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# Newsletter

October - December 2009

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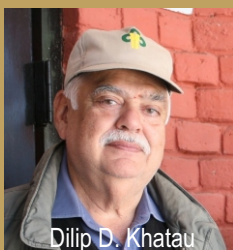
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## Chairman's Message



Dilip D. Khatau

It gives me a great sense of happiness to reconnect with you all in 2010 through our **Newsletter** in its new format. The Foundation was established by me in 1994 in Corbett and over the years, its operations have been extended to Kutch and Bandhavgarh and by end of 2010, we will add Kanha and Kaziranga into our areas of work. I sincerely thank all you who have wholeheartedly supported our Foundation's mission from time to time. Our teams have been striving hard to preserve our endangered wildlife, precious forests and imbuing our young minds with love, passion and appreciation about our rich natural heritage. I trust all of you will continue to be part of our Foundation and work together to strengthen our conservation efforts in future. Wishing you all a VERY HAPPY, HEALTHY and ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY 2010.

## Corbett

### Interim Relief Scheme



One of the major impacts of Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR) on the lives of people living along its periphery is damage to their livestock by tigers and leopards, and to their crops by other wild animals. This creates resentment among the affected people against both, the wild animals and the forest department. Often in the past, this has resulted in retaliatory measures being taken by the affected people, e.g. poisoning of carcasses to kill the tiger or the leopard responsible for killing their livestock. The forest department gives monetary compensation for the cattle killed but there are procedural delays in disbursement. Therefore, The Corbett Foundation (TCF) launched the Cattle Compensation Scheme in 1994 which was eventually renamed as the Interim Relief Scheme (IRS). IRS provides on-the-spot interim monetary assistance to the affected villagers in the buffer area of CTR. TCF teams deployed at Dhikuli, Sindhikhal and Rathuadhab villages, inspect all reported kills within 72 hours. Since October 1997, TCF is running this scheme with the financial support of WWF-India. On an average, around 1000 cases of cattle predation are handled by TCF annually. In the quarter October to December 2009, around 140 cases have been examined and more than Rs. 4.0 lakhs disbursed as interim relief.

### Mahseer Conservation Programme

For the past seven years, TCF, with the financial support from E-Pac International, UK, has started the protection of Golden Mahseer fish in the Kosi River, mainly in a natural pool near Infinity Resorts. However, Mahseer habitats in the area are under pressure due to uncontrolled destructive fishing methods such as use of dynamites, poisoning and electrocution to kill fish. All these have taken a heavy toll on

Mahseer population outside the CTR, and they have become locally extinct in many areas. Fortunately, TCF's conservation activities around the small protected pools of Kosi River,



have experienced a steady increase in their population. This pool has the highest known density of Mahseer anywhere in this river stretch between Kumeria and Kosi Barrage. To educate the locals against use of destructive methods to kill Mahseer, a vigilant team of "Mahseer Mitras" (Friends of Mahseer) is on duty for 24 X 7, to discourage fishing and large-scale laundry activities in these areas. Awareness programmes are conducted with the help of the Village Eco-development Committees aimed towards the protection of Mahseer and promotion of angling (catch-and-release) activities that will ensure conservation of Mahseer in the Kosi River.

### Rural Medical Outreach Programme

TCF has been working towards promoting harmony between people and nature through its various community development initiatives. Our Rural Medical Outreach



Programme (RMOP) is dedicated to providing medical facilities to the villagers living in remote hilly villages located in the buffer zone of CTR since 1995. It was a modest beginning with TCF providing a first-aid box in each village. Eventually, TCF employed doctors and medical health workers who regularly visit the villages and attend to the primary health care of the villagers. The activity is very popular today as we are the only NGO working in these areas. Through its own resources, TCF caters to more than 100 villages around the CTR thus



benefiting an average of 6,500 patients in a year through medical camps, Out Patients Clinics and health awareness initiatives.

### Awareness Programmes

TCF organized various activities to celebrate the Wildlife Week from 1st to the 07th of October 2009. With the cooperation of Forest Department and WWF-India, we organized a marathon to create awareness about the need for the conservation of wildlife. The marathon, organized from Aamdanda Gate to Ringoda village, was inaugurated by Mr. Deewan Singh Bisht, the local MLA. The local people, students, Forest Department officials, staff of TCF and other local NGOs participated in the marathon. TCF provided a medical team for first aid, if required.



TCF organized a Poster Competition on the theme of "Climate Change". Around 50 Students of class IX to XII participated from various schools of Ramnagar district. The joint first prize went to two students Priyanka Bhandari of D.D.C.M. Public School, Dhikuli and Jaydeep Negi of Little Scholar School, Kashipur. The first runner up was Pragati Khulbe of M. P. H. Inter College, Ramnagar and second runner up was

Gulnag Ansari of D.D.C.M. Public School, Dhikuli.

