



# GLOBAL TIGER PATROL

[www.globaltigerpatrol.org](http://www.globaltigerpatrol.org)

Newsletter 2006

Photo: Pete Cooper

## View from the Chair

Amanda Bright  
*Chair of Trustees*

There have been reports that China is considering using bone from its captive bred tigers in the domestic trade. This type of trade would be a disastrous move for the wild tiger. By condoning this practice the Chinese government would allow illegal wild tiger parts to be used and "laundered" into this market. Conservation agencies have consistently stated that tiger farming cannot be called a conservation measure.

The trade in tiger skins and parts has been growing out of all control over the last few years. Seizures of tiger bones, claws and skins have been horrifying, fuelled by demand in China and Tibet. It is not illegal to wear tiger skins in China and Tibet; it is illegal to buy and sell them or to smuggle them into the country. The absence of any Chinese enforcement means that the trade continues on the open market. Other articles in this newsletter give more details of a project Global Tiger Patrol (GTP) has funded to support the production of VCDs showing footage and images of Tibetan people at a Horse Festival in the Sichuan Province of China, wearing tiger, leopard and otter skin, from small patches right down to a whole skin, as a way of displaying wealth.

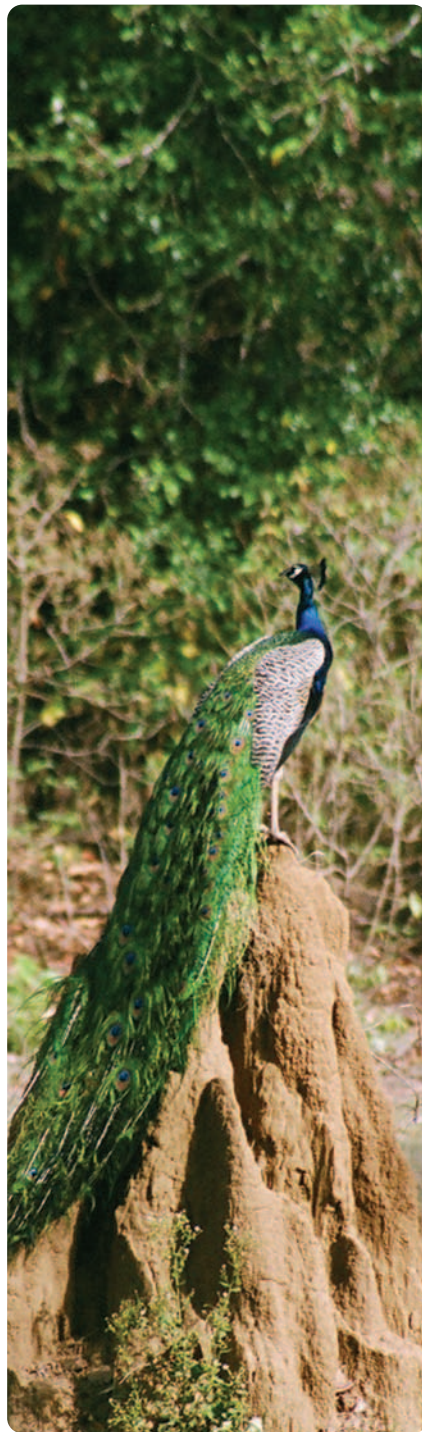
Once, India pronounced itself as leading the world in conservation. Unfortunately this has now been exposed as a sham. We are regularly receiving reports about missing tigers from Ranthambhore, Kanha, Bandhavgarh and Panna. The tiger is extinct in Sariska. Other parks have no pugmarks or kills. For years, official tiger figures for parks have been talked up for numerous reasons, not least being job security, avoiding inquiries and scandals of officials being caught in the spotlight.

Apparently even the national tiger census figures (due to be released in August) are being delayed for another year. We have been receiving reports that the number of tigers in India may be as low as 1,200-1,500, which would mean a fall of over 2,000 tigers in 3 →

From front cover

years (according to the 2002 census)! India was the main hope for the future of the tiger, as it was home to over 50% of the world's wild population at the end of the last century. How long before the tiger is extinct in India? The main cause of these killings is poaching. In 2004 there was the largest seizure of the last 10 years in Tibet: 39 tiger and 579 leopard skins. Since then seizures have continued - and what about the skins that have not been apprehended? How many more are getting through to feed the demand for tiger skins and bones.

