

In addition to the 25 arrests during the two-month INTERPOL operation, more than 50 kg of tiger bone, including skeletons and skulls, were seized, and key smuggling routes broken up during raids across the six participating countries.

INTERPOL's Environmental Crime Manager David Higgins said, "The national agencies involved in this international operation supported by INTERPOL have shown unscrupulous criminals who target threatened species that action will be taken to combat

their illegal activities." Tiger skin for sale in herbalist shop in Yanji, China that was not part of the INTERPOL enforcement action. It may have come from Changbaishan, a Biosphere Reserve in northeast China at the North Korean border.

Fewer than 3,200 tigers remain in the wild as a result of loss of habitat and the involvement of organized criminal networks engaged in poaching and in the illegal trafficking of their skins and bones.

"It's great to see news of arrests of criminals rather than seizures alone," said Debbie Banks, who heads the Tiger Campaign for the UK-based nonprofit Environmental Investigation Agency, which investigates and campaigns against a wide range of environmental crimes, including illegal wildlife trade. "Organized crime needs an organized response and Operation Tigre is a step in the right direction, but must be sustained," said Banks.

Conservationists hold out hope that concerted action and funding may be the outcome of a Heads of State Tiger Summit that will be held November 22-23 in St. Petersburg, Russia, hosted by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and World Bank President Robert Zoellick.

The summit aims to get unprecedented high-level commitment for tiger conservation from all of the 13 tiger range states.

Banks said, "Increased resources for slick, professional policing operations to bust the criminal networks controlling the tiger trade should be at the top of the agenda for the St. Petersburg tiger forum."

The global conservation organization WWF has been working with tiger range countries to strengthen protection for wild tigers. WWF hopes the St. Petersburg summit will deliver a high-level binding agreement committing countries to initiate actions, backed by sustainable financing mechanisms, to double the number of wild tigers by 2022.

Large Seizure of Deer Antlers-India

Lucknow, Oct 2 – Three poachers were arrested and nine quintals (920 kg) of antlers were seized in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district, according to a forest official.

'The antlers are mainly of spotted deer, sambar deer, barking deer,' Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Girish H.V. told IANS over phone from Saharanpur, some 450 km from here. Officials have not ruled out mafia link into the incident. Police and forest officials have initiated a joint inquiry.

Several people keeping regular contacts with the arrested men have been detained, police inspector Deepak Chaturvedi said.

APPEAL

Dear valued readers,

The 26th issue of the Wildlife Times is in your hands. It is our small effort to raise various issues related with wildlife conservation. Please help us include the activities from your group or organizations of wildlife conservation by sending us the concerned information. We would love to find any suggestion and criticism. Please feel free to leave your feedback at info@citesnepal.org. We also seek support from your organization to continue this Wildlife Times. We look forward to your queries, comments and support.

