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TIGER UPDATE

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Issue 1, November 2004

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Reflecting on a suitable format for the Tiger Update, I was pondering over the following:

1. Should it be a story from each landscape?
2. Should it be an overview?
3. Should it be a collection of news and stories?

After much thinking I figured we should go ahead with 2 and 3 since many landscapes also produce their own newsletters that contain their stories. So, for this first issue, we put together overviews and some interesting findings, achievements and events. From the next issue we will have enough time for more contribution of specific stories from the field. I hope this remains a dynamic process - a process that is shaped and moulded as we go along, but one that would adequately communicate analysis of our programme. Your feedback is critical to this update.

So Far This Year...

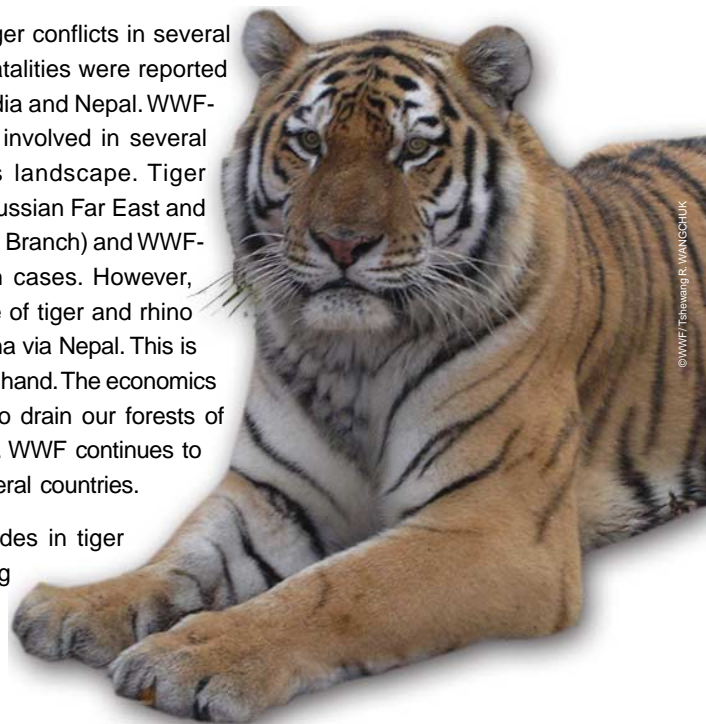
■ Tshewang Wangchuk

Welcome to the first issue of **TIGER UPDATE**, a bi-annual newsletter highlighting analyses, news and stories from various countries and landscapes where WWF works with its partners to conserve tigers in the wild.

The year 2004 started off on a strong positive note. In January, the WWF Species Working Group meeting was held in Kanha Tiger Reserve (thanks to WWF-India) and many participants got an up close and personal view of tigers! In a partnership effort between WWF and WCS, several WWF staff were trained by Dr Ullas Karanth (WCS) in tiger and prey monitoring techniques. This will greatly enhance scientific validity and standardisation of monitoring techniques in WWF field tiger projects. A major highlight at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was the declaration of new protected areas by the Indonesian government. This was the culmination of years of support by WWF-Indonesia and other conservation partners. WWF-France has raised funds for tiger conservation from the premiere of the film 'Deux Freres' (Two Brothers) in Nice, and we are getting more European WWF NOs interested in supporting our field programmes.

There has been a spate of human-tiger conflicts in several places. Numerous cases of human fatalities were reported in the Terai Arc Landscape, both in India and Nepal. WWF-India and WWF Nepal Program are involved in several conflict mitigation activities in this landscape. Tiger poachers were apprehended in the Russian Far East and in Sumatra. WWF-Russia (Far Eastern Branch) and WWF-Indonesia were instrumental in both cases. However, just a few months ago, a huge cache of tiger and rhino skins were discovered en-route to China via Nepal. This is a grim testimony of the daunting task at hand. The economics of illegal wildlife trade still manages to drain our forests of magnificent animals such as the tiger. WWF continues to support anti-poaching activities in several countries.

We continue to make significant strides in tiger conservation but there is still a long way to go. 