India still has a committed band of private individuals with integrity but their personal standing is being constantly undermined by civil servants and vested interests. Although I am not Indian, I had the privilege of living there for three years in the 1990s and every year since have travelled widely to this country's wildest places and have seen extraordinary wildlife. It grieves me to think that the Indian government and officialdom think so little of their national animal and its habitat being so decimated. Why is this? It seems clear that because India's remaining forest is so coveted by mining interests, farmers, politicians and industrialists that the law of the land is being flouted openly to harvest these riches. From the cases being brought before the Centrally Empowered Committee of the Indian Supreme Court (which deals with environment cases) it is clear that government agencies are amongst the worst culprits. It is exactly these government agencies that should be upholding their own laws as an example to their citizens. Their behaviour represents an insidious diminution of respect and worth of this huge natural resource - which, once it is gone, will never return. 🐾



## Award Finalist

Stop the Slaughter – Stop Wearing Tiger Skins is a finalist in the Wildscreen 2006 Campaign Award, which will be announced this October at the Wildscreen Festival in Bristol. Many congratulations to EIA and WPSI; GTP is delighted to have been able to help.

Wildscreen has been celebrating and promoting excellence within the wildlife media industry for 25 years. This year's festival takes place between 15-20 October. [www.wildscreenfestival.org](http://www.wildscreenfestival.org)

## Infamous Poacher Reveals Links with Tibet & Nepal

Reports received earlier this year revealed that the infamous poacher, Sansar Chand, informed the Rajasthan police that hundreds of tiger and leopard skins were sold to international dealers in Nepal and that they were smuggled through Tibet.

Sansar Chand was arrested last year in Delhi and is currently in prison.

## Important Change of GTP contact details

GTP has recently changed its email and website addresses.

To contact us in the future by email, the new address is [admin@globaltigerpatrol.org](mailto:admin@globaltigerpatrol.org)

You can find the new website at [www.globaltigerpatrol.org](http://www.globaltigerpatrol.org)

[www.globaltigerpatrol.org](http://www.globaltigerpatrol.org)

# NGOs Rally Together to Stop the Tiger Skin Trade

Stop the Slaughter – Stop Wearing Tiger Skins - This was the simple message behind a new initiative in January 2006 by a coalition of non-government organisations (NGOs) aimed at raising awareness among the tiger and leopard skin wearers in Tibet and western China, many of whom were unaware of the devastating impact the skin trade was having on big cat populations.

The pressure from this and other NGOs campaigns may have proved effective, as reports received stated that Tibetans were been burning endangered wild animal skins to encourage wildlife preservation with about 1,500 people participating and around US\$60,000 – 70,000 worth of animal pelts being destroyed. Apparently, the price of Tibetan chubas has also appeared to fall.

Information was disseminated through an exhibition of photographs, posters, leaflets and an awareness film in the Khampa language. The film, produced by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) with the support of Global Tiger Patrol (GTP), contained shocking footage obtained during an EIA and WPSI survey of the trade across the Tibetan plateau where the true and horrific scale of tiger and leopard skin use was revealed.

The initiative was launched at Kalachakra, a major spiritual event in the Tibetan Buddhist calendar, which took place in January at Amravati, southern India. Tens of thousands of Tibetans from all over the world came face to face with the cruel reality of the trade as the coalition displayed stark images tracing the story of the tiger, from the jungles of India to a brutal death at the hand of poachers, and the final indignity of being reduced to a fashionable ornament for Tibetan costumes.

Posters and information leaflets, produced with the assistance of The Fund For The Tiger, along with the awareness film were distributed amongst visitors to the Kalachakra by representatives of Khawakarpo Tibet Culture Centre who manned a stall at the festival.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself condemned the illegal trade in tiger and leopard skins, and on 9th January addressed the crowds at the Kalachakra stating that he had been very embarrassed to see photographs of people wearing banned animal furs and skins in Tibet. He also commended Tibetans working for animal welfare.

A spokesman for the coalition said: "We hope that the shocking images being used in the material will encourage Tibetans to abandon the cruel practice of decorating costumes with tiger, leopard or otter skins."

