

# ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009



**Wildlife Trust of India**

B-13, Second Floor,  
Sector-6, Noida-201301, India  
Tel: +120 4143900 Fax: +91 120 4143933  
E-mail: [info@wti.org.in](mailto:info@wti.org.in), Web: [wti.org.in](http://wti.org.in)

---

---

# CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Valmiki Tiger Conservation project	5
Sloth Bear Conservation and Welfare Project	6
Rajaji Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation Project	9
Centre for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation	10
Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation	11
Mobile Veterinary Services	12
Greater Manas Conservation Project	14
Wild Buffalo Conservation Project	16
Elephant Mortality Database	17
Trade Control	17
National Elephant Corridor Project	19
National Train Hits Mitigation Project	21
Northeast Tribal Council Project	22
Rapid Action Projects	22
Van Rakshak Project	29
Wildlife Litigation	30
Global Tiger Forum Support Project	31
Animal Action Week	31
Tibetan Conservation Awareness Campaign	32
Schaller Conservation Surveys	33
Shahtoosh Workers Rehabilitation Project	36
Whale Shark Campaign	37
Communications	37

---

---

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The financial year 2008-2009 saw Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) in its eleventh year of operation. Since the early days of inception, WTI has evolved into a well-respected conservation agency with specialised skills in diverse fields. WTI has managed to attract and develop a consortium of people that includes among its ranks field biologists, conservation biologists, lawyers, finance and business managers, veterinarians, sociologists, anthropologists and communication specialists.

Some key achievements during the financial year 2008-2009 are listed here:

1. Kashmir Pashmina gets Geographical Indication (GI) of Origin: Advocated by IFAW-WTI since the early 2000s, Kashmir Pashmina was finally granted GI on September 12, 2008. This development has the potential to play a significant role in the conservation of the endangered Tibetan antelope by contributing towards the welfare of artisans from Srinagar, among whom are the former shahtoosh weavers.
2. Rhino reintroduction in Manas: While the process to reintroduce rhinos in Manas was initiated with the relocation of hand-raised rhinos to Manas since 2006, the rhinos were successfully released in the wild in December 2008 following prolonged acclimatisation.
3. Quickest wildlife trial in India and first case of conviction and sentencing under India's Biological Diversity Act, 2002 (BDA): Two Czech nationals arrested for illegal insect collection in Singhalila National Park in West Bengal were convicted and sentenced under the BDA. The case lasted less than three months from arrest to sentencing - September 2008.
4. Protocol established for otter rehabilitation: A RAP that facilitated successful rehabilitation of a hand-raised otter in Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary in Bihar, also helped establish a protocol for otter rehabilitation.
5. Human-Elephant Conflict Mitigation near Kaziranga: Electric fence installed in December 2008 in six villages (Lukhrakhonia, Mohpara, Doomjan, Sildubi, Kohora - 1 and Kohora -2, in Golaghat district) around Kaziranga NP as part of an RAP successfully benefited people as well as animals, particularly elephants. Villagers report six fold increase in crop yield as compared to the year before the installation of the fence.
6. Conservation of a satellite population of greater adjutant stork in Bihar: Following the discovery of a satellite population of greater adjutant stork in Bhagalpur district, Bihar, a RAP that was sanctioned to protect the population and spread awareness among local people helped increase the survival chances of the birds here. As compared to 2007, there was a two-fold increase in population (to at least 157 individuals) in 2008 after the implementation of the RAP. Also, this RAP helped bring about a change in perception of the local people on the species: initially considered a pest, they began observing the species as 'Garuda', the steed of Lord Vishnu, even taking care of injured individuals on their own.

7. Threat of online wildlife trade highlighted: With a carefully planned and executed undercover operation busting an online wildlife trading gang operating from Uttar Pradesh, the WTI team established for the first time, the real threats to Indian wildlife from a virtual space. While online wildlife trade was known to be a problem, this operation provided conclusive evidence bringing to light the use of internet by other statutes.

## VALMIKI TIGER CONSERVATION PROJECT

Valmiki Tiger Reserve, spread over 880 sq km in West Champaran district of Bihar, is contiguous with Chitwan National Park and Parsa Wildlife Reserve in Nepal. The three protected areas taken together form one of the 11 Level I Tiger Conservation Units (TCU) identified in the Indian sub-continent.

However despite its critical status, Valmiki TR had remained largely neglected. Lack of scientific data on habitat, population and distribution of the tiger and its prey was perceived as one of the main hurdles to effective management of the reserve.



Camera trap pictures of a Tigress and its cubs (inset) in Gonauli Forest Range

The situation was aggravated by the intense biotic pressure from about 140 villages located within a few kilometres of the reserve boundary. Disturbances from a cluster of 22 villages in the Doan Valley, an incursion into the core of Valmiki TR, necessitated urgent remedial action. The tiger reserve also faced threats from poachers and wildlife traders, who capitalised on the porous Indo-Nepal border and lack of law and order in the area.

As part of the tiger recovery component of the Valmiki Conservation Project, camera traps were placed in select spots for tiger density estimation in February 2009. A tigress and her cubs were photo-captured in the early days. Transect surveys were also carried out in different ranges for prey estimation using distance sampling method.

As a habitat restoration initiative, a detailed layout of the Phoenix weed removal and monitoring plots was prepared. A five-hectare plot in Gonauli forest range was marked for this. Pre-removal data on the density, grass density and ungulate habitat use was collected.



**Demonstration of the husk stove**



**Husk Stoves provided to Villagers**

Through the community-based conservation component of the project, WTI provided husk stoves in nearby village as a potential alternative to firewood to reduce the biotic pressure within the tiger habitat. Twenty husk stoves were distributed to villagers in Khairani, Kamarchinwa, Majuraha, and Gardi villages situated in the Doon Valley to reduce the dependence of the local community on firewood. The use pattern of the distributed stoves was monitored, following the distribution.

The demand and popularity of these stoves have increased considerably since their introduction here. Each stove consumes less than one kg of husk to prepare a meal for a family of six. Three persons were trained in manufacturing husk stoves to facilitate production locally.

Participatory rural appraisal exercises were carried out in three villages (Matiarawa Tola, Piparahawa Tola and Semarahani Tola) of the Doan valley.

## **SLOTH BEAR CONSERVATION AND WELFARE PROJECT**

### **ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS FOR KALANDARS**

The Sloth Bear Conservation and Welfare Project helps conserve sloth bears by identifying and convincing kalandars (sloth bear performers) to give up bear dancing, and provides alternative livelihood to the complying individuals. Over the years, WTI has convinced 24 kalandars from Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh to surrender their bears. These kalandars have been provided alternative livelihoods of their choice. About 50 dependents of these kalandars have also been provided support for alternative livelihood or income generation trainings, under this project.

Several kalandars in Munger, Bihar, had submitted letters of intent to surrender their bears. However, delay in getting requisite clearances from relevant government authorities for creation of a lifetime care centre, hampered progress on this front. Financial support was provided to these Kalandars. Regular monitoring visits were made to review the progress of previously rehabilitated kalandars in Chorbhatti and Sirnabhata in Chhattisgarh, and Kotra Sultanabad in Bhopal. Visits were also made to Nawada, Nalanda and Munger in Bihar to



### Rehabilitated Kalandars of Bhopal with alternative means of livelihood

monitor and evaluate how kalandars were adapting to their new livelihoods. While a few were performing well in their respective new professions and satisfied with the earnings, few others were demoralised. Efforts were made to arrange for financial support (bank loans) to motivate the kalandars and prevent them from relapsing into bear dancing.

The second phase of intervention was carried out subsequently. Extra support was provided to those kalandars who were not doing well, but were still committed. Those who were doing well and had the potential to expand their activities were rewarded as well.

Most notable among the beneficiaries, was a kalandar from Biharsharif, Bihar, earning Rs 7000-10000 per month by selling milk. He had purchased cattle with the alternative livelihood support provided.

### SLOTH BEAR CAMPAIGN

The Sloth Bear Campaign is aimed to sensitise people to the cruelty involved and risks in bear cub poaching while also educating them on the illegality of wildlife trade. Taravada village in Sambalpur district of Orissa had earlier been identified as one of the main sources in illegal trade of sloth bear cubs in India. Since its launch, the campaign has been conducted in 24 villages in the district; each event drew an audience comprising 40-60 local people.



Local street play artistes enacting a play as part of the campaign to create awareness



Street play artistes performing in a local bazaar at a village in Orissa



As part of the campaign, local street play artistes dressed up in bear costumes enacted the story of bear cubs separated from their family for the entertainment of humans. The street play team comprises 15 locals - 13 performers and two support staff.

The campaign also incorporates traditional elements including folk songs and dances on environment issues to effectively reach out to the people of the area and help spread awareness. This team comprised eight women performers and two musicians.

