

2004/2005 Annual Report

- Report From Chair
- Projects Supported By GTP In 2004/2005

THE END OF THE WILD INDIA?

India is in the grip of another tiger crisis equal to that of the early 1990s. There are tigers and leopards dying in every corner of the country. The Wildlife Protection Society of India recorded the death of 719 tigers and 2474 leopards between 1994 and 2004. Even high profile Ranthambhore is facing the fact that some of its tigers are missing in suspicious circumstances. The situation in Sariska is even worse with it now being accepted that all its tigers have gone, having fallen prey to notorious poaching gangs.

In June 2002 a directive from Project Tiger urged stringent protection measures including extensive foot patrolling, strict supervision and surprise checks by officers, joint raids with local police etc. "A park and its tigers cannot be protected unless the management is out in the field patrolling everyday." But this has not happened.

India's two most acclaimed wildlife scientists who have provided insights into tiger behaviour in their published works over the last few years, have been harassed either through court cases or just plain non-co-operation by authorities. (this paragraph could be put into the Panna piece to make the front page less negative or if you require more space for a good pic on the front page)

97% of India is now dedicated and reserved for humans. Just 3% remains for the wild animals and plants that together make up the "India.a.a.a.ah" that so many of us love. Even this remaining area is under siege. There is no political support for it. A draft bill lying with the Indian government entitled "The Scheduled Tribes and Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act" will, if passed, ensure the end of every bit of wilderness in India. This measure would give those dwellers and tribes, who have lived illegally in forests for the past 10 years, the legal stamp of approval.

It is a desperate situation for India to find itself in. It is a time when those with integrity and vision are standing and being counted and must receive unflinching support from those who believe in the ideals of a beautiful forest with the tiger still roaming free within it, protecting by its very presence the whole natural environment, India's water catchment areas, its very integrity. If the political will can at last be shamed and brought to account, maybe there is still a window of opportunity through which optimism may prevail against the odds.

Amanda Bright
Chair of Trustees

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Ranthambhore and Sariska Tiger Reserves, Rajasthan

The Committee appointed by the Chief Minister of Rajasthan to look into the tiger crisis in Ranthambhore and Sariska has confirmed that there are no tigers left in Sariska. Immediate protection measures have been put in place around Ranthambhore where it is to be hoped that this timely intervention will protect the park from going the same way.

GTP's sponsorship of the "Ultimate Ranthambhore Guide" continued into 2004. This second edition is now being sold at the park entrance to raise funds for the Ranthambhore Staff Welfare Association. The first edition raised over £10,000 for the Association. It is still the only publication of its type available for visitors to this world famous tiger reserve and provides a great variety of information on the park and its natural diversity.

The Prakratik Society continues its work to win the hearts and minds of the local people believing that only a project that aims to find local solutions with local people can ensure Ranthambhore's long term survival. They have now completed more than 10 years of community conservation work around Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve.

Panna Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh

Dr Raghu Chundawat has been studying tigers in Panna Tiger Reserve for the last nine years. During this time he has been radio tracking two male and five female radio collared tigers, as well as some of the tiger's prey - five sambar and two chital. Radio tracking of these tigers amounts to over 41 years of total monitoring. Dr Chundawat and his team has been able to observe and monitor for extended periods eight breeding females, five adult males and over 14 litters (some 31 cubs) from these known breeding tigresses.

For the last two years he has been documenting how the Park authorities have been failing to respond to his warnings of threats to the tiger and the management of the general Park environment. The Supreme Court's Central Empowered committee (CEC) has, after site visits, twice recorded their own grave concerns and have made suggestions to remedy the situation. In spite of all this nothing has been done.

Dr Chundawat has been subject to continued harassment of his project. At one point a project vehicle (donated by GTP) and equipment were seized by the park authorities, although the vehicle was subsequently returned. His permission to carry out project activities was seriously curtailed by spurious conditions and he was asked to vacate the field camp and finally the whole research project was suspended. After many months of representations permission was finally restored at the end of January 2005. After a fresh meeting in Panna in February 2005 the CEC were again shocked about the management of the Park. They suggested an immediate assessment of tiger numbers using the camera trap method.