On hearing about this new multi-NGO awareness campaign, the UK Government's Biodiversity Minister Jim Knight said the initiative would make a positive contribution to the conservation of some of the world's most endangered big cats. "I share their grave concerns about the future of big cats, and tigers in particular, which are under such great threat from the illegal trade. I applaud the work that the EIA, the Wildlife Protection

Society of India and Global Tiger Patrol are doing to help stop the illegal trade by raising awareness of the plight of tigers and leopards in these areas. Next month I will be traveling to India myself, and will discuss the work that is being done to protect tigers, and investigate the obstacles that still surround efforts to fight wildlife crime, including illegal trade like this in Tibet and western China." 



B Wright / WPSI / EIA

## Be Vigilant

If you notice endangered species products for sale or if you know of anybody involved in crimes against wildlife, please ring:

The Metropolitan Police's Wildlife Crime Unit on  
020 7230 8898

or

Crimestoppers on  
0800 555111

# Projects Requiring Funding

## Please Help

India's tigers have been in a crisis before and with support have rallied. Our mission is to put the money we raise into projects that really work. Often this is catalytic or seed funding, which once the project gets off the ground, the bigger agencies move in to take over with major funding. Sometimes this means we hold onto funds awaiting the right project or study and with key scientists or conservationists in place.

## Tiger Conservation Fellowship

Many large donor-driven tiger conservation initiatives have foundered because of serious issues with financial sustainability, inconsistent political and administrative will to act on the ground, and the lack of effective local level presence and support for tiger conservation. In contrast, more localised tiger conservation efforts spearheaded by motivated individuals are frequently much more successful in mobilizing ground-level changes while being considerably less expensive to undertake. Further, these efforts also focus directly at broadening the local support base for tiger conservation within the community.

In this light GTP is supporting, through a fellowship, an outstanding community conservation leader, Mr D V Girish, who works consolidating the tiger habitat in and around Bhadra Tiger Reserve. Bhadra is one of the important tiger conservation sites in the Western Ghats in Karnataka.

The work of a Conservation Fellow is conducted year-round, outside the boundaries of protected areas, and carried out strictly in compliance with all local and national laws. The background to part of this work was that over 400 families were relocated under a government-sponsored voluntary relocation programme from Bhadra Tiger Reserve between 1999 and 2001. Most of the proposed work under the rehabilitation programme is nearing completion. The project leader continues to co-ordinate to ensure the completion of the rehabilitation programme in totality. The project leader has kept in constant touch with the beneficiaries on the project. So many re-location projects founder in the long run because the beneficiaries are not actively supported in the long run. **GTP is seeking £2,780 to continue this funding.**

# Sundarbans Tiger Reserve

The GTP funded boat is currently on dry land requiring repair to its bodywork and other refurbishment. The engine which needed a major overhaul last year following damage from a cyclone, only requires minor maintenance. The Patrol Boat continues to be detailed for keeping a vigil on the sweet water ponds located in various corners of the reserve. However, it was also employed for the Tiger Census operation and other duties for Project Tiger. **£4,062 is required for repairs, maintenance and running costs.**

It appears that the number of illegal intruders into the reserve has reduced considerably due to extremely strict vigil by the Project Tiger Eco-Development Committees and the NGOs as well. Quite a good number of floating check posts were introduced, which have become very instrumental and effective in curbing the criminal activities inside the reserve. Not a single stray tiger has been killed by the villagers – everyone in the field was being particularly vigilant.

This has been possible mainly due to the positive attitude of the present Field Director, Mr. Pradeep Vyas. He took all stake holders into confidence and held regular meetings with the villagers, EDCs and the NGOs.

Radio collaring of two tigers has begun in the Sundarbans. This is being done under the active guidance and supervision of the Wildlife Institute of India. Upon successful completion of the job this will add a new dimension in conserving the tigers in this unique area.

All thirty students (children of tiger and crocodile victims) at the non-formal evening school did very well in the last annual examination with 2 girls and one boy being admitted into different city colleges for higher education. **£625 is being sought to cover the cost of admission in new classes, books, school uniform etc. for the evening school.**

With the support of Project Lifeline Sundarbans, a self help group (Sundarban Bagh Sevika Swanirbhar Gosthi) has been formed by 10 women of the Anpur and Jamespur villages on Satjelia Island, resulting in all of the women and their families no longer finding it necessary to venture into the forests. Two cultural groups in the village have also been formed, comprising around 30 people. They are performing various ethnic cultural programmes for tourists staying at hotels and resorts on the fringe of the tiger reserve. Their success is proving encouraging to others who are coming forward to form self help and cultural groups.