The performances were advertised through posters and personal invites, apart from word-of-mouth publicity. Movement of artists in bear costumes through the respective villages and song/dance performances also helped attract viewers.

The street play is now being rewritten to make it more effective. The aim is to educate the local people on the illegal practice of capture of sloth bear cubs and wildlife trade in general.

## RAJAJI HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT MITIGATION PROJECT

The status of electric fence installed on the fringes of Rajaji National Park to reduce crop raids by elephants was evaluated. A 105 km stretch of electric fence has been put up by the Uttarakhand government. However, only 19 km was functional, including 10.5 km in Resham Majri and Bullawala villages that was maintained by WTI. Modifications in the fence, including reassessment of its orientation and extension, are being explored for greater efficiency.



**Electric fence installed in the fringes of Rajaji National Park to avoid elephant raids**

Flash lights were redistributed in Hazara Taungia to help drive away wild elephants. These lights had been successfully used last year to deter elephants from approaching the farms. The newly-developed trip alarms that are much lighter and easy to use have also been installed in Hazara Taungia after being tested in Harnol.

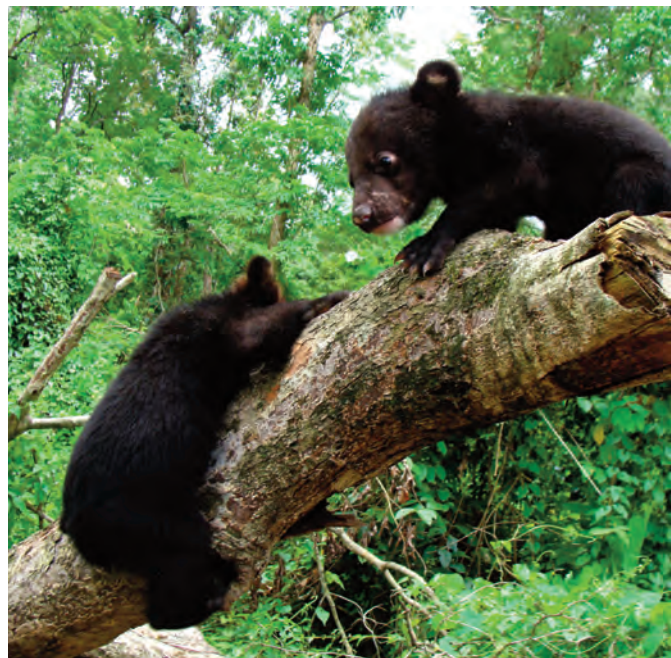
A questionnaire survey was conducted on a sample of 100 households to understand the status of human-elephant conflict in five villages (Bandarjur, Rasulpur, Kurkawala, Anneki and Aurangabad) along the southern boundary of Rajaji National Park.

Another survey was conducted on a sample of 60 households of Hajara Taungia and Haripur Taungia to assess the current conflict status. It sought to understand the general opinion of the villagers regarding the conflict mitigation measures implemented by WTI.

## CENTRE FOR BEAR CONSERVATION AND REHABILITATION

Five Asiatic black bear cubs hand-raised at CBRC were relocated to the acclimatisation site in Upper Dikarai in Pakke Tiger Reserve for the 'Walk the Bear' programme for gradual acclimatisation and eventual release. They were taken for daily walks in the wild from their base camp where they were initially confined in enclosures at night for protection against predators. The cubs were observed eating leaves, shoots of bamboo, fruits of *Dillenia indica* and various cane species and barks of various tree species in the wild. Gradually, the cubs became independent of the keepers. The bear cubs were released in June 2008, after being radio-collared for post-release monitoring. The bears were continuously monitored through radio telemetry till December 2008, when their collars dropped off as programmed, marking successful completion of the rehabilitation process.

One of the older bears, Seppi, released in 2006 in Kharipong in Pakke TR after acclimatisation, had to be brought back to CBRC for treatment of an injury on her leg. She was treated and released back in May 2008. Seppi was sighted by the monitoring team near Khari lake area in mid-May about a fortnight later.



Bear cubs with their keeper at CBRC and on one of their walks (*right*)



### Asiatic black bears in the wild post-release and their monitoring by the CBRC team

Two black bear cubs, confiscated by the Assam Forest Department from Kumrikata Reserve Forest, Dhansiri Forest Division, and hand-raised by the Lower Assam unit of IFAW-WTI Mobile Veterinary Service, were relocated to a release site in Manas National Park near the Indo-Bhutan border. Two other cubs rescued from Dhekiajuli area of Sonitpur district and Udalguri village in Baksa district were also relocated to the release site in August 2008.

The four permanently-displaced Asiatic black bear cubs at the Centre for Bear Rehabilitation and Conservation (CBRC) are healthy. They were given solid concentrate feed daily and provided with periodic medical check-ups throughout the year.

## CENTRE FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION AND CONSERVATION

The Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) is the first rescue and rehabilitation centre near a protected area in India. Strategically located in Borjuri village adjacent to the Panbari Reserve Forest and near Kaziranga National Park in the state of Assam, the centre attends to a wide range of wildlife emergencies resulting from natural or anthropogenic causes.

Managed by two veterinarians and six attendants, CWRC has the essential veterinary infrastructure including an examination clinic, a surgery theatre and an evolving preliminary disease investigation laboratory. It has spacious holding shelters for birds, reptiles, ungulates and primates, enclosures for big cats and nurseries for mega-herbivores. The centre follows accepted international protocols and guidelines during rescue, treatment and rehabilitation of displaced or distressed wild animals.

CWRC attended to 322 animals during the year. In all, 118 animals were released following temporary captivity at the centre for stabilisation/treatment. Among the released animals were reptiles (including red-necked keelback, banded krait, monocled cobra, Burmese rock

python), mammals (including common leopard, hog deer, jungle cat, leopard cat, swamp deer, hog badger, slow loris, small Indian civet, Indian porcupine,), and birds (including barn owl, bar-headed geese, Eurasian scops owl, brown fish owl, brown wood owl, jungle owlet, Himalayan griffon, crested serpent eagle, besra, Cattle egret, spotbilled pelican, Asian openbilled stork, woolly-necked crane, lesser adjutant stork, rufous treepie).

A total of 27 animals including greater one-horned rhinoceros, Asian elephant and common leopard were under treatment or being raised for rehabilitation at CWRC as of March 31, 2009.

## MOBILE VETERINARY SERVICES

The Mobile Veterinary Service (MVS) project envisages the placement of trained wildlife veterinarians in important protected areas in India to ensure emergency relief to wildlife in distress. It provides *in situ* veterinary care to injured wild animals and helps relocate them to the nearest rescue centres or field stations for further care if required.



An injured Swamp deer being taken to CWRC and a Vet bottle feeds the rhino calf

Each MVS unit comprises a vehicle equipped with medical equipments and supplies, and in operated by a wildlife veterinarian, and animal attendant, besides equipment and supplies. The veterinarians follow recognised scientific principles and protocols while dealing with displaced animals.

Each MVS unit is equipped for:

1. Swift response to wildlife in crisis and distress.
2. Rehabilitation of displaced wild animals.
3. Assisting the Forest Department in conflict animal management.
4. Providing veterinary care to captive elephants of the Forest Department.
5. Disease investigation operations during epidemics and sporadic deaths.
6. Protecting wildlife from livestock diseases through immunisation.



**Caged tiger is loaded in the truck for its journey to the release site**

Five MVS units, three in Assam and one each in Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh and Rajaji National Park in Uttarakhand, were in operation during this year. All the MVS units (except MVS Central Assam, which is associated with CWRC) attended to 128 animals in all. Sixty of these animals were released after treatment or other necessary interventions and 14 were captive as on March 31, 2009.

Among the notable operations carried out was the rescue of a tiger from a well near Tezpur on October 30, 2008. The rescue operation that lasted more than 24 hours saw a combined



**A rescued Bengal monitor lizard with the MVS unit vehicle in backdrop**

effort of MVS Central Assam and MVS Upper Assam along with the Assam forest department. The tiger was tranquilised, rescued from the well, transported to Nameri National Park and released.

Likewise on November 19, 2008, young male leopard that strayed into a house in Digboi town in Assam was rescued. It was tranquilised and translocated to the nearby Upper Dihing Reserve Forest and released.

MVS Lower Assam also undertook rehabilitation of a pair of jungle cats. Two rare clouded leopard cubs are also being hand-raised at the field station of this MVS unit at Choraikhola, Kokrajhar.