During March 2005 a census was carried out, but using the unreliable pug mark method. This has reported that tiger numbers remain at an official 35! This finding is

despite Dr Chundawat having documented the loss of 9 breeding tigers out of the eleven known to research project staff. The project has in fact submitted 23 missing tigers to the Prime Minister in his capacity as the Chairman of the National Board of Wildlife. During the census 2200 impression pads made at 300m intervals along all the road and tracks and monitored over 7 days, turned up only 31 pugmarks. Another 30 were "collected" from other parts of the park. Some were seen being manufactured from old casts in a bowl of sand at one range office.

Note: Wildlife biologists favour the camera trapping method as being the most scientific method available to estimate tiger numbers. The camera trapping method takes photographs of tigers. Each tiger has a unique stripe pattern, much like a fingerprint. Photographs taken of tigers in this way mean that one tiger cannot be counted more than once. A record of tigers built using this method would also be of great forensic use as it would help to trace the origin of skins in instances of poaching. At present when skins are recovered from the illegal wildlife market it is easy for authorities to shrug off the responsibility. With the pug-mark method each different pug-mark of the same tiger may be counted as different tigers and can throw up absurd and unrealistic tiger densities in small pockets.

Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, West Bengal

Project Lifeline Sundarbans (PLS) has been progressing the scope of their work with the villages on the outlying islands of the Sundarbans. Another medical officer has joined the Bagh hospital. This has enabled them to intensify the activities at the hospital. Dr Mahoto comes with experience of working in the Sundarbans so his expertise is very welcomed.

Under a recent tie up with the authorities at the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, PLS has started veterinary care services for the villagers' use. The vet stays at the hospital camp for 8 days a month and provides immense help to the villagers.

PLS are also in the process of setting up a 'Dastkar' unit in the Sundarbans to help the local women earn their own income. Those of you familiar with 'Dastkar' activities in other places will be aware of how empowering it is for local women to be able to receive the expertise and backup to make handicrafts, which are then marketed throughout the whole country.

PLEASE HELP US FUND THESE 3 PROJECTS NOW

GTP is currently seeking funds for three projects. If you are able to support our work, please either send us a cheque, made payable to Global Tiger Patrol or fill in the standing order form, not forgetting to fill in the Gift Aid section if you are a UK taxpayer. Any donation you can make towards these projects together with other ongoing GTP work would be gratefully received and put to good use.

1. Alternative Fuel Initiatives in Panna

It is generally accepted that tigers will only be protected in the long run if the communities living within and alongside their habitats can see the direct advantage of keeping the tiger alive. Working towards this aim Dr Raghunandan Chundawat has

set up a new project working with several villages considered important as tiger breeding habitats around the edge of Panna Tiger Reserve. The two activities that place direct biotic pressure on Reserve resources are livestock grazing and fuel wood collection.

Discussions have taken place with two villages about their willingness to participate in reducing the number of unproductive livestock and find alternate means of fuel. After several meetings, a select group was taken to a cattle breeding centre to educate them about the improved indigenous breeds available, their potential and more importantly the importance of stall feeding. Both villages are very keen to participate in this new initiative and, in anticipation, some of the families have sold off their unproductive cattle, which is very encouraging and shows how keen the local community is.

Cow dung is used very successfully in many areas to generate energy through inexpensive biogas plants. The concept for this energy to be used for cooking is being introduced for a few selected families. At present, villagers leave their cattle unattended to wander and graze freely and often collect fuel wood from the area. With the introduction of biogas it is hoped to encourage them to stall feed their cattle, keeping them close to home to facilitate dung collection to fuel the biogas unit. In the past, officials initiated a similar scheme but after a year there was no maintenance. The transition from traditional to this new fuel source is slow and can take more than a year. The key to the success of this type of project is maintenance over a long period so that families switch and keep to this alternate source of energy.