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Vision

A world in which tigers thrive in natural habitats across their range and benefit humanity as a result

Long-term Goal

To conserve demographically viable populations of tigers and their prey, across their range, in large, well-managed networks of protected areas, ddddddzones and connecting tiger-friendly landscapes

Programme Goal

To improve the protection and management of key tiger populations and their habitat in top priority conservation landscapes through measures that can be sustained and supported over the long-term by governments, local communities and other stakeholders

the WWF Tiger Programme

In 2000, WWF and other tiger biologists, conservation planners and practitioners put together a strategy and action plan for conserving tigers in the wild. It was to be the basis for WWF tiger conservation work until 2010. Using criteria like current population and habitat parameters, threats, conservation opportunities and partnership, the most important tiger areas across its range were prioritised in order to maximise conservation impact. Seven priority landscapes were selected and four other landscapes also identified to focus WWF investment in tiger conservation. As more information becomes available, the prioritisation process continues to evolve.

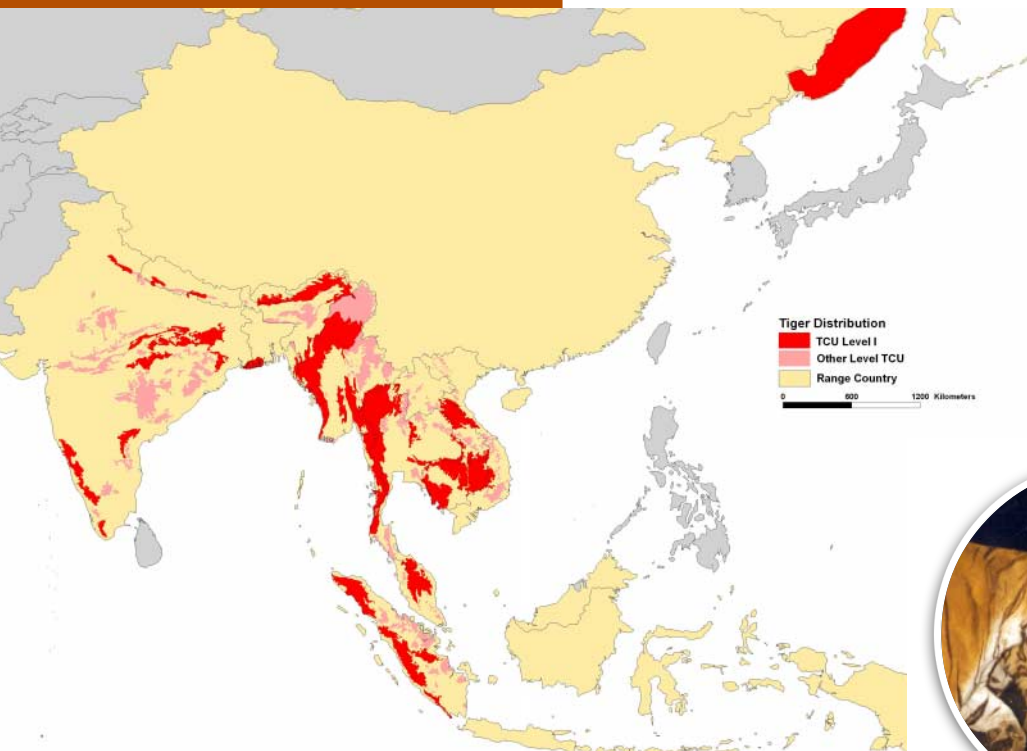
The priority landscapes were:

1. Terai Arc Landscape (India/Nepal)
2. Satpuda Maikal Landscape (India)
3. Sunderban Landscape (Bangladesh/India)
4. Hala Bala - Belum - Taman Negara Landscape (Malaysia/Thailand)
5. BBS-Kerinci-Seblat Landscape (Indonesia)
6. Lower Mekong Landscape (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam)
7. Russian Far East Landscape (Russia)

In addition to the above, the following were selected as "tier-two" landscapes.