## GREATER MANAS CONSERVATION PROJECT

### RHINO REHABILITATION PROJECT



Rhinos in Manas National Park, Assam



Rhinos graze after their release from the boma, Manas National Park

Manas National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, had lost all its rhinos to poachers by the early 2000s. The Rhino Rehabilitation Project envisaged reintroduction of the endangered greater one-horned rhinoceros in Manas. The project coupled the reintroduction initiative with the rehabilitation of displaced rhino calves from Kaziranga National Park. As part of the project, three female rhino calves, hand-raised at the IFAW-WTI run Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) near Kaziranga had been relocated to Manas earlier. Rhinos were confined in a spacious boma (enclosure) in Kuribeel, Bansbari range of Manas NP to acclimatise them to the surroundings before their release in the wild. In August 2008, the radio-collar of the oldest rhino calf was replaced; those of the other two were loose enough to be used for another year.

In November 2008, the three rhinos were released from their boma after necessary health inspection by a team of veterinarians and experts from WTI and the Assam Forest Department. The forest authorities increased the security within the park for protection of the released rhinos. Post-release monitoring was carried out daily. The rhinos have not ventured far away from their boma. Their body conditions improved considerably following their release in the wild.

By February 2009, the rhinos had separated, with the older female exploring on its own, while the two younger rhinos mostly remained together.

#### **ELEPHANT REINTEGRATION PROJECT**

Efforts to re-integrate hand-raised elephant calves with wild herds in Manas National Park continued through the year. A total of eight calves had been relocated to Manas from the IFAW-WTI run Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) near Kaziranga in the previous years.



**Elephant calf transferred to a truck for release in Manas National Park, Assam**

Of the eight calves, six older ones had separated into two groups comprising three individuals each, while two younger calves were being hand-raised .

One of the older male calves (Mohan) made frequent raids on forest camps; it had to be restrained and kept as a captive elephant. Removal of this elephant from the wild disintegrated the group. The two remaining female members of this group joined the calves undergoing hand-raising and were taken for daily walks to reinitiate their soft-release. They were eventually released in July 2008 and were monitored with the help of radio-transmitters. These calves remained together and frequented the south and southeast of Manas.

The second group comprising three male elephants remained in Bhuyapara range in May 2008 and visited Doimari and other anti-poaching camps. In August, this group was seen near the Bhutan border. In September 2008, one of them was found with injuries and was restrained temporarily for treatment. The elephant was released at the end of the year. Although signals were received from its radio-transmitter, it was not sighted. However, it was believed to be moving amongst a wild herd.

Cogent evidence of reintegration of one of the individuals of this second group was received in January 2009. The elephant was seen interacting with a wild herd comprising 107 individuals of all age groups. Vocal communication and sniffing was observed between the released elephant and the wild individuals.

## WILD BUFFALO CONSERVATION PROJECT

### UDANTI WILD BUFFALO RECOVERY PROJECT

The population of the endangered wild buffalo in Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary in Chhattisgarh is limited to seven individuals, including a female and a calf. Following the discovery of



**Wild Buffalo in Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary**

this population, WTI has been monitoring these animals and their habitat to design and implement effective conservation measures for the recovery of this species. While the five males roam free in the wild, the female and the calf were confined in a spacious enclosure for their safety.

A conservation breeding programme was initiated in November 2008. Two males were confined in the enclosure with the female. The calf was separated and efforts were made to acclimatise it for germplasm collection for cryo-preservation. Supplementary feed was made available for these buffaloes by the Forest Department.





**One of the two male buffaloes in a boma near Kolia camp Dibru Saikhowa NP**

Blood samples of wild buffalo were collected and sent to the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology for genetic analysis after obtaining permission from the chief wildlife warden.

A vaccination programme was also conducted in the sanctuary on January 12 and 13. About 7,390 cattle belonging to residents of 15 villages were ring-vaccinated and dewormed.

#### **WILD BUFFALO REHABILITATION PROJECT**

Two male buffaloes translocated to a boma near Kolia camp, Dibru Saikhowa National Park, were healthy for most of the year. Regular health examinations were carried out. For effective operation of the electric fence used to confine the buffaloes during their acclimatisation, regular checks and repair work were carried out.

Monitoring of the buffaloes in the wild as well as those in the enclosure continued throughout the year. Whenever required, supplementary fodder and water was made available for the buffaloes by the state Forest Department. All seven buffaloes were healthy throughout the year.

Habitat management work, such as digging new waterholes and restoring old ones and weed removal was carried out in the wild buffalo habitat. Deweeding was carried out in a 145 hectares area.

## **ELEPHANT MORTALITY DATABASE**

WTI staff visited all the forest divisions and ranges in Kerala that are home to wild elephants, and collected data of elephant mortality. Data was also collected from Orissa, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. The collected data was stored in the elephant mortality database being maintained by WTI. The database will be useful to evaluate trends in natural/unnatural deaths of elephants across India.



Seized leopard skins from Nepal

## TRADE CONTROL

Controlling illegal trade in wildlife products is one of the critical aspects of wildlife conservation. Throughout the year, WTI helped enforcement authorities across various states in India as well as in Nepal carry out undercover operations against wildlife traders, leading to a number of seizures of illegal wildlife products besides arrests.



Seized rare Albino Civet cat and hill Mynas from Uttar Pradesh

A major undercover operation took place in Meerut in August 2008 which provided first cogent evidence on the ongoing online wildlife trade in India. Based on information provided by the wildlife trade control division of WTI, the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force and Forest Department arrested two Meerut-based wildlife traders. The traders, pretending to deal in pets, used social networking sites to find customers. An albino civet cat along with Schedule I birds like peacock chicks, adult hill mynahs were recovered.

WTI also assisted Nepal authorities in two other undercover operations. On May 2, four notorious wildlife traders were arrested from the East-West Highway near Mahendranagar, a city within the western boundary of Nepal, in a joint operation carried out by the police and the wildlife department of Nepal based on information provided by WTI. Six leopard skins were seized from the accused. In a similar operation in September 8, four sloth bears were confiscated from Sukhipur village, Lahan district.

On March 5, three wildlife traders were arrested in Uttar Pradesh in a joint operation conducted by the UP Special Task Force and WTI. Two leopard skins were recovered. On March 21, a wildlife trader was arrested near Charmal town in Sambalpur district of Orissa. One leopard skin was recovered from him.

## **NATIONAL ELEPHANT CORRIDOR PROJECT**

In 2001, WTI and its partner International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), with financial support from US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS), had begun an extensive countrywide study to identify critical elephant corridors as the first phase of its National Elephant Corridor Project in 2001. Along with the Asian Elephant Research and Conservation Centre (AERCC, which surveyed the habitats in South India), state Forest Departments and Project Elephant, WTI identified 88 critical elephant corridors in India.

With the help of its supporters IFAW, USFWS, Elephant Family, World Land Trust, IUCN-Netherlands, the second phase of the project was initiated to help implement the recommendations of the study, including recognition and notification of these corridors by relevant state governments to ensure legal protection

This year efforts were made to transfer ownership of land secured by WTI in the Kollegal corridor to the Karnataka Forest Department. A gift deed is being prepared for formal transfer of ownership. Efforts were also made to obtain permission and fix signage in elephant corridors across various elephant range states including Karnataka, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu.

In Tamil Nadu, a pilot survey was undertaken to collect socio-economic data of the landowners in the Talamalai-Guttialattur (Sathyamangalam) elephant corridor. Details like the names of landowners, survey number, extent of area and locality, human-elephant conflict statistics, land prices, opinion on selling off their land, dependence, etc were collected from them. This would be vital in preparing a proposal to formulate appropriate package for securing this corridor.

Demarcation of the Rajaji-Corbett corridor (through Lansdowne forest division) is in progress. Data on elephant movement, corridor boundary and biotic influences have been collected from Laldhang and Kotdwar ranges. Data collection in Dugadda range is in progress. Demarcations have been completed in Chilla-Motichur corridor and Kansrao-Barkote corridor.

#### **PANBARI CORRIDOR SECUREMENT PROJECT**

Following numerous discussions between the locals residing in the corridor and WTI and relevant government authorities, about 80 per cent of the households in Silijuri village have given their written consent for voluntary relocation. About 38.3 hectares of the 47.5 hectares in Silijuri has now been pledged for the establishment of the corridor. Talks are on with the residents of Methoni village.

Line transect surveys were conducted to study vegetation cover in the corridor and the use of the corridor by animals, especially elephants.

#### **CHILLA-MOTICHUR CORRIDOR PROJECT**

WTI continued its assistance to the Uttarakhand Forest Department for the securement of Khand Gaon III in the Chilla-Motichur Corridor. An alternative site for voluntary relocation of Khand Gaon III residents was selected at Bibiwala near Rishikesh. Clearance of bushes and demarcation of plots was carried out to facilitate construction of houses and other basic infrastructure before relocation. An estimate of the immovable properties of the families has been obtained from the PWD to ensure adequate compensation.

The corridor was periodically monitored for the frequency of visit or use by wild animals, especially elephants. Demarcation of the corridor was completed during the year. GPS locations of the corridor boundary, forest blocks, their extent, artefacts, etc have been collected as part of the ground truthing.

