

Nature is our Password, Conservation the Creed

Summer 2014

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Capacity building...

Current Protected Area Network of India

Position as on May 17, 2014

National Parks – 102; Area 40074.46 km² (1.22%)
Wildlife Sanctuaries – 528; Area 125295.30 km² (3.81%)
Conservation Reserves – 57; Area 2017.94 km² (0.06%)
Community Reserves – 4; Area 20.69 km² (0.00%)
Total – 691; Area 167408.29 km² (5.09%)

*New Wildlife Sanctuary Notified in West Bengal

Name: West Sundarban Wildlife Sanctuary

Area: 556.45 sq km; District: South 24 Parganas

Notification No.1828-For/11M-86/2012(Pt.I) dt. 11.09.2013

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- Annual Research Seminar 2014
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Around the Campus



KULDEEP CHAUHAN
NEERAJ GUPTA



XXXV Post Graduate Diploma Course in Advanced Wildlife Management concluded

One of the important training course of the Institute, the 10-month P.G. Diploma Course in Advanced Wildlife Management concluded on June 30, 2014. During the summer period, the Management Term Paper Exercise was held at Panna Tiger Reserve in M.P. during April 3-17, 2013. The trainees were assigned specific topics on various aspects of protected area management. The Management Plan Exercise was held at Parambikulam Tiger Reserve in Kerala during May 6-30, 2014. The officer trainees conducted field surveys and exercises to collect first-hand information on Tiger Reserve, to understand its problems and existing management practices. On June 23, 2014, the Viva-Voce examination for officer trainees was held at the Institute.

All the Officer Trainees of XXXV Post Graduate Diploma Course in Advanced Wildlife Management have successfully completed the course and 6 Officer Trainees were awarded Honours Diploma for securing 75% and above marks. The Valedictory Function for this course was organised on June 30, 2014. Dr. Anmol Kumar, IFS, Director General, Forest Survey of India, Dehradun graced the function as the Chief Guest and Dr. S.K. Khanduri, Inspector General of Forests (Wildlife), Ministry of Environment, Forests &

Climate Change, Government of India spared his valuable time as the Guest of Honour. The awards and prizes were presented to the officer trainees by both the dignitaries. The following officer trainees were awarded on this occasion:

Ms. Monali Sen and Ms. G.A.P. Prasuna jointly bagged the Institute's Gold Medal for the 'Top Trainee' for obtaining highest aggregate marks in all modules including field exercise. Ms. Amandeep Kaur received the Wildlife Preservation Society Silver Medal for the 'Second in Merit' for obtaining second highest aggregate marks in all modules including field exercises. Silver Medal for the 'Best All Round Wildlifer' for obtaining highest marks in the Techniques Tour Journal, Management Tour, Management Term Paper, Management Plan and Viva-Voce was awarded to Ms. G.A.P. Prasuna. Ms. Venkatesh Sambangi won the N.R. Nair Memorial Silver Medal for 'Best Management Plan' for obtaining highest marks in Management Plan. Best Management Term Paper A.K. Chatterjee Silver Medal for obtaining highest marks in Management Term Paper was given to Mr. M. Abdur Rahman. He also bagged the Silver Medal for the Best Foreign Trainee for obtaining highest marks amongst the foreign trainee. Ms. Monali Sen also received the Book Prize for





VINOD VERMA

A training programme on “Veterinary Intervention in Wildlife Management”,

Dehradun, April 2-5, 20014. The training programme was organized by the Institute. It was financially supported by CAMPA funds, Uttarakhand Forest Department as well as Environment & Forest Department, Govt. of Bihar. The workshop was attended by 30 participants representing Uttarakhand and Bihar and included managers and veterinarians from Uttarakhand (Dehradun, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Pauri, Haridwar, Nainital, Rudrapur, Udham Singh Nagar, Pithoragarh, Bageshwar, Almora and Champawat) and Bihar Veterinary College, Patna, Bihar.

The training was organized with the objectives of providing an exposure to the participants on various aspects of wildlife health management, enhancing capacities and capabilities of veterinary professional in managing wild animals and enabling them to appreciate the conservation challenges besides understanding the strategies required for wildlife conservation.