# Further Project News

## Panna Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh

What happened in Sariska Tiger Reserve last year, where all the tigers were poached, highlights the situation where no independent monitoring of local tiger populations takes place. If such monitoring had been taking place in Sariska an early warning could have been raised and this may then have averted the total elimination of the tiger population there.

For a decade, Dr Raghu Chundawat has studied tiger populations in Panna Tiger Reserve. His analysis of the population's trends clearly indicated that tiger populations are most vulnerable in dry forest habitat. Because of the independent monitoring that Dr Chundawat was carrying out, he and his team were able to raise early warnings about the loss of tigers due to poaching in Panna. Due to recent controversies about this alarm, the park management has reacted by refusing him permission to continue his scientific work. Not only is there now a gap in the monitoring protocol but, most importantly, it has brought to an end the independent monitoring of wildlife populations in Panna Tiger Reserve. GTP is funding innovative ways of maintaining an independent monitoring facility in Panna.

Sadly reports last month highlighted the deaths of two tigers found a couple of weeks apart, one a cub. The cause is as yet unknown and we await the results of the post mortem. However, these were two of the seven tigers photographed in the on-going camera-trapping census.

# travel operators for tigers

Action on responsible use of wild habitats


## Going from Strength to Strength

While the news that the recent Tiger Census is showing a desperate collapse in tiger numbers to as low as 1200, the Travel Operators for Tigers campaign, run under Global Tiger Patrol's aegis, has gathered rapid momentum over the last season in 6 Project Tiger parks in India - Ranthambhore, Panna, Pench, Corbett, Kanha and Bandavgarh, which are the most popular with tourists.

Set up in 2004 by a group of concerned UK tour operators in response to the increasing need to make tourism more sustainable and more supportive of habitat conservation efforts in South Asia, it also aims to bring park authorities, tourism providers and host communities together into a more cooperative partnership. We are delighted that the initiative has had a great reception from all involved. Our new Campaign Manager based in Delhi, Abhishek Behl, has spent weeks in each park, recruiting key TOFT representatives for each area (see [www.toftindia.org](http://www.toftindia.org) for details), meeting all lodges owners, running lodge and guide workshops and gathering data on the management of tourism, as well as hearing the issues that villagers and communities face in each region. The result is over 40 lodges, a number of Indian travel agents and 22 UK Tour Operators (see below) have signed up to the campaign's Codes of Conduct over the last season. This is a great start and gives us a wonderful platform to enhance our campaign both with these parks, within the Indian travel provider community, and also the greater international travel community to South Asia. TOFT was also invited to join the Indian Wildlife Tourism Board, which involves some of India's top policy makers on wildlife tourism, together with the Ministry for Tourism and Ministry of Environment and Forests. The campaign has also provided GTP-TOFT with funds of over £17,000 from TOFT members' contributions with which to conduct the campaign, support small scale projects and fund the necessary initiatives that will make us capable of catalysing and enhancing wildlife conservation efforts and providing better and more responsible wildlife experiences for visitors to these parks in the future.

This coming season with Abhishek Behl back in the field we aim to:

- a) Undertake official inspections and 'client' audits of all the lodges in the six parks, with the aim of awarding a newly designed 'PUG' rating
- b) New noticeboards and signage in lodges to support the codes of conduct
- c) Workshops and support for lodges to decrease the 'environmental footprint' of operations
- d) Action and training to enhance knowledge and respect of local guides and drivers in parks
- e) Action and research on tourism carry capacity of the parks
- f) Catalyse and support new walking trails, village and tribal activities and cooperatives to enhance experiences for visitors and create opportunities for private enterprise within host communities.