Funding required: Around £6,000

2. Camera Trap Equipment

Looking towards the future and to undertaking proper scientific work to ascertain the scale of the tiger problem and identify individual tigers, Dr Chundawat has submitted a project to us for the purchase of camera trap equipment. At present there is a great lack of availability of the sets for carrying out these surveys. Funding for the actual project work has been secured so it is the equipment alone that now requires purchasing. Once in hand the equipment will be invaluable in carrying out scientific work both in Panna and other protected areas.

Funding required: Around £16,000

3. Boat Repairs for Project Lifeline Sundarbans

The launch, donated by GTP in the nineties, is still proving invaluable to Project Lifeline Sundarbans (PLS). However, at the end of March 2005 it sustained serious damage in a cyclone. Urgent work needs to be carried out to the engine and to replace some of the planking to the launch.

Funds Required: £1,500

Saving Wild TigersThe Way Forward by Valmik Thapar

We have entered an era like no other. It is the worst crisis for the tiger since the inception of Project Tiger in 1973. The wilderness and all its inhabitants are at the crossroads. Forests diminish, tigers die and the natural treasures of this country vanish like never before. What can we do to change course before it is too late?

Action Plan for Chief Ministers

1. We need to immediately AND on a war footing modernise our forest staff of over 1,75,000 men that is directly responsible for the protection of both tiger and forest. This protection force has been completely neglected for decades and has gone to seed. 30% of all posts are vacant and there has been no recruitment for 20 years as an 'economy' measure. It is this measure that has killed tigers and the forests of India. The average age of the forest guard is now touching 53. He is just not fit to patrol his beat and the 20 year old poachers have fun on their undisturbed killing sprees. We have by virtue of a ban on recruitment left our nation's natural treasures open for whole scale looting. Today the forest staff is totally demoralised and lacks all motivation. They require an urgent dose of inspiration. We need to fill all vacant posts with fresh recruits and provide arms, and other infrastructure right across the country so that the forest staff is fully equipped to deal with the present threat. This first step must be taken immediately by our Chief Ministers, since the issue of forest and tigers is a state subject.

2. Equally vital for all the state governments to do is to provide the best training capsules that money can buy for all the forest staff. The protection machinery needs to be lean and mean and a deterrent to poachers and timber mafias. Good on site training is a vital component to prevent poachers from getting easily into our network of forests. And if there are any delays in this process, temporary deployments of armed police will be essential as a preventive measure. Till the forest staff is totally modernised we can take no chances at all.

3. State Governments must encourage good science and research across all our tiger habitats. Sadly so far this process has been discourage and ignored. Many independent field researchers have been hounded and harassed for calling a spade a spade. This must change. Field researchers are like doctors that assess a problem and then recommend a cure. Their advice must be heeded and their work supported. In a new National Park service the relationship between the park manager and wildlife scientist will determine the health of the area.

4. Last but not least are the local people. There must be training courses tht create village protection forces and local intelligence gathering cells. The young in a village must be imparted the best training in forest management be it water and soil conservation or even scientific monitoring of wild animals. There is much to be done and local people ca play a vital part. They need to be diverted away from exploitation to protection.

TIGER TOURISM - Curse or Cure?

by Julian Matthews, Chairman, Travel Operators for Tigers

"Big hotels, supported by influential politicians, have a short-term view and keep demanding access for more safari vehicles to ferry growing number of tourists to see the tigers," said Govind Sagar Bhardwaj, the head of India's premier tiger reserve, Ranthambhore National Park. He accused 'politically influential hotel owners' of

endangering the national park's future and warns there will be no big cats left to see in five years unless the number of visitors is controlled.

This one statement encapsulates a further conflict raging in India around the disappearance of tigers, that of whether tourism is a benefit or a danger to wildlife conservation. Quite simply it depends how you use tourism - and Indian wildlife tourism is a poor model for long term sustainability in its present form.

We shouldn't blame the tourists themselves. Tourism, or more correctly, responsible tourism, is one of the best tools in a conservationist's tool box as shown most vividly in parts of Africa. It is also proven in most Indian parks, for where tourism exists one generally finds the healthiest tiger populations and their prey. It's a fabulous 'anti poaching' unit for a start!