#### **WAYANAD ELEPHANT CORRIDOR PROJECT**

After the acquisition of the first (Thirulakunnu) of the five settlements in the corridor in 2007, WTI secured land from the second (Valiya Emmadi) this year. Six families residing in this settlement agreed to move to an alternative site at Panavally. They will each be given some land and a house with basic amenities. Construction of the new houses in Panavally is ongoing and almost complete.

Discussions were initiated with residents of the third settlement (Pulayankolly) for voluntary relocation. They have given in writing their consent to move out to an alternative site. Land for relocation has been identified at Appapara.

Discussions with landowners of the fourth settlement, Kottapady, resulted in an agreement, in principle, to voluntarily relocate to an alternative site. Efforts are on to hand over the acquired land at Thirulakunnu and Valiya Emmadi to the Kerala Forest Department.

#### **SIJU REWAK ELEPHANT CORRIDOR**

Following discussions initiated by WTI, the Nokma (village head) and other villagers of the Rewak village falling within the Siju-Rewak Elephant Corridor had last year unanimously agreed to set aside 20 hectares of their community to be declared as a Village Reserve



**Handing over of the newly constructed house to the villagers of Panavally, Kerala**

Forest (VRF). The Siju-Aretika VRF was demarcated this year. This VRF, secured through the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council Forest Act is gradually rejuvenating as an undisturbed passage for elephants. The imminent threat of the corridor forest being cleared for the jhum cycle has been contained. WTI is closely monitoring the development and regularly attending village level discussions and meetings. Monthly data collection on corridor usage by elephants and other animals indicates that animal movement and activity has increased within the reserve.

To minimise dependence of the locals on the forest, WTI has been promoting eco-development activities. As part of this, 32 families in Aretika were given two piglets each to help initiate piggery for income generation.

Rewak Kosi village is inhabited by only 10 families. Like Aretika, this village is also remote and devoid of development. The socio-economic status of the villagers is below average; this has compelled them to continue with jhuming as a primary source of livelihood. Several eco-development interventions as deemed important by the villagers are now being planned.

## **NATIONAL TRAIN HITS MITIGATION PROJECT**

The National Train Hits Mitigation Project aims to mitigate loss of wild animals in railway accidents, with the endangered Asian elephants as a flagship species. WTI began the project with a highly successful intervention in Rajaji National Park in Uttarakhand. The efforts initiated by WTI in collaboration with the state Forest Department and Northern Railways has succeeded in ensuring zero elephant deaths in train accidents along these tracks since 2002.



### **Installation of signage near railway track and people paying tribute to a dead elephant.**

Joint patrolling by WTI, the Forest Department and Northern Railways along the railway tracks in Rajaji continued through the year beginning in August.

WTI Executive Director met the Director (TT/Chg), Railway Board, and discussed reduction in train speeds at critical sections of Rajaji National Park and some places in Assam. Information on train movements (number of trains and train timings) through critical elephant habitat and vulnerable sections in Rajaji NP and Assam was provided to the director. The board assured that it would increase the running times of all trains in these sections, give drivers the flexibility to run trains slowly and cautiously. In this regard, they have written to Northern Railway and North-East Frontier Railway (NFR).

The long-term train-hit mitigation project was initiated in Assam too as a follow-up to a rapid field study conducted by WTI in 2006. With 47 deaths reported since 1985, Assam has the highest rate of elephant mortality due to train accidents among Indian states. An extensive survey was carried out to identify accident-prone sites on the railway network in Assam. On December 4, senior officials of the Assam Forest Department, NFR and WTI, met to formulate strategies to mitigate elephant deaths in railway accidents. Based on recommendations, the authorities decided upon several action plans including joint patrolling in crucial sections, installation of signage, and training and awareness generation for train drivers, among others. Strategies on improving visibility in blind turns and problems created by steep embankments along the track were also discussed.

## **NORTHEAST TRIBAL COUNCIL PROJECT**

Plantation was carried out in 10 hectares jhum fallow in the Selbalgre Village Reserve Forest (VRF). Deweeding was also carried out to help regeneration. According to the villagers, the vegetation of Selbalgre has improved after plantation and gibbons are seen moving in the area more comfortably. Sighting of other animals like deer, monkey, langurs have also increased.

The 7 sq km Mandalgre VRF, adjoining Nokrek National Park, was declared and registered this year.

Discussions were held with people of Sasat-Sakal Aduma to encourage creation of VRF. Sasat-Sakal Aduma is a vital A'khing corridor in the Selbalgre-Nokrek landscape with 57 households and 455 individuals. The Nokma and the villagers understand the value of preserving the forest cover as village reserve by following the example of Selbalgre VRF. They have decided to set aside a part of the forest cover measuring approximately 100 hectares as a VRF. The Nokma has already held several rounds of discussions with GHADC and approached for registration of VRF.

## RAPID ACTION PROJECT (RAP)

### 1. Rehabilitation of smooth-coated otter in Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary

Sanctioned in April 2008, this RAP aimed to help rehabilitate a five-year old smooth coated otter (*Lutra gale perspicillata*) in Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary in Bihar. The male otter was hand-raised by Sunil Kumar Chaudhury, the RAP proponent, and Principal Coordinator of the Vikramshila Biodiversity Research and Education Centre (VBREC). As the otter had spent nearly three years in human captivity, a soft-release approach was opted to ensure successful rehabilitation.



Ganga - the smooth coated otter



The Asian small clawed otter

Moujma Diara, near Sonbarsa village, about 20 km upstream of Bhagalpur along River Ganga, was selected as the release site. A man-made den resembling natural otter dens was constructed to house the otter. Initially, supplementary feed was provided and the animal was kept in the company of humans. It was eventually left alone, while rehabilitators observed its behaviour and interaction with wild otters from a distance. Quantity of supplementary feed was gradually reduced to increase its dependence on natural food. By June, the otter broke away from human bonds and was at home in the wild. Post-release monitoring was carried out with the help of fishermen who frequent these waters. The otter has been sighted several times in the wild since its release; the last sighting was recorded in January 2009.

### 2. Preventing road kills of wildlife in Bandipur National Park by installation of speed barriers and signage

WTI initiated a RAP, proposed by Rajkumar and supported by the Forest Department, to check speed of vehicles plying through this stretch to minimise wildlife casualties. The project sought enforcement of a speed limit of 40 km/hr by placing barricades in critical sections to prevent accidents.

### **3. Nilgiris Tiger-Toda Buffalo Conservation Project**

The Toda tribes of the Upper Nilgiri Plateau in Tamil Nadu have been known for living in harmony with their environs. The Todas revere the tiger as the divine entity and even worship it. However, frequent attacks by tigers on their buffaloes, an endangered breed of Asiatic water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) endemic to the Nilgiris and holy to the tribesmen, threatened to change the dynamics in the relationship with increase in possibilities of retaliatory attacks on the tigers.



**A Sacred Toda Buffalo and a Toda hamlet in Nilgiri highland, Tamil Nadu**

This RAP, proposed and implemented by Dr Tarun Chhabra, a practising dentist and an expert on the Toda community, aimed to create a pool of Toda buffaloes to provide quick compensation to the families who had lost their animals in the predatory attacks. Through this compensation scheme, the project aimed to assuage the resentment of the Todas against tigers. Moreover, the profits from the sale of dairy products from the pool was used for the welfare of the community.

To ensure that the project was self-sustaining, beneficiaries were required to donate the first born calf to the buffalo pool. Several awareness campaigns were also organised.

### **4. Installing speed breakers and signage in Corbett Tiger Reserve to prevent road accidents involving wildlife**

The public works department (PWD) of Uttarakhand repaired a 300 km-stretch of road from Moradabad to Tehri, of which a 22 km-stretch from Ramnagar to Mohan passes through the Corbett Tiger Reserve. A number of wild animals including the tiger had been killed due to accidents along this stretch. With the renovation, the toll of wild animals killed in road accidents was likely to increase significantly, as smoother roads facilitate higher speeds of vehicles. There were no speed breakers or signages along the highway to specify speed limits or to alert the drivers about wildlife.

The proponent installed speed breakers at eight specified points and also put up signages along the highway to reduce vehicle speeds and prevent road kill of wildlife.

### **5. Conservation of greater adjutant storks in Ganga and Kosi Diara region of Bihar**

In 2006, a breeding population of greater adjutant storks was discovered in the Ganga and Kosi flood plains in Bihar by Arvind Mishra, member of the Bihar Wildlife Board and executive



committee member of the Mandar Nature Club, Bhagalpur. Prior to this, breeding population of greater adjutant storks in India was known only from Assam, which holds about 80 per cent of the world's know population of 800.