Furthermore we are on a big campaign to recruit new TOFT members from the UK and abroad. Amanda Watts, our new volunteer, will be helping us do this from her home in Dorset. [www.toftiger.org](http://www.toftiger.org) 

## Berkshire

**Raptor Adventures Ltd** - Slough  
Tel: 01753 725401  
[www.raptoradventures.co.uk](http://www.raptoradventures.co.uk)

## Cumbria

**Tiger Trails** - Calerbridge  
Tel: 01946 841495  
[www.tigertrails.co.uk](http://www.tigertrails.co.uk)

## Derbyshire

**Classic Journeys** - Tibshelf  
Tel: 01773 873497  
[www.classicjourneys.co.uk](http://www.classicjourneys.co.uk)

## Gloucestershire

**Far Frontiers** - Ampney Crucis  
Tel: 01285 850926  
[www.farfrontiers.com](http://www.farfrontiers.com)

**Discovery Initiatives** - Cirencester  
Tel: 01285 643333  
[www.discoveryinitiatives.com](http://www.discoveryinitiatives.com)

**Steppes Travel** - Cirencester  
Tel: 01285 651010  
[www.steppesttravel.co.uk](http://www.steppesttravel.co.uk)

## Kent

**Kerala Connections** - Horsmonden  
Tel: 01892 722440  
[www.keralaconnect.co.uk](http://www.keralaconnect.co.uk)

**Pettitts Travel** - Tunbridge Wells  
Tel: 01892 515966  
[www.pettitts.co.uk](http://www.pettitts.co.uk)

## Oxfordshire

**Indian Explorations** - Holwell  
Tel: 01993 822443  
[www.explorationcompany.com](http://www.explorationcompany.com)

## Sussex

**Time for Travel** - Midhurst  
Tel: 01798 867750  
[www.timefortravel.co.uk](http://www.timefortravel.co.uk)

## Wiltshire

**Guerba World Travel** - Westbury  
Tel: 01373 826611  
[www.guerba.co.uk](http://www.guerba.co.uk)

When planning a visit to see India's magnificent wildlife, please consider arranging your trip with one of the Travel Operators for Tigers' members listed here:

## London

**Partnership Travel** - N3  
Tel: 020 8343 3446  
[www.partnershiptravel.co.uk](http://www.partnershiptravel.co.uk)

**Ampersand Travel** - NW8  
Tel: 020 7723 4336  
[www.ampersandtravel.com](http://www.ampersandtravel.com)

**Cox & Kings** - SW1  
Tel: 020 7873 5006  
[www.coxandkings.co.uk](http://www.coxandkings.co.uk)

**Cazenove & Loyd** - SW6  
Tel: 020 73842332  
[www.cazloyd.com](http://www.cazloyd.com)

**Ultimate Travel Compant Ltd** - SW6  
Tel: 020 7386 4646  
[www.theultimatetravelcompany.co.uk](http://www.theultimatetravelcompany.co.uk)

**Original Travel** - SW11  
Tel: 020 7978 7333  
[www.originaltravel.co.uk](http://www.originaltravel.co.uk)

**Greaves Travel** - W1  
Tel: 020 7487 5687  
[www.greavesindia.com](http://www.greavesindia.com)

**Trans Indus** - W5  
Tel: 020 8566 2729  
[www.transindus.com](http://www.transindus.com)

**On The Go Tours** - W14  
Tel: 020 7371 1113  
[www.onthegotours.com](http://www.onthegotours.com)

**Equinox Travel** - WC1  
Tel: 020 7831 4888  
[www.equinoxtravel.co.uk](http://www.equinoxtravel.co.uk)

**Palanquin Travels Ltd** - WC1  
Tel: 020 7580 6700  
[www.palanquintravels.com](http://www.palanquintravels.com)



Photo: Pete Cooper



GTP's partnership with the Zoological Society of London is now in its 10th year thanks to ExxonMobil's initial funding to help get the alliance off the ground. Despite the successful EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquariums) campaign having finished, a number of European zoos are continuing their support, as well as the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (ARAZPA). The UK government, through DEFRA, maintains an annual grant.

To date, 21st Century Tiger has funded some 56 wild tiger projects in 7 countries (India, Indonesia, China, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand and the Russian Far East) amounting to over £1 million. All projects submitted to 21st Century Tiger for funding are rigorously examined by a panel of international experts. The projects must have sound practical scientific and/or conservation value and use local staff wherever possible. 21st Century Tiger feels it is important to continue support for some projects where possible, whilst also considering new initiatives.


In Cambodia, 21st Century Tiger sent funds to WildAid for their ongoing project training rangers, outreach activities and monitoring wildlife in Bokor. The grant covered field equipment, walkie talkies and camera traps, as well as salary supplements for the park's staff, whose remuneration is so low, forcing them to seek alternative jobs to supplement their income and therefore distracting them from their important role as defenders of the wild.