Wildlife tourists are effectively the victims of poor tourism practices and complete tunnel vision shown by the Government departments responsible for Park management and Project Tiger officials in their attitude to tourism. Ranthambhore is probably the best example of how not to run wildlife tourism.

My recent visit to Ranthambhore, as Chairman of the Travel Operators for Tigers campaign, highlighted this fact. Unrestricted growth of hotels and lodges outside the park, complete lack of coordination and communication between parks, tourism and local communities, very poor quality guiding and interpretation for visitors, lack of recognition or support by most hotels and lodges of their responsibilities to the very resource they need to sustain their businesses and a park entrance system that has drivers and tourism officials regularly having 'fisty cuffs' at the park's entrance, in full view of clients watching from their 24-seater open buses called 'Canterers'. There are 256 tourists allowed into Ranthambhore at any one time, but a bednight capacity of over a 1000 and growing each season. Demand completely outstrips supply - ensuring such conflicts.

This, combined with huge holes in park staffing because of low morale and poor pay, too many 'desk johnnies' spending too little time in the field, a complete restriction on scientifically proven wildlife monitoring programmes (like that initiated and funded by GTP, through Dr Raghu Chundawat in Panna) and the lack of official encouragement and support towards community run wildlife regions and corridors, is having a devastating effect on the ability to maintain wilderness regions effectively. While tourism may help to justify preservation of wilderness regions and support it financially and by its visible presence, sadly it needs all the institutions and personnel in a civil society, free from blind intransigence, corruption, and with a common agenda, to stop its ultimate demise.

Thankfully only in late March, thanks to overwhelming evidence, lobbying and bad publicity has the Indian Government finally woken up to the problems that exist and instituted a range of changes that are desperately needed. Better late than never.

Be Environmentally Aware When Booking Your Next Wildlife Safari to India

- If you are travelling to India on a tiger safari use one of the 20 UK Tour Operators signed up to TOFT campaign:

- Adhere to the Codes of Conduct when visiting and please report any misdemeanours to Travel Operators for Tigers at info@toftiger.org
- For further information, please see the website at www.toftiger.org

MEMBERS OF TRAVEL OPERATORS FOR TIGERS (TOFT)

Berkshire

RAPTOR ADVENTURES LTD, Slough

Tel: 01753 725401 www.raptoradventures.co.uk

Cumbria

TIGER TRAILS, Calerbridge

Tel: 01946 841495 www.tigertrails.co.uk

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Tel: 01773 873497 www.classicjourneys.co.uk

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DISCOVERY INITIATIVES, Cirencester

Tel: 01285 643333 www.discoveryinitiatives.com

STEPPE TRAVEL, Cirencester

Tel: 01285 651010 www.steppestravel.co.uk

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Tel: 01892 722440 www.keralaconnect.co.uk

PETTITTS TRAVEL, Tunbridge Wells

Tel: 01892 515966 www.pettitts.co.uk

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PARTNERSHIP TRAVEL, N3

Tel: 020 8343 3446 www.partnershiptravel.co.uk

AMPERSAND TRAVEL, NW8

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Tel: 020 7386 4646 www.theultimatetravelcompany.co.uk

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Oxfordshire

INDIAN EXPLORATIONS, Holwell
Tel: 01993 822443 www.explorationcompany.com

Wiltshire

GUERBA WORLD TRAVEL, Westbury
Tel: 01373 826611 www.guerba.co.uk

Travel Operators for Tigers' Code of Conduct for Visitors

Visitors to India's wild places will help to conserve the natural environment and assure their safe and enjoyable stay by following these simple rules

- Act with courtesy and respect to local people, the authorities and to other visitors.
- Do not disturb wildlife or ask guiding staff to get you closer than is necessary or advisable to wild animals. Report to park staff immediately if you see any irresponsible behaviour or driving off road.
- Make as little noise as possible when in park areas, especially while watching wildlife.
- Avoid litter at all times.
- Act with sensitivity regarding the dress code of the host nation. You are a visitor and will be treated as a guest if you show respect.
- Avoid taking excessive photographs, being intrusive with the camera and insensitive to those you are photographing. Always ask permission. A number of the ventures offered will have accomplished photographers on them and slides and pictures can be duplicated for participants to keep. Close up photographs of people should ONLY be taken by cameras with long lenses, unless express permission is granted by the subject.
- Endeavour to learn a few key phrases of the language of your hosts.