A Wildlife Quiz Competition was organized during the wildlife week. The team from Jim Corbett Public School secured the first place and the team from Pt. Gauri Datt Dani Sarasvati Vidya Mandir, Chhoi were declared the first runners up. The second runner up was the team from Shri D. D. Chhimwal Memorial Public School, Dhikuli. TCF awarded fellowships to the winning students and donated to their respective schools for the developmental activities of students. TCF also organized film shows in collaboration with the Forest Department for the villagers and Gujjar settlements in and around the buffer zone of CTR.

### Waterfowls census:



Corbett and its surrounding areas are famous for a variety of migratory waterfowl. TCF started the waterfowls census from October 2009. In this programme, TCF visits three locations fortnightly to ascertain the migratory and resident species along with their numbers. Annual data is being maintained in a scientific way.

### Stakeholders meeting:

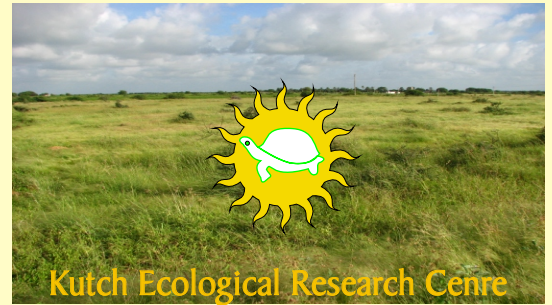
TCF organized a one-day multi-stakeholder meeting in the conference hall of Infinity Corbett Wilderness to discuss issues concerning the conservation of CTR. Around 73 participants comprising of Panchayat functionaries, representatives of community based organizations, teachers, nature guides and forest officials attended the meeting. The workshop emphasized on joint efforts by various stakeholders to achieve the goal of conservation of tigers and other animals in the Corbett Tiger Reserve.

### North Zone Office of The Corbett Foundation



To facilitate its conservation and community development programmes to around 50 more villages situated along the Himalayan foothills in the North Zone of the CTR, TCF has opened another office at Rathuadhab village. This office will be fully operational in January 2010.

**Mr Ranjan Kumar Mishra, IFS has been appointed as the new Field Director of the Corbett Tiger Reserve. He was earlier the Addl. Secretary (Forests & Environment), Govt. Of Uttarakhand.**



Kutch Ecological Research Centre (KERC), a division of The Corbett Foundation, was established in 1999 in Tera village of Abdasa taluka, with the objectives to help the local communities and to preserve the fragile eco-system of the unique grasslands of Kutch ever threatened by overgrazing and drought. Tera is the ancestral village of Mr. Dilip Khatau, Chairman of TCF. KERC actively engages itself in mobilising local support for the conservation of biodiversity and the unique ecosystem of the area.

### Rural Medical Outreach Programme (RMOP)



This programme has been successfully implemented in 50 villages of Abdasa Taluka of Kutch since 1999. A mobile medical unit headed by a qualified and experienced doctor visits the villages every week. Since 2003, more than

54000 persons have taken the benefit of this scheme. KERC also organises specialised medical camps for the villagers. Around 1000 villagers were treated through RMOP in this quarter.

### Cattle Development Programme (CDP)

KERC initiated this programme with tremendous support from Bombay Gowrakshak Mandli Trust in 2005. Over the years, the programme has been very well received by the local communities. KERC reaches out to over 80 villages under the CDP that comprises of the following programme components:

#### Veterinary Care Programme



Most of the villagers are pastoralists and therefore this programme has been very useful to them. Two mobile units of KERC provide vet care facilities to over 80 villages in a week. In 2008-2009, more than 2,800 cattle were treated under this programme. In this quarter, around 600 cases were attended by the KERC veterinary team.

#### Artificial Cattle Insemination Programme



For better milk-yielding breeds of buffaloes and cows, KERC collaborated with BAIF Development Research Foundation in 2007-2008 to introduce the Artificial Cattle Insemination Programme. The programme was extended to over



80 villages in 2008-2009 and large numbers of villagers are taking benefit of the programme.

### Awareness Programme



KERC, with its experience in the areas of veterinary care and artificial cattle insemination, realized that the general conditions of the animals in Kutch area is very poor as the cattle owners lack the necessary knowhow about cattle care. Thus KERC introduced several capacity building programmes for the cattle owners and volunteers to ensure sustainability of the project.