1. Manas-Namdapha (Bhutan/India)
2. Nilgiris Eastern Ghats Landscape (India)
3. Eastern Highlands (India)
4. Western Forest Complex-Tannantharyi Landscape (Myanmar/Thailand)

Illegal trade of wildlife parts and products was recognised as a crosscutting global "landscape". 🐾



Human-Tiger CONFLICT: What is happening?



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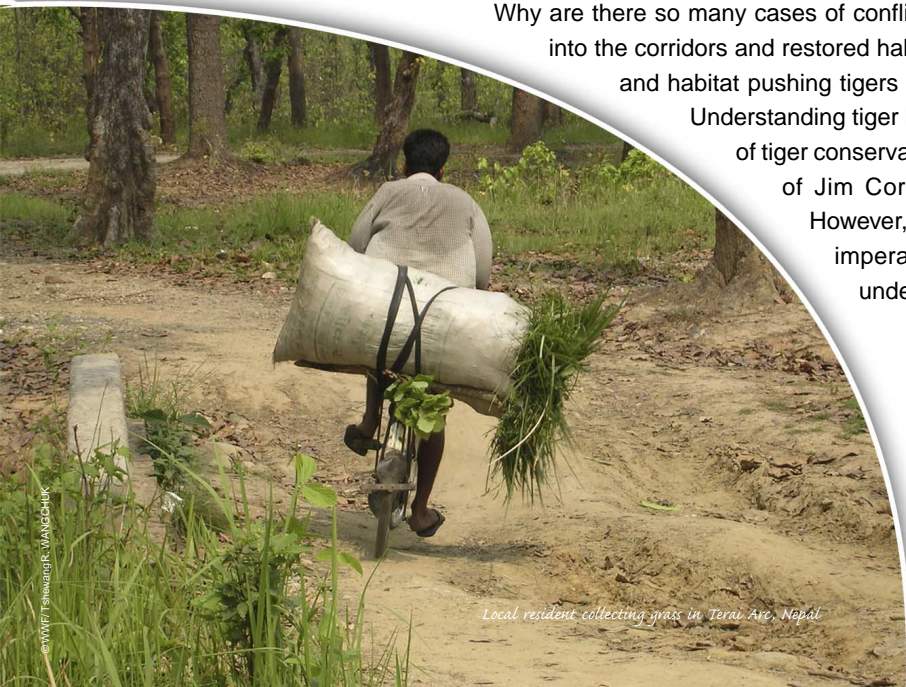
Human-tiger conflict is a major factor leading to retributive killing or increasing negative attitudes towards wildlife conservation along with poaching of tiger and prey, and habitat loss. Between December 2003 and April 2004, 12 human deaths in the Pilibhit Forest Division in Uttar Pradesh, India were attributed to tiger attacks. This area falls within the Terai Arc Landscape and WWF-India is currently working on reducing such conflict. Badrish Mehra, Harish Kumar and their team from the Tiger and Wildlife Division, WWF-India, along with partners from the Forest Department, local NGO Gyan Bigyan Seva Samiti and local communities are collaborating to reduce dependence on tiger habitat by providing alternative sources of income. WWF helps the by complementing the government compensation schemes, especially around Dudhwa Tiger Reserve and Corbett Tiger Reserve. One tiger had to be destroyed by local government authorities.

Earlier this year, a tiger near Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal attacked five picnickers, and four of them were killed. Nineteen lives were claimed around the park in a span of four months. According to official sources, three tigers were destroyed because of an increase in attacks on humans. In the last winter, 2003-2004, 11 tigers were killed in the Russian Far East, some because they attacked humans. WWF and other partners are working with Russian government authorities to enhance their anti-poaching capacity and law enforcement. Tiger attacks on humans were reported in Sumatra too.

WWF-India and Nepal Program have several conflict mitigation schemes in the Terai Arc Landscape, Sunderban and Satpuda Maikal Landscapes. These include reducing residents' dependency on tiger habitat and after-effect measures such as financial compensation and ex-gratia payments. These methods prevent retaliatory killing of tigers to a certain extent.