The four-day training program included three days of theoretical inputs at Wildlife Institute of India and one-day field visit to Rajaji National Park. Hands-on training on immobilization equipment and demonstration of procedure used in studying wild animal including health management of captive elephants was provided at Chilla Elephant Camp and Rajaji National Park on April 4, 2014. The workshop provided an insight into the ethical and professional management of

wild animals. The participants expressed their satisfaction towards conduct of the training workshop. The participants opined that there was a need for regular up-gradation of skills by way of training on different aspects of wildlife focusing on wildlife rescue & rehabilitation, restraint and handling of wild animals, wildlife health management, biological sampling, preservation and transport.

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Workshop on Digital Libraries Consortia for MoEF Institutions, Dehradun, May 2, 2014.

The Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) is the nodal agency in the administrative structure of the Central Government for the planning, promotion, co-ordination and overseeing the implementation of India's environmental and forestry policies and programmes. The MoEF family comprises autonomous institutes (WII, ICFRE, IIFM, GBPHIED), centre of excellence (CEE, CES, SACON etc.), offices (ZSI, BSI, FSI, IGNFA etc.) and several collaborative Science and Technology institutes. A digital library consortium is needed by these institutes for a variety of reasons viz: (i) To avoid paying multiple times by individual entities for same e-resources; (ii) To cope up with the information explosion; (iii) To meet the diversity of user needs; (iv) To overcome the financial crunch resulting from the increasing cost of e-resources.

Around the Campus



VINOD VERMA

To discuss the existing library situation and to evolve plans to meet the challenges of planning and management of e-resources by the libraries, a workshop was organized at Wildlife Institute of India. The workshop was attended by a total of 27 participants which include 15 members from WII and 12 members from 8 MoEF Institutes. Two resource persons as guest faculty were also invited for the workshop.

Dr. P.K. Mathur, Dean, Faculty of Wildlife Sciences, WII talked about the role of organizations of MoEF in dealing with interdisciplinary subjects like wildlife, environment and forestry. He expressed his views on the need to develop hybrid library system *i.e.* with both print and digital media in modern era. Dr. P.P. Bhojvaid, Director, Forest Research Institute, congratulated WII for taking the initiative to conduct a workshop to establish a Digital library Consortia for MoEF Institutes. He requested the domain experts to increase sharing their information resources with other Institutes. In his opening remarks, Director, WII, Dr. V.B. Mathur stressed on the importance of information technology in the growth of any institution. He also talked about why consortia was needed and what were the challenges that the libraries are facing nowadays *i.e.* shrinking budget, monopoly of publishers, compulsion of the libraries to purchase the e-bundles etc. He suggested that it was necessary to jointly work together with all Institutes of MoEF to get good business deals in respect of subscription of e-resources.

Participating members agreed that three factors should be considered to form the library consortia in its initial phase *i.e.* selection of suitable model for proposed consortia; sources of funds; and the role of nodal agency *i.e.* MoEF. It was also proposed that one representative of MoEF should also be co-opted in the society/committee dealing with planning and implementation of consortia.

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Training Workshop on Wildlife Health Management, Dehradun, June 10-13, 2014. The training workshop was organized by Wildlife Institute of India in collaboration with the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department and Department of Animal Husbandry, Govt. of Uttar Pradesh. The workshop was aimed at enhancing capacities of field Veterinarians of Uttar Pradesh State in the area of wildlife conservation with special emphasis of health management of



VINOD VERMA

free ranging and captive wildlife. A total of 25 field veterinarians working with the Animal Husbandry department from 14 districts of Uttar Pradesh namely Bahraich, Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Bijnor, Pilibhit, Auraiya, Siddarthnagar, Lucknow, Balrampur, Shravasti, Gonda, Shahjahanpur, Agra and Etawah attended the workshop.

The training program involved 3 days classroom session at the Institute and one-day field tour to Rajaji National Park. The participants were briefed about issues and challenges of wildlife conservation, wild animal capture tools and techniques, wild animal medicine, general field procedures, wildlife forensics and recent advancements in wildlife research. The field component included exposure to various drug delivery systems including hands-on exercise on dart preparation and target practice; health management of captive elephant at Chilla elephant camp, Rajaji National Park and an orientation visit in Rajaji National Park. Inputs were provided by eminent resource faculty from both within and outside the Institute.