The Zoological Society of London's Compatibility, Conflict and Compromise: Coexistence between Tigers and Other Large Mammals and Industry received funding. Building upon the previous two years of the Jambi Tiger Project which was based on an oil palm plantation in Sumatra, the project continues to study how tigers are coexisting with commercial interests. The Jambi Tiger Project has shown mixed results on the compatibility between tigers and commercial industry. Early results showed extremely promising numbers of tigers surviving in both a working oil palm plantation and logging concession. However, more recently a massive decline in tiger numbers was witnessed, thought to be primarily due to a large influx of people for 'illegal' logging and settlement. Extending the research beyond the core area of the previous studies, it is a continuation of work on an oil palm/forest logging concession site looking in detail at how tigers and their prey coexist, (or otherwise), with commercial activities with an increased focus on economic variables. The project is also an expansion into local national parks and other commercial landscapes to look at broader patterns of tiger presence in different habitat types. The second objective is partly a natural step in the project development, looking at how representative the core study site is, but it also meets specific requests by the local wildlife authorities to work with them to survey other potential tiger hotspots.

The Wildlife Foundation of Khabarovsk is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation that was founded in 1993 by a small group of Russian ecologists and environmentalists to

protect forests and biodiversity. The Foundation, based in the north of the Amur tigers' range, works to protect rare and endangered species such as the Amur tiger. Save the Amur Tiger for Future Generations mainly focused on their work with the younger generation, aiming to change attitudes towards tigers and gain public support. Over the last year, the project has established close ties with twenty-five schools, at which they arrange special tiger lessons. They have also set up environmental field schools where children can learn about the unique wildlife of the Russian Far East. In September 2005 the Wildlife Foundation, together with their colleagues from the zoo, organized a summer camp. About 600 children with their parents participated and the most active school children won prizes. These activities led to increased media involvement, with a press release on tiger monitoring and articles about Amur tigers in the local newspapers.

The Wildlife Conservation Society's India branch (WCS India) believes strongly in nurturing and encouraging local community leaders who wish to conserve tigers. In 1999 the WCS India programme identified highly motivated local youth leaders in four prime tiger landscapes in the Western Ghats of Karnataka. The 'Community Leadership for Tiger Conservation' project in Anshi-Dandeli is a product of this venture and has been supported by 21st Century Tiger since 2003. Anshi-Dandeli's project leader is Balachandra Hegde, a local farmer who is passionate about tiger conservation.

Anshi National Park and Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary (ANP & DWS) are located in the Western Ghats global biodiversity hotspot of southern India, one of the best long-term areas for tiger conservation in India. Tiger habitats around Anshi and Dandeli extend over 5,000 sq. km of deciduous and semi-evergreen forests, including other protected areas. Balachandra and his team started by collecting basic information about the threats to tigers present in the area. These included hunting of the tiger's prey, commercial extraction of non-timber forest products, cultivation in almost all the fertile valleys in the hilly region, and destruction of forests for large developmental projects. The project is seeking to raise awareness about wildlife and tiger conservation in ANP & DWS amongst villagers, students and the media. It is also motivating villagers to relocate to areas outside existing wildlife reserves and interacting with local people and forest officials to improve on-ground protection for tigers, their prey and their habitat. A similar project also continues to be funded in Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve. [www.21stcenturytiger.org](http://www.21stcenturytiger.org) 



Please help  
us spend our  
funds where  
it is needed  
most

If you have not already done so, please let us have your email address, so that we can forward information on events etc to you without the exorbitant cost of printing and mailing. Simply send an email to [admin@globaltigerpatrol.org](mailto:admin@globaltigerpatrol.org) with your name, address and telephone numbers. We promise not to bombard you with emails requesting funds.



A Simple  
and Free  
Way to Raise  
Money for  
GTP

You can raise money for Global Tiger Patrol just by searching the internet. [www.everyclick.com](http://www.everyclick.com) is an internet search engine with a big difference – it donates half its revenue to charity.

Please consider making [www.everyclick.com/uk/globaltigerpatrol](http://www.everyclick.com/uk/globaltigerpatrol) your home page and use it whenever you search the web.