There is a need to understand what is happening to tiger populations in these landscapes. Why are there so many cases of conflict? Is it because tigers are breeding in and dispersing into the corridors and restored habitats outside the protected areas, or is the lack of prey and habitat pushing tigers towards people? This crucial question needs answers. Understanding tiger behaviour under such circumstances should be a focus of tiger conservation efforts in conflict-ridden areas. Even from the times of Jim Corbett tigers attacking humans were fairly common. However, now, with relatively much fewer tigers, it has become imperative that conservationists attempt to understand the underlying causes that lead to tigers attacking humans. 🐾

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Local resident collecting grass in Terai Arc, Nepal

©WWF Terawang R. MANGGOHK



Illegal Tiger Trade

In a report titled 'Nowhere to Hide', TRAFFIC reveals that trade in tiger parts continues unabated in Sumatra. Poaching has not declined despite increased conservation and protection efforts. According to the report, poaching still takes place even within national parks.

WWF Indonesia has been working with the Indonesian government authorities and other partners in battling illegal logging and habitat loss. It has successfully lobbied the Indonesian government to declare Tesso Nilo, the last block of lowland rainforest in Raiu province in Sumatra, as a National Park. Currently WWF Indonesia has embarked on a tiger and prey distribution survey in the Tesso Nilo-Bukit Tigapuluh region.

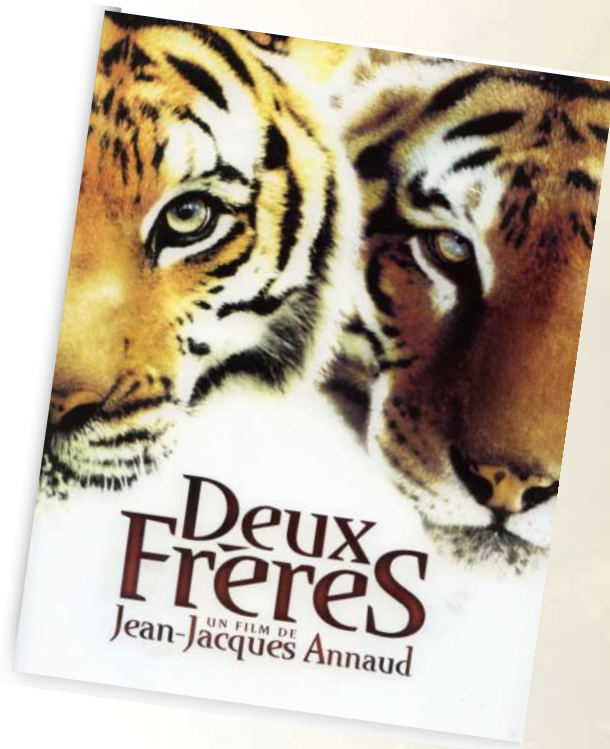
For more information: Nazir Foead, Director of Species Programme, WWF Indonesia, nfoead@wwf.or.id
James Compton, Director, TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, tsea@po.jaring.my

Capacity Building - The Needs Of The Day

Tiger and Prey Monitoring Training, Tadoba-Andheri Tiger Reserve, India

In an effort to standardise monitoring methodology and train WWF field staff in tiger and prey monitoring techniques, WCS-India and WWF-India organised a training workshop in Tadoba-Andheri Tiger Reserve. About fifteen participants from WWF offices in Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Nepal, US, and Vietnam participated in the four-day training workshop that taught participants sampling-based techniques of monitoring tiger and prey populations. Ullas Karanth and Samba Kumar from WCS were key resource persons. Most of the trainees are currently working on actual tiger and prey monitoring programmes in the field. Some of the participants, Barney Long in Vietnam, Kanchan Thapa in Nepal, and Ahmad Wahab in Malaysia already implement tiger and prey monitoring activities.