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Wildlife Institute of India and University of British Columbia sign Memorandum of Understanding

In a significant step to boost academic, research and training activities involving international partnership, Wildlife Institute

of India (WII), Dehradun and University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on April 23, 2014, marking beginning of a formal collaboration between these two premier institutions of learning of international repute. Dr. V.B. Mathur, Director WII and Dr. John Innes, Dean UBC signed this broad based MoU which will facilitate collaborative courses, projects, workshops/seminars and academic exchange visits of faculty members, researchers and students.

After signing the MoU, Dr. V.B. Mathur said "WII has always valued collaborative engagement and partnerships with reputed institutions and in this specific case, in addition to working jointly on various activities of mutual interest and expertise, WII would aim to utilize the expertise of UBC for establishing a *state-of-the-art* Visualization Laboratory as a priority and also initiate joint activities looking into aspects of ecosystem services and life cycle assessment of India's key landscapes". The MoU, which has been duly approved by concerned ministries of Government India, is initially for five years, with scope for further extension as required. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Jorma Neuvonen, Director, Special Projects, UBC re-iterated the collective interest of UBC faculties in initiating collaborative activities with WII in identified thematic areas including climate change. Dr. P.K. Mathur, Dean, WII, shared the details of MoU with the faculty members present on this occasion and suggested mechanism for initiating joint activities.

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Around the Campus



A tryst with the Bears

After a long yet fun week of travelling around Mysore and a short trip to Ooty, I was tired due to severe lack of sleep. This was my first trip to the South of India, and there was more to come in the following weeks. I absolutely love working with and for animals. The wild animals attract me all the more and so I decided to volunteer for a fortnight at the Wildlife SOS Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Centre near Bengaluru. Something, I planned beforehand, I landed in Bengaluru, and my time at the centre was full of learning and interacting with the sharp yet adorable sloth bears and a variety of people.

Housing 74 bears, 38 males and 40 females looking after these is more than just carrying out a day's work. One needs to be in sync with the animals. You cannot afford to be fearful and go on about doing the daily chores. At the same time, one needs to be careful as wild animals are known to be often unpredictable.

A usual day's work first comprised of feeding the bears. This would begin at 8:30 a.m. and extend up to 11:00 a.m. and involved collecting the feed and delivering to all the five enclosures, keeping it to cool and finally, feeding it to the bears. I was surprised to hear the slur sound the bears made while taking in their food. All in unison, it would sound like someone dragging iron sheets across a marble floor! The kitchen staff would actually begin work by 4-4:30 a.m. to make sure the large amount of food for the 74 bears would be properly cooked before being picked-up. After food, the enclosures would be cleaned meticulously with disinfectants as prescribed by the veterinarian, which are regularly changed every fortnight. An hour before lunch, there would be group tasks, which required the keepers as well as others to work together say for painting the walls or building the enrichments for the bears (wobble trees, hammocks, straw balls etc).

In the meantime, usually Srikanda Anna, the keeper, accompanied by a few others would drive around the safari offering and hiding fruits for the bears to encourage their natural foraging behaviour. It was a treat to see the fruit feeding as the bears would sprint towards the car and some would even play with Srikanda Anna, who seemed to have a way with these lovely animals. The animals would be given their second feeding with a slight change in their meal such as honey and eggs but without *Ragi* and relatively lighter than the morning meal. The bears are given a semi-liquid diet of *Jowar-Ragi* porridge mixed with feed additives, which are also regularly changed every 10-15 days as advised by the veterinarian.

As sloth bears are known to have a preference for termites and ants as food, the centre also provides them with nutritional enrichment, which includes mealworms, termite logs, groundnuts, and a whole range of other food stuff to pamper their sweet 'teeth' (coconuts, dates, sugarcane, honey etc.).