It will not cost you nor GTP a penny, so please use it – a free and easy way to support GTP's work to conserve the tiger in the wild.



# Book News



## 'A View from The Machan – How Science Can Save the Fragile Predator'

K. Ullas Karanth  
Permanent Black  
(ISBN: 81-7824-137-4).

'A View from The Machan – How Science Can Save the Fragile Predator' is K. Ullas Karanth's latest book, published by Permanent Black. Dr Karanth is an eminent scientist working for the World Conservation Union and based in southern India.

Over the past 25 years, he has studied tigers and developed camera-trap methods to monitor wildlife, which is a technique now used worldwide. In this latest book, he informs about the science behind large predator conservation, describing both the drudgery and the excitement of working in the wild and what he feels are the solutions for the future.

"No-one in India or elsewhere in the world has done more to promote all aspects of tiger conservation than Ullas Karanth...India's finest field biologist and the tiger's most persistent and successful advocate," said George B Schaller.

"This is probably the most pragmatic book on tiger conservation and the cutting edge of wildlife protection in India," said Peter Lawton, GTP's founder. "It is the most readable deep conservation book I have ever read."

## TIGER FOREST Special Offer

GTP has been given a number of copies of 'Tiger Forest' by Chris Brunskill. It is a visual study of Ranthambhore National Park featuring glorious colour plates of the tiger and other wildlife that shares its home in this famous tiger reserve.

We can sell these to you at a special price of £15 plus £4.50 p&p. To place an order, please send your name and address together with your cheque, payable to Global Tiger Patrol, to Tiger Forest, Global Tiger Patrol, 87 Newland Street, Witham, Essex CM8 1AD. If you would like us to send this as a gift to someone, simply insert your completed greetings card or message together with the name and address of the desired recipient.

## 'The Last Tiger – Struggling for Survival'

Valmik Thapar  
Oxford University Press  
(ISBN 019568000-6).

Valmik Thapar's newest book 'The Last Tiger – Struggling for Survival' is published by Oxford University Press. "I believe that in the last three years we have lost 1,000 tigers. Caught in metal traps, they are shot at point blank range. The tiger is being butchered primarily to tailor Tibetan dresses used on festive occasions. This is shocking and shameful."

Thapar's latest book presents the various crises and conservation efforts in the past from the 19th century right up to the current and very real predicament facing the tiger in India.

## Photographs for Tigers

Pete Cooper has generously donated a percentage of sales of his tiger photographs to GTP. He sells his work at craft fairs. You can see a couple of them in this newsletter, but you can also find a much larger selection and other wildlife on his website [www.lionscape.co.uk](http://www.lionscape.co.uk)



# The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

Peter Lawton  
*GTP's founder*



Photo: Pete Cooper

Being an endangered species, the tiger has a special place in the conservation process and as a keystone species its protection provides a safety umbrella for other endangered and rare species. If you add the Asian elephant then habitat protection becomes even more important and challenging. Both are under threat in India due to habitat depletion.

In Northern India, wildlife is under considerable pressure from human population needs, development and poaching coupled with habitat depletion - not just in the protected sanctuaries - but also in connecting or surrounding forest habitats.

In southern India the pressures are slightly different but are nevertheless becoming of great concern to scientists and environmentalists. One area of particular significance is the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, which falls within the 1600 kilometre-long hill system running north to south and known as the Western Ghats (hills).

GTP has shown its concern for parts of this region almost from its inception, providing funds for conservation in major tiger habitats including Project Tiger Reserves, National Parks and Sanctuaries like Nagarahole and Bhadra as well as to NGOs at the cutting edge of wildlife conservation.

GTP applauds the brave efforts of scientists and NGOs in this region who have fought tirelessly to protect unique habitats oblivious of personal criticism and politics. Without their determined efforts things might be even worse.

The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR) was India's first designated biosphere reserve - established in 1986 - and covering a huge 5520 square kilometres (about the size of Surrey and Middlesex ). The reserve connects in several places with not just the Western Ghats, but also forest areas in the Eastern Ghats, all once part of a biological and migratory forest and habitat system for wildlife that stretched all the way to Bihar and the foothills of the Himalayas.

The Western Ghats is believed to hold many as yet undiscovered species of flora and fauna, in addition to the endemic and very rare flora and amphibian species already discovered in recent years. About 80% of the wild flowering plants in the Western Ghats occur in this area.