For more information: Tshewang Wangchuk, WWF International, tshewang.wangchuk@wwfnepal.org

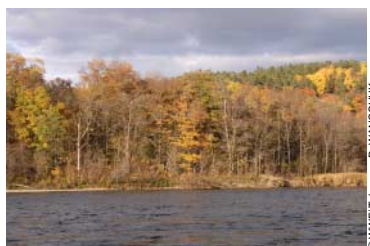


WWF France Supports Tiger Conservation

WWF France coordinated a fund-raising and awareness event at the premiere of the movie "Two Brothers" (Deux Frères) directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud. The premiere, held in the city of Nice on March 16, was attended by the mayor of Nice, WWF France President Daniel Richard, director Annaud and other guests. A tiger conservation message and information on WWF's work on tigers is included at the end credit of the film. Funds collected from the premiere will support a small project to create 'tiger-friendly' landscapes in the Terai region of Nepal.

Inspired by this initiative, other members of the WWF network have been involved in premieres in other countries as well.

For more information: Anne-Isabelle Perrin, Communications Director, WWF France aiperrin@wwf.fr



Tiger and prey habitat along the Bikin River, Russian Far East.

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Habitat Connectivity—Securing a Home for the Tiger

WWF-Russia (Far Eastern Branch), in partnership with local agencies, was instrumental in starting documentation for the creation of three new national parks: The Roar of the Tiger, Udegeyiskaya Legenda and Anuskii. Two ecological corridors were approved between Khor-Mukhenskii and Khuttenskii tiger reserves. Local inhabitants did not agree upon the Mataiskii corridor and the proposal was resubmitted for consideration. In June 2003, the Ministry of Natural Resources of Primorskii, in response to appeals by international and local NGOs including WWF, authorised a logging ban in the areas up-stream of the Bikin River. This order also prohibited shifting or changing of boundaries of the Verkhe-Bikinskii landscape refuge.

For more information: Yuri Darman, Director, Russian Far East Branch, WWF-Russia, ydarman@wwfrfe.ru



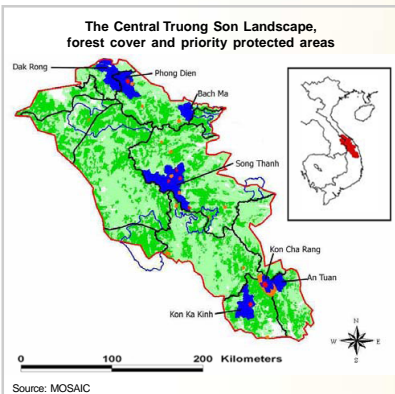
(l-r): Ullas Karanth (WCS), John Seidensticker (STF), Susan Lumpkin (Smithsonian Institution) and Fred Bagley (USFWS) take a breather.

© WWF/T. Ishiwang/R. WANIGCHUK

Updating The Tiger Action Plan For Bhutan

Global tiger experts, conservation practitioners, and academicians convened to assist Bhutanese conservationists update the Tiger Action Plan for Bhutan. Funded by the Save the Tiger Fund (STF), the three day conference sought to garner the knowledge and experience of Dr Ullas Karanth (WCS-India), Dr John Seidensticker (Chairman, STF), Dr Mel Sunquist (University of Florida) and Dr David Macdonald (Oxford University) among many others. In addition to sharing global perspectives, the participants were also made aware of the challenges of monitoring tigers and prey in steep and moist temperate forests. WWF Bhutan coordinated the conference with its government partner, the Nature Conservation Division.

For more information: Chado Tenzin, Senior Program Officer, WWF Bhutan, ctenzin@wwfbhutan.org.bt



Vietnam Records Breeding Tigers

For the first time in six years, Vietnam recorded evidence of breeding tigers. In surveys conducted by WWF and the Forest Protection Department of Vietnam between January and June this year, two sets of tiger tracks were found in the Truong Son regions of Central Vietnam. One set of tracks included those of a tigress and cub, found in Thua-Thien Hue province. The other set was found in Quang Nam province. Tigers are believed to exist in low densities in Vietnam, but this is the first evidence of breeding tigers in recent years. Nine medium to large prey species were reported to be present from the surveys. Maintaining a healthy prey base through adequate protection was a priority intervention. These surveys were conducted by trained rangers.