### Grasslands Project



KERC encourages and supports the development of barren community pasture lands with nutritious varieties of grasses. This not only ensures adequate supply of nutritious grasses for cattle but also helps in soil and water conservation. These measures will help in reducing the pressure of grazing by domestic cattle on the wild grasslands thereby restoring the degraded grassland ecosystem. Currently, barren community land areas of four villages Moti Dhufi, Bharapar, Path and Bhavanipar are being converted into community grassland plots under this scheme. Eventually, they would be managed by the people. The scheme has been successfully implemented in over 100 hectares of barren land in Kukdau village in the past.



### Awareness Programmes in Schools

KERC organized awareness programmes for students of six schools and they participated in painting and card-making activities using various leaves. Interactive lectures about personal hygiene and health were also conducted in these schools. During the school vacations, meetings with the village heads were organized to make them aware about KERC activities and the overall mission of TCF.



### First Bulk Milk Cooling Centre in Abdasa

KERC facilitated the setting up of the first Bulk Milk Cooling Centre in Kanakpar village of Abdasa taluka. The Centre was set up by National Dairy Development Board and Mother's Dairy. The Centre has the capacity of collecting 10,000 litres of milk every day and will benefit the people from 40 villages. KERC is in the process of facilitating

and setting up another such Bulk Milk Cooling Centre in Tera village.

### Eco-tourism and Birding in Kutch

KERC campus has recently renovated its facilities for lodging and boarding of serious wildlife enthusiasts, students, volunteers, researchers and bird lovers from India and abroad. KERC guesthouse is close to wildlife hotspots like Naliya Bustard Sanctuary, Chari-Fulay wetlands, Tera grasslands, Sonari hills and Jakhau coastal mudflats. KERC also encourages village walks in Tera, which is declared as a heritage village. Contact us at [bthakkar@corbettfoundation.org](mailto:bthakkar@corbettfoundation.org) for further details.



## Bandhavgarh

### Solar Lanterns Project



TCF, in collaboration with TERI and the Forest Department of Bandhavgarh, will establish a solar-powered lantern system in village Rakhi. In the first phase, solar lantern will be provided to 50 families of the village.

Villagers in Rakhi have whole-heartedly expressed their support to be a part of this project. The project is part of the famous 'Lighting a Billion Lives Campaign' initiated by TERI all over the country.

### Awareness Programmes in Schools



TCF organised wildlife movie shows at schools in Tala, Bijheria, Garhpuri, Gurwahi, Panpatha, Kushmahi, Pathera, Kathli, Pator, Mala and Rakhi villages. TCF team interacts with students on a regular basis to make them aware about the local fauna and flora

and the conservation issues of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve.



Infinity Bandhavgarh Wilderness welcomes you...



Infinity Resorts opened yet another resort in October 2009 at the outskirts of the famous Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh. The resort is beautifully set in the midst of thick bamboo groves, with luxurious accommodation comprising of 8 Lakeside Pavilions, 6 Villas and 6 Deluxe Rooms. The Lakeside Pavilions overlooking the grassland and the natural lake provide guests with beautiful views of the resident and migratory birds. The Villas and Deluxe Rooms have a wonderful view of the forest. The resort also houses a swimming pool, a Spa, a library, a souvenir shop, medicinal plants section and an internet office. Our well-trained Naturalists will ensure that each safari is an educational and exciting wildlife experience for our guests. Infinity Resorts practice the motto "leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photographs" for this wonderful Tiger Reserve and advise guests to carry their litter back home. Visit [www.infinityresorts.com](http://www.infinityresorts.com) or write to [reservations@infinityresorts.com](mailto:reservations@infinityresorts.com) for enquiries and bookings.

## Conservation NEWS

### Invasion of lantana in CTR

Two lakh hectares of forest area of the western circle have been invaded by invasive species, Lantana sp. that was brought by the British in 1909 from South America as an ornamental plant. The Terai area had once grasslands that harboured Elephants, Hog Deer, Leopard, Wild boar and Blue bull. Due to the shrinking of grasslands as a result of lantana invasion, human wildlife conflict has also increased and animals are destroying crops of villagers. According to Forest Department, 65% of the area has forest cover and out of this 1% now being covered by the Lantana. Lantana does not allow any fodder species to grow beneath it.

### A ploy to kill wild animals by electric current exposed

A 70-meter long electric wire was found by the forest officials from a farm adjoining the forest in village Shivrajpur that is around 500 m away from the Reserve Forest area. The forest officials believes that the wires were supposed to be used for killing wild animals by the electric current. A report was filed against the landowner.