With most of the bears being rescued from *Kalandars* (a nomadic tribe known to use these bears for street shows), while I was working with and feeding them it kept recurring how we humans are willing to do anything for our survival- even overwrite ways of living for those innocent. We complain of human-animal conflict on one side whereas there couldn't be more signs implying that man is actually causing the conflict- penetrating into core animal habitats, degrading forested areas, uprooting denning sites of the gentle and shy animals, exploiting natural resources and destroying homes for the sake of 'development'. Looking at the '*karadi*' (sloth bear in kannada) interact with their keepers despite being ill-treated and mishandled before being rescued was overwhelming. It is important to understand that everyone has a right to live from the ant crawling next to you to the carnivores roaming the forests. A balance and practical approach is what we need, easier said than done it remains a question when we'll reach such a stage. My focus was mainly on the healthcare aspect of the bears out of mere interest and desire to pursue veterinary medicine in the near future. I was fortunate to have Dr. Arun A. Sha who designed an effective work schedule for me, which included most aspects of animal health and welfare.

With well maintained individual records for each bear, holding information from where and when it was rescued to treatments and general health check-ups carried out up to date was very impressive. In such a setting, I learned that it was important to always be prepared and keep things in order. This was well regulated by Dr. Arun and his colleagues with lists for all things possible. Lists for disinfectant usage instructions and dates for changing them for each enclosure, vaccination charts, de-worming, types of enrichment scheduled for each day and of course one for the Staff health screening and monitoring were put up on bulletin boards.

The small, concise yet well stocked wildlife veterinary clinic was a treat to visit. A bulletin displaying checklists for bear surgical procedures as well as for rescue operations and classes of medicines with their dosage was placed on one of the walls. Interesting new additions to a clinic I hadn't come across before were proper Dental radiograph facilities and the ultrasound scanning machine, all for the bears!

Health is an important aspect especially in captive animals as one cannot afford to let loose the contagious diseases like rabies, tuberculosis, parasitic infestations and other diseases. Interestingly, the sloth bears often require dental attention particularly tooth extractions and root canals as their canines are literally broken off by the *Kalandars* themselves without any medical care so as to keep them from injuring the 'care'-takers.



PRAGYA AISHWARYA LAMA

Apart from observing bear treatments, I also had the opportunity to read some and flip through some very interesting books collected by Dr. Sha over the years. Having a mini-library with books of your interest in the middle of a forest and reading outdoors in complete tranquillity sounds almost unbelievable. It was a pleasure reading and taking notes with the occasional Bengaluru breezes passing through.

During lunch hours, the veterinarians – Dr. Sha, Dr. Hari and Dr. Linto; the wildlife biologist – Dr. Swaminathan and I would have brief discussions on the role of ecologists, veterinarians and other professions in conservation. We would talk about people perceptions in our respective hometowns, experiences with free-ranging wildlife as well as future prospects. Not a moment I would say was wasted and should be when such resourceful, learned people, who are willing to share their thoughts are in the same room as you. Such people would also involve the likes of Srikanda Anna and Imam Ji, who have devoted themselves working for animals. Their practical experiences along with their abilities to multi-task despite lack of proper education could put some to shame. Their humble nature was just cherry on the top!

Wildlife conservation involves a multidisciplinary approach. Just studying veterinary medicine or expertise in field biology or any other field won't help achieve the goal of conservation. At the end of the day, we must remember the bigger picture, that nature – her flora and fauna are our priority. Working together and most importantly, sharing information and new findings will not only open new avenues for us (if that is all that one is worried about) but also help us save species faster and may be bring back some from the brink. Willingness to work together and keep learning is the key and only achievable, when we keep our egos locked up.

I would like to thank the entire Wildlife SOS crew for making my visit a fruitful and memorable one. I left with wonderful memories and hope to contribute to animal welfare and conservation in a bigger and better way in the days to come.

Pragya Aishwarya Lama

Smt. Manju Bishnoi

Smt. Manju Bishnoi, Personal Secretary to Director superannuated on May 31, 2014. She joined the Wildlife Institute of India on March 1, 1987. Before joining the WII, she also worked in other department of the Government of India for more than 10 years. A function was organised on May 30, 2014 to bid farewell to Smt. Bishnoi. She thanked everyone for all support and togetherness as a team on this occasion.

The WII family members wished her a happy and peaceful life in future.

Farewell...



Patron: Director, WII
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A Healthy Ecology is the Basis for a Healthy Economy.

Claudine Schneider
U.S. Representative in *The Green Lifestyle Handbook*
Source: <http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Ecology>