In Bihar, the birds faced threats from local hunting tribesmen known as Gulgulwas. The storks also faced persecution from local people retaliating against the birds for dirtying their courtyards.

Under this RAP, Mishra organised awareness programmes and employed volunteers as watchers to protect the nesting colonies from poachers and other miscreants. This provided security to 32 nests; 62 chicks successfully fledged from these. Mishra also motivated forest officials, media, police, panchayat representatives, school teachers and students to support his campaign. As a result, the perception of the locals has changed, and many now worship the stork as Garuda, the steed of Lord Vishnu.

#### **6. Rescue of flood-afflicted wildlife on the north bank of River Brahmaputra (Sonitpur district)**

This RAP was sanctioned as part of WTI's efforts to minimise wildlife casualties during the annual floods in Kaziranga National Park in Assam. During floods, many animals get displaced from within the low-lying Kaziranga, while many others move to a higher ground to escape the rising water levels and turbulence. As they move out of the protected area in search of higher ground, they also fall victim to poachers.

While the WTI-run Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) situated near Panbari Reserve Forest and the Mobile Veterinary Services are active during these floods, the north bank of the Brahmaputra remains largely cut off due to increase in water levels. The RAP proponent, Ajay Kumar Sarmah of Sonitpur-based Nature's Bonyapran, organised rescue operations along this side of Kaziranga. Injured animals were rescued, provided with medical treatment, and released back into the wild with the help of a veterinarian. As part of the project, awareness campaigns were organised for local villagers, who were also encouraged to report sightings of displaced animals. Severely injured and sick animals requiring long-term care were transferred to CWRC. A number of animals including slow lorises, deer, and python were rescued under this RAP.

#### **7. Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve: Impacts of festivals and local traditional practices on the ecosystems in the reserve**

The Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR) in Tamil Nadu covers an area of 900 sq km. Located in southern Western Ghats, the reserve is the southern-most range of the tiger in India. It also harbours the endangered lion-tailed macaque, Nilgiri langur, the endemic Salim Ali fruit bat (*Latidense salimali*), and endemic plant species such as *Gluta travancorica*, *Aglaiia bourdilonii*, etc.

An annual festival in July -August attracts a lot of people to this forest and littering of the rivers and forests is a major concern.

As part of the RAP, a campaign was organised against the use of polybags by pilgrims and stall keepers inside the reserve. The campaign message was propagated to a wide audience across the district and beyond, through a series of pre-festival activities. A media campaign was carried out through the local radio and cable network.

The RAP also evaluated the effects of the festival: water quality in the river was tested before and after the festival, and its effect downstream was evaluated. The impact of vehicular traffic on wildlife was recorded by monitoring road kills during the early stages of the festival. Indirect evidence of droppings/scats was also recorded at various distances from the festival area, both during and after the festival. This was complemented by a traffic flow survey. The data collected is being analysed. Student volunteers were engaged in garbage collection for the post-festival clean-up.

#### **8. Equipment for anti-poaching team in Golaghat for protection of stray rhinos**

Areas like Bonkowl, Kemeru Sapori, Bhakte Chapori, Luhita Chapori and Lohoria Chapori falling under Numaligarh Beat i.e. Golaghat Division (Normal) have similar habitats as Kaziranga National Park. Rhinos from Kaziranga regularly forage in these areas during the winter and summer months. These rhinos are susceptible to poaching since there are no anti-poaching camps in these areas, as they do not fall within the protected areas network.

The patrolling team faces shortage of basic equipments like tents, lifejackets, and searchlights. The Numaligarh Beat staff are compelled to camp in the open during patrolling. Keeping this in mind, five life jackets, two tents, two rechargeable searchlights and a pair of binoculars were handed over to the DFO Golaghat to facilitate anti-poaching patrolling in the area.

#### **9. Strengthening the anti-poaching activities by supplying field kits to the temporary forest field staff of Sathyamangalam Forest Division, Tamil Nadu**

Sathyamangalam is the largest forest division in Tamil Nadu covering an area of 1455.31 sq km. It connects the Western Ghats with the Eastern Ghats and supports a population of 815-900 elephants. Due to the high frequency of tiger sightings, Sathyamangalam is believed to have a fairly large tiger population. It may be recognised as a Project Tiger site in the near future. Sathyamangalam also hosts sizable numbers of other rare and endangered fauna such as hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*) and blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*).

However, poaching is a major concern in Sathyamangalam. Last year, three tiger skins (of an adult female and two well-grown cubs) were seized from Bhavanisagar range of Sathyamangalam forest division. This year many incidents of poaching have been recorded in the adjoining Kollegal and Chamrajnagar forest divisions of Karnataka.

To facilitate effective anti-poaching patrolling, 60 anti-poaching kits (comprising day packs, LED torches, rain suits, caps) and sleeping bags were handed over to the watchers of the Sathyamangalam forest division.

#### **10. Installation of 20 km power fence for mitigation of human-animal conflict in Lukhurakhonia, Mohpara, Domjan, Kohora 2, Bosa Gaon, Kohora 1, Sildubi 1&2, Rangajan, Maj line and Bor bill mishing gaon**

More than 16,000 residents of fringe villages in Kaziranga National Park depend on cultivation (in about 2200 ha) for their livelihood. There is a high degree of human-animal conflict and instances of damage to life and property by wildlife. Retaliation by villagers is not uncommon.

Following the success of an earlier RAP on power fencing in Kuthori village to minimise human-animal conflict, two similar projects were sanctioned this year. Power fences were

installed in Lukhurakhonia, Domjan, Bosa Gaon, Mohpara, Kohora 1 & 2 and Sildubi 1 & 2 villages. A committee comprising staff of WTI, village eco-development committees and the Forest Department was formed to ensure maintenance of the fence. The fence will be removed every year during the monsoon.

**11. Support for office infrastructure for conducting conservation initiatives like the “Great Himalayan Bird Count-Winter of 2008” and “House Sparrow Nest Monitoring Programme” in Uttarakhand Himalayas, India by ARCH**

A computer set was provided to ARCH (Action & Research for Conservation in Himalayas) to help them in implementation of their conservation projects.

**12. ‘Workshop on Illegal Wildlife Trade’ for awareness and capacity building of ground level informers, police /forest personnel and law practitioners in Jodhpur, Rajasthan**

A workshop on illegal wildlife trade control was held in Jodhpur on January 16. The objective was to spread awareness and form a trained intelligence network to trace and curb underground trade of various rare and endangered species in Rajasthan. More than 100 individuals including MSc student volunteers, local MLA, Forest Department personnel, Bishnoi community representatives, and wildlife experts participated in the workshop.

Following the workshop, a ground-level enforcement team comprising about 50 volunteers was formed to counter wildlife trade in western Rajasthan.

**13. A study on the disappearance of jackals from areas around Nagarhole National Park and Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary in South Coorg**

The dense forests of Coorg, encompassing Nagarhole National Park and Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, harbour numerous rare wildlife species including several endemic ones. The Indian jackal was once commonly seen in Coorg - in forests as well as in the adjoining coffee estates and paddy fields. However, over the past few years sightings of jackals have dropped drastically. Jackals seem to have almost disappeared from this region, especially towards the south. Even calls of jackals can no longer be heard in these areas.

The RAP study identified use of phorate pesticides and possible disease outbreak in the past among the main reasons for the disappearance of the jackal. Major food species of jackals, including rodents, hares and crabs were also found in low numbers. Rodent and crab population were possibly affected by excessive use of pesticides and fungicides. An outbreak of foot and mouth disease causing mass mortality of cattle was recorded in the area about a decade ago; the jackals were known to feed on carcasses of affected cattle and were possibly affected by this. There is also a large-scale habitat fragmentation.

**14. Sea turtle and their habitat protection at Devi Rookery and in the buffer zone of Gahirmatha Sea Turtle Rookery, Orissa (2 RAPs)**

The olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) is among the four turtle species found along the Orissa coast. This Schedule I species is threatened by high level of mortality caused by a number of natural and anthropogenic hindrances, especially during their congregation and nesting periods.

Mass nesting of olive ridley turtles occur in Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary and Rushikulya. Moreover, sporadic nesting occurs in the buffer zone of Gahirmatha sanctuary, including Pentha, Batighara, Hukitola, Mahanadi river mouth and Paradeep Urban Beach of Kendrapara

and Jagatsinghpur District of Orissa, lying south of Barunei river. Sporadic nesting can also be seen in Devi rookery (Devi river mouth, Robert Island, Kadua river mouth, Chandrabhaga and Puri urban beach). While the sanctuary is protected by the government, the sporadic nesting areas remain largely unprotected.



Olive Ridley turtles on the Orrisa coast

The two RAPs were sanctioned to provide protection to nesting olive ridley turtles in these sporadic nesting sites.