For more information: Barney Long, MOSAIC, Vietnam, mosaic@dng.vnn.vn



Mrs Indira Gandhi, Late Prime Minister of India, with a tiger cub on her 50th birthday.

© WWF/Indian Government/Press Information

India's Project Tiger Turns 30!

Under the stewardship of the late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Project Tiger was initiated as a response to the dwindling Indian tiger population in 1973. WWF was a partner right from the start. With its assistance of USD 1 million, WWF catalysed one of the largest tiger conservation initiatives. Over the years, WWF continues to work closely with several Tiger Reserves. Project Tiger, representing the Indian government, is an important partner for WWF in all the WWF priority tiger landscapes in India.

The WWF family congratulates Project Tiger on three decades of achievements!

For more information on Project Tiger visit: <http://projecttiger.nic.in/>

Coming up...

Human Wildlife Conflict Workshop - Analysis Of Mitigating Measures

WWF India, in collaboration with WWF International and WWF US, will hold a two-day workshop on the analysis of existing human wildlife conflict mitigation measures, mostly focusing on large cats in India. However, participants from neighbouring Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan will also share experiences and lessons learnt. The workshop will be held from 15-16 November near Corbett Tiger Reserve and will bring together government partners and conservation practitioners who have long-term experience in implementing conflict mitigation measures. An analysis of existing mitigation measures will be followed by a synthesis of the way forward.

For more information: P.K. Sen, Director, Tiger & Wildlife Programme, WWF India, psen@wwfindia.net

Global Tiger Forum General Assembly In Hanoi

The 3rd General Assembly of the Global Tiger Forum (GTF) will be held this year in Hanoi, Vietnam, from 26-27 November. WWF International is an international NGO member of GTF. The Forum is an inter-governmental and international body committed towards conservation of tigers in the wild. Six range states are present members: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Vietnam, and high-level delegates from these range states attend the GTF meetings. International NGO members are WWF and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). GTF has been involved in capacity building (training rangers and law enforcement agencies) and advocacy for tiger conservation. WWF intends to explore possibilities of the high-level participation from some range countries to discuss curbing illegal (cross-border) trade of tiger parts. WWF International and WWF Indochina (Vietnam) will also participate in the general assembly.

For more information on the Global Tiger Forum visit: <http://www.globaltiger.org>

Did you know?



Panthera tigris tigris, Indian tiger, lying on the ground next to its prey, a Spotted deer (Axis axis). Ranthambore National Park, Rajasthan, India

Tigers are able to eat up to 80 pounds of meat in one sitting. Hunting, however, can be difficult for tigers - they are successful in only one or two attacks out of every 20! Tigers prefer to eat ungulates, or hoofed animals (such as wild deer and wild pigs), but have been known to eat fish, birds, and even other predators like leopards and bears. In many places, declining prey populations have forced tigers out of their natural habitat in search of food near human settlements. It is then that human-tiger conflicts often arise.

On the ground...

Profile of WWF Tiger Programme staff

Harish Kumar coordinates the Terai Arc Landscape initiatives in the eastern part of the Indian Terai. He has more than seven years' experience in the Terai, having done his PhD research in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. He is part of the WWF India team working with local communities, Forest Department counterparts and local NGOs in this landscape.



What is the biggest challenge in your landscape?

The biggest challenge has been the change in land use patterns. Agricultural areas have penetrated right up to the forest boundary. As there are no ecological buffers for the wild animals they are pushed out into agricultural land. This often results in crop depredation, human killing, and human-wildlife conflict (HWC), the biggest challenge in the area.

What is special about your landscape?

This is one of the world's highly diverse and productive ecosystems. It harbours three mega fauna species: tiger, Asian elephant and the one-horned rhinoceros. Several endangered species such as hispid hare, swamp deer and the Bengal florican are also found here. On the Indian side, the landscape contains three tiger reserves (Corbett, Dudhwa and Valmiki) connected by several forest divisions.

Besides tigers, what are your interests?

I am also interested in rhinos and elephants. I wish there was more attention paid to the conservation of swamp deer. The swamp deer is an important prey species for tigers and it is also highly endangered.

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For more information visit:
<http://www.panda.org>

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