### Forest Dept staff suspended in elephant tusks theft

In Lansdowne Forest Area, a Forest Ranger along with a Forester and a Forest Guard were suspended in the case of theft of elephant tusks. Two elephants were found dead in the area in two and a half months, and their tusks were stolen.

### Investigation of a poacher changed Forest department's strategy

Operation Monsoon has been running in CTR and other forest divisions for the last so many years. The aim behind running the operation is that during rains, roads are blocked inside the forest and poachers take advantage in such conditions to hunt wild animals easily and smuggle their skins in the international market. Daria, a poacher, was caught red-handed by officials of CTR in April 2007. He has been involved in poaching of the wild animals in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh. During investigation, he disclosed his strategy that the time of summer is more suitable for smuggling than rains. The Forest officials have prepared a CD of the statement give by Daria that would be used as an information source for conducting training programmes for forest officials in future. According to Daria, animals are easier to catch in summer due to the limited availability of water and the concentration of wild animals in such areas. It is also easier to dry the skins of animals and transport them.

### Problems in formulating the Tiger Protection Force

Mr. Jairam Ramesh, Minister of Environment and Forest had initiated the formulation of the Tiger Protection Force for twelve Tiger Reserves in India. The whole budget for its expenses would be borne by the central government. But due to the delay in giving consensus by the state governments, the recruitment of the force was being delayed. The maximum numbers of tigers are found in CTR and the activities of poachers has increased in this area in the past though it is considered as one of the safest parks for the wildlife. According to Mr. Vinod Kumar Singhal, Field Director of CTR this force is very important for the protection of the park as it would strengthen the security of the forest areas.

### A Central Government team investigates Gola River Elephant Corridor

To investigate the encroachment on the Gola River Elephant Corridor, a central government team including the members from MoEF, WWF-India and WTI visited the site. A report relating to the status of the corridor would be submitted to Directorate General of Forests, GOI. The WTI and WWF-India took up the matter with the MoEF about the encroachment and hampering of the movement of wild elephants due to the encroachment in Gola Corridor. A meeting was also held with the forest officials to enquire about the maps of forest land, proposed plans, and number of wild animals present in the area. To save the Gola River Elephant Corridor, a flyover is being proposed to be built on Lalkuan road. The vehicles would cross over the flyover while elephants and other animals would pass through underneath it.



### Himalayan bears may soon become locally extinct

Himalayan bears have become locally extinct from four divisions of Uttarakhand including Corbett Tiger Reserve and Gangotri National Park.



The animals have not been observed from these areas in the last six years. This alarming fact was disclosed in the report of the Chief Wildlife Warden of the state. The report also mentioned the disappearance of bears from Chakarata, Haridwar, Terai East and Haldwani forest divisions. Similarly, the numbers of bears from Kedarnath forest division has reduced from 132 to 94 from 2005 to 2008. The maximum number of bears have been reduced from Terai East and Haldwani divisions. The main reasons for the disappearance of bears are hunting and habitat degradation.

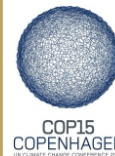
### A tiger dies in Corbett Tiger Reserve



A Carcass of an 8-year old male tiger was found in the Dhikala Range of Corbett Tiger Reserve on 13th December, 2009. There was no marks of injury on the body and the entire carcass was found to be intact. A team of two veterinary

doctors conducted the postmortem of the tiger in the presence of the representatives of National Tiger Conservation Authorities (NTCA) and the Chief Wildlife Warden, Uttarakhand and TCF. According to the doctors, the tiger might have died because of a bacterial infection as all the vital organs like liver, lungs, kidneys were found to be damaged. The veterinary team also indicated of some worm infection in the liver.

### Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change



From 7th to 18th December 2009, over a hundred world leaders gathered in the Danish capital of Copenhagen to attend the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change to form a new climate deal that will come into force in 2012. The Copenhagen Accord is a first and useful step to slow the course of climate change – a threat that is already affecting people, ecosystems and biodiversity in many parts of the world. All the countries agreed that deep cuts in global emissions are required so as to hold the increase in global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius. The developed countries have agreed to set up a Climate Fund named "Copenhagen Green Climate Fund" to provide resources approaching US\$ 30 billion during the period 2010-2012 to support the adaptation and mitigation actions of the developing countries. They have also undertaken a commitment to mobilize US \$ 100 billion a year by 2020 for such purposes. To enhance action on development and transfer of technology, the countries decided to establish a Technology Mechanism to accelerate technology development and transfer. An assessment of the implementation of this Accord would be completed by 2015. However, there was no agreement on a long term global mitigation target of 50% by 2050 to avoid dangerous climate change, and no agreement that global emissions should peak by 2015-2020.