- Take time to get to know and understand your hosts when the opportunity arises.
- Do not buy, collect or trade in wildlife products. It is frequently illegal and can lead to prosecution.
- Adhere to national and local rules and regulations inside protected areas.

BLUNDERING DOWN THE CATWALK

The tiger crisis has been going on for decades - urgent steps need to be taken to save natural India by Dr. K. Ullas Karanth

Just a few months ago, Ministry of Environment had planned a multi-million rupee celebration of Project Tiger's 30th anniversary: this plan is currently on hold because some of us complained that there was nothing to celebrate, and the money would be better spent helping tigers survive. Now, following the disappearance of tigers at Sariska, the media have proclaimed yet another 'tiger crisis'.

The tiger is depicted as a victim in a hit-and-run case, who can only be saved by some emergency treatment or other. NGOs are screaming for action: whatever first aid they fancy at the moment. On the other hand, officials appear unworried, except about the bad press they are getting. But the most creative explanations so far have come from Rajesh Gopal, Director of Project Tiger. Quotes attributed to him range from the bizarre explanation that tigers have migrated away from prey-rich Sariska forests to dubious claim that the tiger's future can be secured through a piece of fancy GIS software he is waiting for. This web-based genie will apparently tell him what is happening his tigers across the country. A pity really, if only the poor Sariska cats could have sent real-time messages while they were being clobbered.

In the opposite direction, Gopal's boss, the Director of Wildlife Preservation appears all set to initiate a ban on radio-telemetry, bird banding and other standard tools of wildlife monitoring. Only a handful of wildlifers are worried. If he was in charge of telecommunications instead of wildlife, he would probably try to ban telephones, wireless sets and computers-and have a riot on his hands. Meanwhile, the Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) is reportedly asking for further proof that there is indeed a crisis.

The truth is that the real 'tiger crisis' has been always around. If we don't take notice and institute long-term cures, even the larger and currently more secure tiger populations like the ones in Kanha and Nagarhole-Bandipur could disappear over a long term.

When P. K Sen, the current head of WWF's tiger program, took over as Director of Project Tiger in 1996, he recorded problems of tiger protection in brutally frank official notes. No one in the Ministry above him bothered. He struggled for four years to introduce science-driven tiger monitoring. Most of his colleagues ignored his directives. No wonder, after retirement, Sen is an angry man. Fortunately, dedicated individuals like Sen, Chinnappa of Nagarhole and Reddy of Ranthambore can still be found sporadically within the tiger's domain. However, their dogged, individualistic efforts are becoming increasingly irrelevant in the context of a massive systemic failure. Worse still, failures that stare us in the face are being covered up by official

'reviews' of tiger reserves and projects. These superficial reviews are often generated by doling out fat consultancies to persons of dubious ability and integrity. Before a cynical reader (like the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, for instance) dismisses me as yet another wild-eyed green missionary unconcerned with human welfare, let me just point out that natural India with its full complement of wild animals and plants is now confined to a mere 3% of our landscape. The remaining 97% is overwhelmingly reserved for human welfare.

There are three major facets to the 'tiger crisis'. First, tigers would be long gone but for a strong personal intervention by Mrs. Indira Gandhi over three decades ago. The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 and Forest Conservation Act of 1980 were two laws that buffered India's wild nature from ravages of humans. Subsequent politicians have worked hard to dismantle the two legal "brakes" that Mrs. Gandhi had fitted to protect natural India. The Ministry of Environment, the skilled mechanic supposed to keep these brakes in good repair, has become an agent promoting commercial penetration of the protected areas, deftly applying a 'pro-people' polish over its handiwork.