The proponents provided round-the-clock protection to the turtles against predation by stray dogs, wild animals like jackals, and disturbances by local people. They also marked the location of the nests and intimated the forest department for egg collection for the hatcheries. They organised beach cleaning and awareness programmes for the fishing community to prevent fishing in restricted areas. General public awareness activities included display of hoardings, community meetings, Beach cleaning involving school students etc.

The two RAPs were implemented in the buffer zone of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary and Devi rookery by Action for Protection of Wild Animals (APOWA) and Green Life Rural Association (GLRA) respectively. APOWA Director, Bijaya Kabi's team in Gahirmatha rookery provided round-the-clock security along 48 km stretch of coastline in Pentha, Dobandi, Hukitola and Batighar-Paradeep beaches in the buffer zone of Gahirmatha. Since the initiation of the project in mid-February, 753 individual turtles have visited these beaches to lay eggs.

GLRA General Secretary, Sovakar Behera, reported that 1,743 turtles had nested in the 37 km stretch of coastline including Devi rookery, Gangadevi, Kadua and Chandrabhaga beaches since January. Till March 2009, 13,882 hatchlings that emerged in hatcheries and 29,219 hatchlings that emerged in the beaches, have been released back into the sea.

**15. Provision of 10 mobile sets for the administrative staff of Pench Tiger Reserve to enhance the communication system for better protection for wildlife**

Effective communication system is vital in anti-poaching operations. At the request of Girish Vashist, Assistant Conservator of Forest, Maharashtra, 10 mobile sets were presented to the administrative staff of Pench Tiger Reserve to facilitate better protection.

## **16. Mitigating human-elephant conflict in Burapahar Hill range, Assam**

Habitat degradation, declining forest cover, and encroachment by humans has resulted in frequent instances of in human-animal conflicts across Assam.

In the Burapahar Hill range within the state, there still exists a good forest cover supporting an elephant population of about 150-200 elephants. However, there were frequent instances of human-elephant conflicts in the area.

As part of the RAP, an early warning system (EWS) was installed in prime conflict areas in Chapanala including Garhchuk village, Nalbari, Kaziranga (a village inhabited by Bodos) and Jiajuri- village No-2, identified through a field survey. In December, installation of the EWS was completed in Thekeraguri village in Salona. The local people were trained on the technicalities of installing, operating and repairing the EWS in place.

A nursery for chilly and citrus plantation (to be used as barrier crops around human settlements) was also established. The project has shown positive results with conflicts being effectively reduced, even in certain high conflict areas.

## **VAN RAKSHAK PROJECT**

The Van Rakshak Project (VRP) maintains the Protected Area Staff Status database, comprising information on more than 17,000 frontline forest field staff from across the country.

Capacity building training for frontline field staff in the Asiatic black bear and mountain ungulates habitat was organised in Jammu and Kashmir. A wildlife crime prevention training



**Forest Department staff after the refresher training in Jammu and Kashmir.**

programme was also organised in Leh to sensitise frontline staff as well as range officers, on relevant wildlife legislations, particularly the Jammu & Kashmir Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1978. Field gear kits were distributed to the participants.

A refresher training was organised for Forest Department staff in sloth bear habitats in Bihar in January 2009. The training targeted staff of protected areas where the first phase of the VRP training was held in May 2007. Nearly 200 frontline field staff including range officers and forest guards, from Bhimbandh, Kanwarjheel, Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin, Nagi Dam, Nakti Dam, Pant, Salim Ali Barela, Gautam Buddha, and Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuaries participated in the two-day training.

## **INSURANCE**

The duty of frontline field staff often requires them to face better-equipped criminals. As part of its morale boosting initiative, VRP runs the only one of its kind umbrella insurance scheme for forest staff all over India. This unique Group Accident Insurance Scheme benefits the frontline field staff and their families in case of permanent disability or death while on duty. It provides an insurance cover of up to Rs 100,000 (app US\$ 2000).

Insurance claim for Sukleshwar Deka, a casual worker in Burchapori Wildlife Sanctuary, who was killed in an elephant attack, was settled during the year.

Insurance claims for the following have been forwarded to the insurance company:

1. Lalan Prasad Gupta, Range Officer, Palamau Tiger Reserve.
2. Dhiraj Lal, Casual worker, Kanha National Park.
3. Ratan Kumar Dutta, forester, Neora Valley, West Bengal.
4. Amrit Lal Pandey, forest guard, Bandhavgarh National Park.

An ex gratia payment was made to Hamel Singh Pattai, grass cutter in Kanha National Park, who lost his eyesight after being injured in a tiger attack.

## **WILDLIFE LITIGATION**

### **TRIAL COURT**

With WTI's assistance, 20 accused of lion poaching were convicted on October 23, 2008. They were sentenced for a jail term and a fine of Rs 10,000 each. The accused were arrested for poaching six endangered Asiatic lions from Gir and for illegal possession of wildlife articles. Two lion claws were recovered from the main accused Kuntar Singh and Nanaka Singh during their arrest in April 2008.

In another major victory in wildlife litigation, the appeal of Ratiram Sharma (also known as Sansar Chand of the East), was rejected by the Additional District Judge of Alipurduar, West Bengal on December 2, upholding his conviction and a sentence of five years in prison. Ratiram was arrested on July 14, 2006. Four leopard skins, 140 pieces of rhino skins, 125 pieces of tiger bones and a skull were recovered from his house by Forest Department

officials. Before the trial of the Czech insect traders, this case held the place for the quickest wildlife trial in India lasting just four months between arrest and sentencing.

## **CENTRAL EMPOWERED COMMITTEE**

In addition to trial court cases, WTI filed several applications in the Supreme Court appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC). An application was filed on August 28 against the upgradation of National Highway-7 (connecting Nagpur to Seoni) to a 4/6 lane. The proposed upgradation covers a 8.7 km stretch of NH-7 along the periphery of Pench Mowgli Sanctuary of Pench Tiger Reserve, Seoni, which is contiguous with South Seoni (Territorial) Forest Division. This upgradation will have adverse impact on wildlife and forest of the area. The expansion of road will cause permanent fragmentation of this important wildlife area leading to irreversible damage to Kanha National Park and Pench Tiger Reserve.

An application regarding the encroachment in Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary, Darjeeling, and West Bengal was filed before the CEC on April 24, 2008. Violating the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 as well as the Supreme Court order dated February 2, 2000 and November 11, 2005 in TN Godavarman vs Union of India W.P 202 of 1995, the illegal dumping of used cars by the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council continue within the forest land including within the Senchal Wildlife Sanctuary. The application calls upon ceasing the illegal activities and recommends action against the Principal Secretary of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council for deliberate and intentional violation of the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

On August 22, 2007, an application had been filed before the Central Empowered Committee regarding the ongoing construction of Hansi-Butana Canal through Saraswati Wildlife Sanctuary against State of Haryana. The hearing took place on June 13, 2008. Although the construction of canal has been allowed, the WLS which had been denotified with effect from October 11, 2007 was declared a Conservation Reserve. The CEC has also imposed a fine of one crore rupees on the Government of Haryana. The money will be used by Forest Department, Haryana for better management and protection of the Conservation Reserve.

## **GLOBAL TIGER FORUM SUPPORT PROJECT**

Cambodia's existing Tiger Action Plan (included in Action Tiger) is very basic and needed upgradation. Laos, meanwhile, is the only country (barring North Korea) without a National Tiger Action Plan and is also not a member of GTF. Lobbying in both the countries had been ongoing for quite some time. The matter was taken up with the authorities in Laos as well as Cambodia. Formation of core committees to look into the respective matter was facilitated. First meetings with representatives of forestry administration and other stakeholders were also organised. Minutes and recommendations that emerged during the meetings were forwarded to the respective governments.

Following discussions, the government of Cambodia endorsed the upgradation of its existing NTAP. Likewise, the government of Laos has agreed to prepare an NTAP. Following extensive interactions regarding 'GTF membership of Lao PDR' with authorities in Vientiane, the

Director-General, Department of Forest Resources Conservation has agreed to pursue the matter with higher authorities.

## ANIMAL ACTION WEEK.

About 1500 schools from all over India were invited to participate in AAW 2008. In addition, 350 non-government organisations (NGOs) were invited to collaborate and help spread the outreach of AAW to schools at the district level in their respective regions. Participating schools were sent a free education activity pack, film (VCD) and other AAW material on the theme. To facilitate participation of students from regional Hindi medium schools, the activity packs were translated into Hindi.

The classroom activities this year included a quiz programme, passage writing on marine species, and debate on animal welfare issues. Participants were invited to contribute their entries for the slogan-writing and poster-making competitions.



Children participating in Animal Action Week

A total of 1250 entries for the poster and slogan competition, and over 4470 signed pledges against use of plastic were received from schools in Delhi, West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Arunachal Pradesh.