The NBR has a wide range of habitat types; unspoilt areas of natural vegetation with several dry scrub, dry and moist deciduous, semi evergreen and wet evergreen forests, evergreen sholas (grassy hills), grass lands and swamps. In parts, cloud rainforest is also represented and the rainfall range is very contrasting throughout the area. The topography of the NBR is extremely varied, ranging from an altitude of 250m to 2650m and is quite spectacular in its ecological influence on the surrounding areas.

The forests, with their rivers and rich soil provide the sources of the regions agricultural productivity and the rainfall it attracts boosts

the movement of the monsoon much awaited in the more arid north. Without this region India would rapidly become an arid wasteland.

The NBR includes the largest known population of two other endangered animal species, namely the Nilgiri tahr (a member of the ibex family) and the lion-tailed macaque, which is critically endangered (IUCN World Conservation Union) and lives in very few patches of forest and in small troupes. It's also home to the largest south Indian population of elephant, tiger, gaur (the world's largest bovine species) as well as a wide range of other animals that are also tiger prey species such as sambar, chowsinga and chital.

The NBR includes key national parks and wildlife sanctuaries within its boundaries where the conservation of wildlife is the main objective. The government has especially designated some of these areas as 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' sanctuaries. As a result they receive special attention from the Central Government as well as from the respective states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. Despite this they are under extreme threat in their breeding and movement from not just poaching, illegal timber felling and encroachment. Most of the tea, coffee and spice plantations are seen only in the buffer, or manipulation, zone.

The NBR is divided into:


- A core zone (1240 square kilometres), which is afforded total protection within the law by the three states of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- A buffer zone (4280 square kilometres), which includes agriculture, commercial forestry and tourism.

The human population surrounding the NBR is somewhere in the region of 1.5 million and includes many tribal groups that constitute the last of India's hunter-gatherer groups. Many of these tribes date back to Neolithic times and have inhabited these areas longer than any other ethnic group on the subcontinent. The tribal groups were once remarkable for their traditional modes of harmonious use of the environment, however there is much controversy over their continuing presence in some of the most fragile areas since the ecological balance has changed drastically in recent years. Some tribal groups have been motivated by outside influences, revealing exploitation by unscrupulous local commercial and political interests. The main human population of the region is urban-based in the many market towns dotting the region and →

surrounded by (intensive) agricultural communities.

The development and maintenance of communications infrastructure within national and state plans (roads, railways, dams and hydro-electric installations and civic projects) place considerable pressure on the NBR, particularly around the larger towns and cities in the region and agriculture also impinges on migratory routes of elephants, and other animals and inhibits biological diversity. This problem can only increase as years go by unless strong and lateral action is taken to protect the 'corridors' and provide stronger buffer areas between wild animal habitat and human settlement, agriculture, arterial roads and waterways.

Aside from any action that is already being taken by the respective state authorities within their conservation plans, under the Ministry of Environment and Forests and within the various individual efforts such as Project Elephant and Project Tiger, the mobilisation and continuing encouragement of non-government agencies, conservation and scientific bodies is important. Leading scientists, naturalists and conservation organisations are concerned about any further development that may take place that will exert irreversible pressure on the NBR, and the time has come for alternative strategies to be employed that will assist in the protection process.

GTP is currently reviewing their commitment to the area and hopes to play a larger part in helping to protect what might be the final stronghold of the tiger and the Asian elephant. Currently studying this, one of my early concerns is that no Management Plan has yet been produced for this UNESCO world heritage biosphere reserve. Such an oversight should be of concern to the Central Government, the three State Governments and UNESCO. Without it there is no knowing how science and wildlife management can together prevent development plans from damaging the habitat and its corridors. 



Jennifer Porter and friend have great success with their street collections in Birmingham and Leicester. How could anyone turn down such friendly tigers?



## The late Alan Mole: "...humour and generosity..."

We are so sorry to report that Alan Mole, who had administered Global Tiger Patrol's accounts from the beginning and retired last year, sadly died in August 2005. His sense of humour and generosity will be sorely missed by all those who knew him.

Also we are most grateful to the family and friends of Margaret Goodyear, who sent GTP donations in her memory.

## Acknowledgements

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