A second aspect to remember is the remarkable recovery of India's wildlife between 1970-1990, before the present decline commenced. It was made possible because of a strong commitment to basic protection on the part of the Indian Forest Service that implemented Indira Gandhi's laws. Subsequently, this professional commitment has nose-dived. On ground protection has given way to a massive wave of escapism in the form of expensive, corruption-ridden 'community-based conservation' projects. And, to costly pretenses of carrying out wildlife management while in reality destroying perfectly good natural habitats through unnecessary manipulations driven by greed or ignorance. While there are apparently tons of money available to pay an ever expanding army of senior forest officials, levels of tiger protection on ground, in terms of men, equipment, vehicles, patrolling systems, and even prompt payment of wages to lower staff have all plummeted. Compared to the mid-1980's basic protection capacity stands reduced by more than half. No wonder one by one, tiger populations are being pushed over the edge by poaching, prey depletion and habitat fragmentation.

A brand new professionally trained wildlife service must be established, not just another generic UPSC cadre as envisaged in some quarters. Engineers, surgeons and airline pilots get rigorously trained before being allowed to practice their professions. Similarly, wildlife professionals at higher levels should have five years of rigorous training in biology, management and law enforcement. The lower echelons should be manned not by semi-literate small town boys who want to escape at the first opportunity as at present, but by genuine forest dwelling people with traditional skills suited for nature protection.

The third major area of deficit is the neglect of genuine scientific research and monitoring in tiger conservation. Millions of rupees spent on so-called wildlife research (conducted mostly by unqualified officials or consultants) have not produced even a dozen scientific articles in peer-reviewed international journals in three decades. This anti-science culture permits individual MOEF officials to inject their personal whims and fancies into wildlife management policies. Meanwhile, attempts are made to keep out genuine wildlife research and monitoring through blind application of draconian laws originally meant for dealing with wildlife criminals.

This science-deficiency has been criticized widely internationally, but the MOEF does not even acknowledge these criticisms. Its proposed solution to the problem is mind-boggling: invite yet another UN-style bureaucracy, IUCN, to set up shop in Delhi.

Take the example of camera-trap sampling of tiger populations, which has been demonstrated to work well across India's major tiger reserves. It holds potential for monitoring some of our critical tiger populations. Apart from providing reliable estimates of tiger numbers, such sampling can measure vital parameters like annual survival and recruitment rates. While admittedly not applicable at wider geographic scales, it is highly relevant to monitoring medium to high-density tiger populations at key sites that are now targeted by poachers. Moreover, unlike pugmarks, DNA codes or blips on a GIS map, photos of flesh and blood individual tigers that can be identified by ordinary citizens and enforcement officials without special skills. Such photographic monitoring of tigers may even permit authorities to trace the origins of at least some tigers when seizures are made.

The broad solutions I suggest above are neither quick nor easy to implement, but there is urgent need to arrive at a political consensus to arrest the critical decline of natural India. Until they do, there will always be a tiger crisis.

TACKLING WILDLIFE CRIME IN THE UK by Andy Fisher, Head of Wildlife Crime Unit, Metropolitan Police Service, New Scotland Yard

The Wildlife Crime Unit has now been operating on a full-time basis for just over a year. Many people do not realise that, prior to March 2004, our enforcement work was undertaken by a small team of police officers who had to fit this in around their many other duties. Obviously, this severely restricted the amount that could be done and, although the Unit remains very small, we have achieved more in the last year than was possible before. During the year we have continued to monitor the traditional Chinese medicine trade in London and tiger products remain a key target.

The work of the Unit involves the protection of wildlife in the London area as well as the international illegal trade in endangered species and this has involved us in some significant operations. These have included the successful prosecution of a prolific collector of bird's eggs and a major operation against the illegal trade in British wild birds.

In the first of these cases a collection of 730 bird's eggs was seized from a house in Bow, East London. These included some of Britain's rarest species such as Hen Harrier, Chough and Dotterel. The individual was subsequently sentenced to six months imprisonment. He had served two previous custodial sentences for offences involving bird's eggs.

In February 2005, in a joint operation with the RSPCA, police officers raided an East London pub which is believed to be a venue for the trade in wild birds. Fourteen people were arrested and over 70 birds, mainly Goldfinches, were seized. Police enquiries are continuing.