Two of the best entries from the AAW painting competition were awarded the IFAW Young Achiever's prize. The IFAW Young Achievers for 2008 were Rajiv Kumar, Class - 9, Evergreen Public School, Delhi, and Hardeep Singh Jadeja, Class - 7, Rajkumar College, Rajkot. The award winners were provided with a certificate and a cash prize.

## TIBETAN CONSERVATION AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Tibetan Conservation Awareness Campaign (TCAC), a joint venture between WTI and Care for the Wild International (CWI), supported by the Rowell Fund was inaugurated by the Dalai Lama on April 6, 2005. The campaign, aimed at spreading conservation awareness among Tibetans, hoped to reduce involvement of Tibetans in illegal wildlife trade and also reduce the use of wildlife articles by Tibetans. Encouraged by the results, TCAC approached Tibetans living in India through its campaign collaterals using the message of the Dalai Lama to spread awareness.

The campaign began in earnest in January 2006 when TCAC participated in the Kalachakra held at Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh. Around 1,20,000 Buddhist devotees including Tibetans from across the world attended the event. Further to his earlier support to the TCAC, the



Dalai Lama also spoke on wildlife conservation and stressed as shameful, the involvement of Tibetans in wildlife crimes, generating a significant response from Tibetans across the world.

Field officers of Tibetan origin visited urban areas as well as remote rural areas to reach out to their fellow Tibetans in 53 settlements, 68 schools and 106 monasteries across India. Wildlife documentaries including one prepared by CWI and WTI containing the wildlife conservation message of the Dalai Lama, were screened during the campaigns. Campaign collaterals in English as well as Tibetan were prepared and distributed among the people attending the campaign activities.

This year, TCAC aimed to reinforce the message of the Dalai Lama with the conservation messages from other Tibetan High Lamas. The video message was collected from the Karmapa, the Sakya Trizin and Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, Tibetan Prime Minister-in-exile.

TCAC field officers also conducted campaigns in several parts of India including five monasteries in Ladakh - Hanley, Spituk, Hemis, Stakna, Monastery School as well as in SOS Tibetan Children's Village School. Campaigns were conducted in four monasteries in Nako, Tabo, Dhankar and Kye in Lahaul and Spiti, Himachal Pradesh. In Bylakuppe, Karnataka, apart from the regular campaigns in the two Tibetan settlements Lugsum Samdupling and Dickyi Larsoe, the field officers tied up with the Bylakuppe Lhamo (traditional Tibetan opera) Association, to spread conservation awareness through cultural programmes. At the request of WTI field officers, the association members incorporated an act with wildlife conservation message in their performance, which was first performed before the Dalai Lama at the Sera Monastery on February 18.

The campaign was also conducted in several monasteries in Nepal.



**Children holding up collaterals produced for the Tibetan Conservation Awareness Campaign**

## SCHALLER CONSERVATION SURVEYS

### TAKIN SURVEY

The Mishmi takin (*Budorcas taxicolor taxicolor*) is a species of goat-antelope found in the hills of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim at an altitude of 2000-3000 meters. The takin is listed under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and is classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Yet, only scant information exists on its population, distribution, ecology and behaviour.

For the very first time an extensive survey to assess the distribution, population status of the endangered takin and assess the threats faced by it is being conducted in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim from where the species has been reported.

The survey which was initiated in the eastern parts of the Arunachal Pradesh has found the presence of takins in healthy numbers. Upper Siang and Upper Subansiri districts were also surveyed. Three troops of takin were recorded by the team in February 2009.

In March 2009, four areas (Kugging, Kopu, Pango and Eco Dumbing) in Yingkiong forest division, Upper Siang district, were surveyed this month. Takin was sighted in Kopu (five individuals including a juvenile) and Pango (19 individuals). Indirect evidence of takin presence was observed in all four areas.



Takin survey ongoing in Arunachal Pradesh

The information generated by the survey will ultimately be used to formulate a conservation strategy for the Mishmi takin in India. The survey is expected to reveal many new facets on the distribution and ecology of this species.

## WILD BUFFALO SURVEY

### Survey in Garhchiroli district, Maharashtra

A survey to study the presence of wild buffalo population in Garhchiroli district of Maharashtra, adjoining the Indravati Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh, was conducted jointly by WTI and Maharashtra Forest Department from June 3-7. The team surveyed Kolamarka, Garewada and Chitweli forest beats under Kamlapur forest range and Mukhanpalli forest beat under Dechli forest range of Sironcha forest division. A few old hoof marks of wild buffaloes were recorded. A set of fresh hoof marks of three individuals, two young and one calf, were recorded on the river bank of Indravati.

In Mukhanpalli beat, two wild buffaloes were sighted. Both animals were healthy with huge body size and with horn similar to those of the wild buffaloes in Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary. The bank of Indravati river seems to be a potential habitat for wild buffaloes because of the abundant water and grass of good quality.

### Survey in Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary and Khariar Forest Division, Orissa

A presence-absence survey was conducted in Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary. The team members surveyed trails within the sanctuary for direct or indirect signs of wild buffaloes, but found none. They also interacted with residents of six villages in the vicinity of Sunabeda WLS. The respondents of all villages except one claimed that the species was never found in these areas. Residents of Koked village informed that a herd had been sighted near Chauradongar about a decade ago.

Another survey was conducted in areas within Sennapali forest range in Khariar forest division, Orissa, adjoining Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary. The survey was a follow-up of the first survey conducted by WTI in 2006. Five villages on the bank of



Field officer installing camera trap

Udanti river were surveyed. Residents of Sindursil and Chitweli villages reported sightings of a lone male wild buffalo in 1973 and 1974 and informed that it had later returned to Udanti. They also informed that wild buffalo movement was restricted due to poor availability of grasses, miscellaneous dry forest and biotic pressures. Residents of Ladhwapara, Bhatapani and Ghatarnal villages said that wild buffaloes have never been seen in these areas.

## HANGUL CONSERVATION SURVEY

The hangul or, Kashmir stag (*Cervus elaphus hanglu*), a species of the red deer family is highly endangered due to various environmental pressures caused by hunting and habitat destruction. Till date no study has been done to ascertain hangul number outside of the main Dachigam National Park population.

For the first time such a study is being conducted in areas which are highly militarised, being very close to the line of control between India and Pakistan. Survey has been completed in Guraiz and Tilail in Kashmir. Strong evidence of hangul presence in fair numbers was found from several areas in Kishenganga catchment near the Line of Control. The survey has established the presence of the species in three pockets of the state. This reconnaissance survey will be followed by a larger survey to estimate hangul numbers. The idea is to revive these populations of the hangul and develop a conservation strategy for the endangered species in India.

## MALABAR CIVET PROJECT

Questionnaire surveys targeting local people and camera trap surveys were carried out in various potential Malabar civet habitats across Karnataka and Kerala. Field work was carried out in Pepara Wildlife Sanctuary, Puttur and Bantwal towards the south of Mangalore, Nagavalli, Coorg. Although the civet sightings were reported by several interviewees from Kerala, none were photo-captured.

## SHAHTOOSH WORKERS REHABILITATION PROJECT

When the northern state of Jammu & Kashmir outlawed the killing of the Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*) and the use of its derivatives in May 2002, bringing its laws at par with Indian and international laws, over 15,000 people in the state engaged in the manufacture of shahtoosh shawls were turned into criminals overnight.

This ban, which was strongly lobbied for by IFAW-WTI, was necessitated by the indiscriminate killing of the antelope in its home on the Chang Thang plateau in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China, and Ladakh in India. They were killed to extract the under fleece of this animal, which is also the world's finest and warmest wool.

Over 70 per cent of this workforce consists of women, many of them conflict widows in a state overrun by civil and political unrest. They either faced unemployment or had to



KHPPT stall at Nature Bazaar, organised by Dastkar at New Delhi

illegally continue their respective roles in the tiered production process of making the shahtoosh fabric.

Following extensive research, high quality pashmina fabric, which was subsequently branded and trade-marked as 'Pashma, the warmth of Kashmir', was chosen as the alternative livelihood. IFAW-WTI had set up a body of former shahtoosh and pashmina workers, named Kashmir Handmade Pashmina Promotion Trust (KHPPT) to promote pashmina products produced by member artisans according to Pashma specifications as well as push for a Geographical Indication (GI) of Origin label, as recommended by IFAW-WTI as early as 2001. In September 2008, Kashmir pashmina was granted the GI. Efforts are being made to determine specifications for GI Mark & Certificate Mark. Different samples of pashmina available in the market were collected for the purpose of setting quality standards

A film titled *A Shawl to Die For*, showcasing the livelihood intervention undertaken by IFAW-WTI in Srinagar during the last three years, was completed. The film was shortlisted among the top five entries and was also screened in Jeevika 2008- South Asia Livelihood Documentary Competition at New Delhi.

KHPPT participated in the weeklong Nature Bazaar-2008 organised by Dastkar at New Delhi in November. KHPPT Founders' Committee members Hayat Ahmad Wani and Nisar Ahmed Bhat managed the stall that was set up for the sale of KHPPT products. More than 60 handcrafted pashmina shawls, stoles and scarves were sold.

## WHALE SHARK CAMPAIGN

One of India's most successful and internationally-acclaimed conservation projects, the Whale Shark Campaign is a collaboration of IFAW-WTI, Tata Chemicals Limited and the Gujarat Forest Department. The campaign was initiated in January 2004 to spread awareness, educate and change perceptions about the world's largest fish among specific target groups in Gujarat.

Whale sharks are the world's largest fish and were slaughtered in large numbers on the Gujarat coast until the species was listed under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (under sub section (1) of section 61) in May 2001. The effectiveness of the campaign in Gujarat has proven to be outstanding, as the turnaround period for this brutally-hunted species has come within the first four years of the campaign's initiation; more than 100 trapped whale sharks have been voluntarily released by fishermen along the Gujarat coast since the start of the campaign.

A cheque distribution function was held at Veraval, organised by the Forest Department on July 5, 2008. Twenty-two fishermen were honoured by the state Forest Minister Kirit Rana for sacrificing their nets to release trapped whale sharks.

On November 27, 2008, the first 'Whale Shark Day' - an honour that has been conferred to no species in India including the tiger, was celebrated in Porbandar, Gujarat. The celebrations, including a rally by school children, a street play and honouring of fishermen

who sacrificed their nets to release trapped whale sharks among others, also marked the beginning of the scientific study of the whale sharks with a Scientific Advisory Meeting attended by government officials, international whale shark experts, scientists, TCL and IFAW-WTI representatives.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Celebrating WTI's 10th year in the service of nature, a revamped website design was unveiled in May 2008. A number of other additions were made in the subsequent months, including a section titled 'focus of the month' that was updated monthly with details about a WTI project, two team members, and a photograph.

Work was initiated to redesign the entire website; a professional website designer was hired for the purpose. The WTI website hosted 81,325 visitors during the year, yielded 1,69,793 page views. A total of 96 stories were uploaded on the website.

A total of 617 media hits including print, online, video and radio coverage were recorded during the year.

In August, the monthly e-newsletter system was reactivated, with the purchase of a mailer software that enables bulk emailing to 10,000 addresses.

The WTI communications team participated in the Times of India - Surf Excel children's festival on August 3 and 4. The team also participated in the Woodstock Wildlife Week celebrations at Woodstock School, Mussoorie on August 20. In February, the team participated in the college festival of the Pioneer Media School and 'Kids for Tigers' awareness programme organised at Shri Ram School in New Delhi.

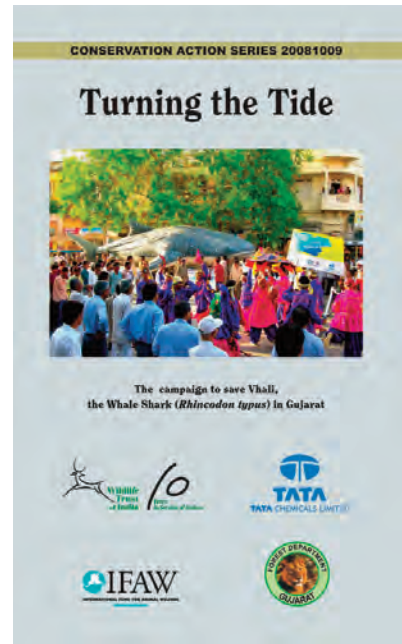
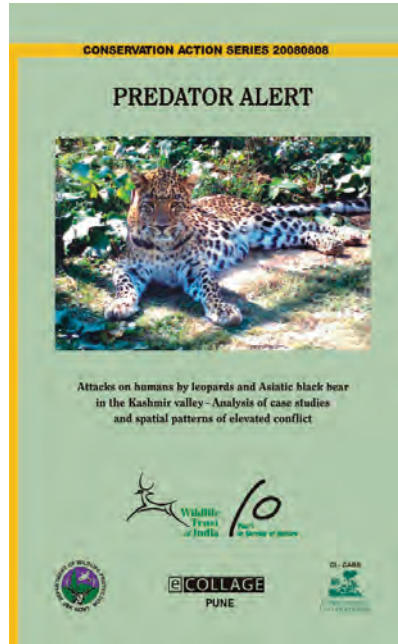
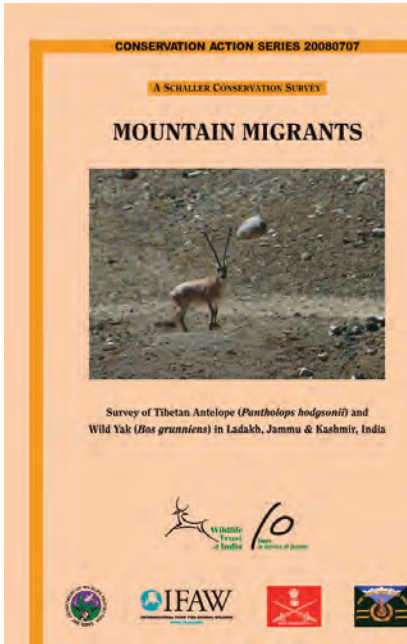
be relocated in an area with less human-animal conflict.

## PUBLICATIONS

Three Conservation Action Reports were printed this year:

1. Mountain Migrants -Survey of Tibetan antelope (*Pantholops hodgsonii*) and wild yak (*Bos grunniens*) in Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir.
2. Predator Alert - Attacks on humans by leopards and Asiatic black bear in the Kashmir valley - Analysis of case studies and spatial patterns of elevated conflict
3. Turning the Tide - The campaign to save Vhali, the whale shark (*Rhincodon typhus*) in Gujarat.

A CD comprising all WTI publications including Conservation Action Reports, Conservation Reference Series, Occasional Reports and general publications was created for distribution. Another CD comprising elephant-specific publications was also made.



**WILDLIFE TRUST OF INDIA**

**BALANCE SHEET AS ON MARCH 31, 2009**

AS AT 31.3.08 AMOUNT (Rs.)	FUNDS & LIABILITIES	AS AT 31.3.09 AMOUNT (Rs.)	AS AT 31.3.08 AMOUNT (Rs.)	ASSETS	AS AT 31.3.09 AMOUNT (Rs.)
909,541.80	<b>CORPUS FUND</b> Opening Balance	909,541.80	19,842,608.23	<b>FIXED ASSETS</b> ( Schedule " C " )	23,878,559.25
909,541.80				<b>CURRENT ASSETS, LOANS &amp; ADVANCES</b>	
17,504,987.13	<b>CAPITAL FUND</b> Opening Balance	19,842,608.23	40,878.54	<b>CURRENT ASSETS:</b>	305,179.31
3,412,682.50	Add : Addition during the year	2,915,889.20	919,645.80	Cash in hand	(478,566.72)
1,389,715.50	Add : Transfer from General Reserve	3,651,852.10	34,813,387.00	Cash at Bank	59,298,496.00
22,306,385.13		26,410,349.53	2,950,056.00	Fixed Deposits	3,227,447.00
27,744.00	Less : Sale / Written off during the year	7,360.00		Accrued Interest	
2,436,032.90	Less : Depreciation	2,524,430.28			
19,842,608.23		23,878,559.25		<b>LOANS &amp; ADVANCES:</b>	425,674.00
1,139,864.28	<b>GENERAL RESERVE</b> Opening Balance	14,043,007.78	516,374.00	Security Deposits	2,063,314.66
-1,312,073.00	Add : Excess of Income over Expenditure	9,030,512.29	1,787,842.14	Advances	140,436.40
1,388,715.50	Less : Amount transferred to capital fund	3,651,852.10	41,464.30	Prepaid Expenses	942,203.00
27,744.00	Add : Sale/ Written off during the year	7,360.00	692,340.00	Tax Deducted at Source	
2,576,188.00	Add : Net Addition as per schedule	5,151,342.77			
14,043,007.78		24,580,370.74			
24,750,471.83	<b>UNUTILISED FUNDS</b> ( Schedule " B " )	39,176,922.92			
2,058,966.37	<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES &amp; PROVISIONS</b> Sundry Amounts Payable	1,257,348.28			
61,604,596.01	<b>TOTAL</b>	89,902,742.99	61,604,596.01	<b>TOTAL</b>	89,502,742.99

Significant Accounting Policies and Notes to Accounts - Schedule "D"  
in terms of our report of even date attached

FOR KOSHI & GEORGE  
Chartered Accountants



GEORGE KOSHI  
Partner  
M.No.82961

New Delhi  
17.09.2009

FOR WILDLIFE TRUST OF INDIA

Vinay  
(EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