In November 2004, our work against the illegal trade in endangered species led to a large seizure of ivory products from shops in Central London. As part of the same

operation, police in Gloucestershire seized a large quantity of ivory from a factory. The value of the seized items is estimated to exceed £100,000. Again, enquiries are continuing.

In summer 2004 the Unit worked in partnership with the Royal Parks and the University of Westminster to ensure the security of a nest site used by Peregrine Falcons, on a high-rise building in Central London. Peregrine Falcons are beginning to establish themselves as a breeding species in London, where they find the many tall buildings and abundance of pigeons to their liking. Last year the birds successfully reared two young and they have now returned to the nest site, where they laid eggs, which have recently hatched. During the winter a webcam was installed at the site and it is now possible to watch the nest over the internet at www.bbc.co.uk/london Peregrine falcons are an endangered species with the status in CITES as tigers or pandas and it is good to know that we have our own endangered species living wild in Central London. We will be working to ensure they are safe from the criminals that often target this species for their eggs or to take their young for the falconry trade.

As part of our work to increase public awareness of wildlife crime in London, we have just published a new booklet on the illegal trade in endangered species. Entitled "Protecting Endangered Species" copies of the new 24 page booklet are available, from the Wildlife Crime Unit, free of charge, and can be ordered by ringing us on 020 7230 7204 or by e-mail to wildlife@met.police.uk.

The Unit is also mounting an exhibition on Wildlife Crime in London at the Horniman Museum in Forest Hill, London SE23 from 24 June to 4 July 2005. This will give us the opportunity to show many of our seized items to the people of London and help us to reduce crimes against wildlife. All visitors are welcome.

2005 will also see the Unit doing more work against the trade in traditional Chinese medicines made from tigers and other endangered species and, probably, a wide range of other wildlife crimes. We always say that we can find ourselves dealing with virtually anything in London and I don't expect the coming year to be any different.

If you see endangered species products for sale, or if you know of anybody involved in crimes against wildlife, please ring us on the number above, or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

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21ST CENTURY TIGER UPDATE

European Zoos' Campaign Boosts Wild Tiger Conservation

GTP's partnership in 21st Century Tiger with the Zoological Society of London goes from strength to strength. The second year of the EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquariums) Europe-wide campaign came to an end in September 2004. Some 126 zoos in 24 countries pledged their support, which resulted in over Euros 660,000 being raised for 21st Century Tiger's projects.

In the last year, 21st Century Tiger's wild tiger conservation funds have supported projects in Sumatra, Russia, India, Cambodia and China, working with other agencies and NGOs including AMUR, Fauna and Flora International, Tigris, Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, Wildlife Conservation Society, Centre for Wildlife Studies, Phoenix and WildAid.

Projects funded include training for forest rangers/guards, public awareness and education programmes in tiger range states, working with local communities around important tiger habitat, fire-fighting assistance and studies on managing unprotected areas, sometimes agricultural land, to support the tiger and other wildlife.

The British government has also continued to support 21st Century Tiger's funding of international projects to conserve tigers in the wild.

For further information on 21st Century Tiger's important work, please visit www.21stCenturyTiger.org

GTP PATRON DIES

HRH Prince Bernhardt, patron to Global Tiger Patrol since our first registration as a charity in 1989 died in 2004, aged 93. The German born Prince, father of the Queen of the Netherlands was known as an ardent conservationist and an ambassador for nature and we are honoured that he was associated with GTP for so many years. *He was also known as a lover of fast cars, aircraft and women, and was welcomed for bringing a dash of colour to the austere style of the Dutch court!*

WITHOUT YOU OUR WORK WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE

We thank all our individual and corporate supporters, the loyal band of people who do street collections and also a number of supporters who made donations in place of sending Christmas cards to their friends and family. We welcome Rose Corcoran to our board of trustees and thank Alan Mole for administrating our accounts, since GTP's inception and wish him a happy retirement. All your contributions are most welcome and help us continue our vital work in seeking out those projects run by individuals who still retain integrity in the face of the most tremendous adversity.