



NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER
2013

PANDA (((SPEAKS)))

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, WWF-INDIA



I take this opportunity to thank you for your support to WWF-India. It is your encouragement and confidence that gives us the strength to stay focused on our mission of conservation and towards creating a sustainable future for our planet. In this issue, you will get to read what WWF-India is doing not just on-ground and at our field-sites, but also in creating awareness using digital tools - which organizations the world over are increasingly employing, to spread awareness.

The snow leopard is one of the 11 priority species that WWF-India works to conserve - in the high-altitude region of Kargil. A major WWF-India initiative is the setting up of predator-proof corrals for livestock in the high altitudes, to help prevent livestock kills by snow leopards and thereby preventing the retaliatory killing of this endangered animal.

In the Western Ghats, we have helped to improve the efficiency of wireless technology, used by forest staff, to respond to challenges swiftly. You will also read about our Global Tiger Day initiative to honour forest guards and our online campaign for Earth Overshoot Day.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to your continued support.

Sincerely,
Karan Bhalla



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A corral set up with the support of WWF-India, the Rufford Small Grant and the Department of Wildlife Protection, J&K




The strikingly beautiful snow leopard is one of the most mysterious big cats in the world. Known as the “tiger of the mountains”, the snow leopard is at the apex of the mountain eco-system and food chain. However, since the animal is found in inhospitable and difficult terrains across the world, it is difficult to study. According to global estimates, there are approximately less than 7000 snow leopards in the world, about 10% of which are found in India in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

WWF-India has been working in Kargil, Ladakh, as well as other areas, since 2009 to protect this elusive animal. In a recent study, WWF-India identified the decline in prey base and retaliatory killing of snow leopards as emerging threats in the area. Local communities residing in the hilly terrains of Ladakh depend on livestock and cattle as a major source of their livelihood. Though protected by livestock pens or corrals, these structures are often weak and poorly constructed, allowing large predators like the snow leopard to break through and kill cattle. This, in turn, leads to angry community members killing the snow leopards in retaliation.

With the aim of protecting this big cat, WWF-India is working with the local communities in Kargil to help set up sturdy predator-proof corrals in the region. Housing approximately 100-200 goats and sheep, these pens are made of stone and locally available material and are sturdier. Two predator-proof corrals have already been set up in Kargil by WWF-India, in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife Protection, J&K, with support from the Rufford Small Grant, with plans of constructing five such corrals every year.



DID YOU KNOW?

-  The snow leopard uses its long tail (about ¾ of its total body length) for balance.
-  When temperatures drop severely, the snow leopard wraps its furry tail around its mouth and throat like a scarf for added protection.
-  Snow leopards have very large paws that act as snowshoes, keeping them from sinking into the snow.

FROM THE WWF-INDIA NEWSDESK

CHARTING THE MIGRATORY ROUTE OF BAR-HEADED GEESE



© Pushpinder Singh Jamwal / WWF-India

Tsokar, Ladakh: A recent water bird census at the Tsokar wetlands in Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir led to the sighting of a bar-headed goose with a red collar. The birds had first been spotted in August 2013 by a team of members from WWF-India and the Department of Wildlife Protection, Leh. The sighting confirmed that the bar-headed goose breeds at Tsokar in Ladakh but spends winters at Pong Lake in Himachal Pradesh.

Such findings, like that of the bar-headed goose's migratory route to Himachal Pradesh, are significant for conservation studies. These will help WWF-India in developing strategies for sites critical to migratory birds and wildlife, with the support of government agencies.

UNCOVERING VALMIKI'S TREASURES



© WWF-India / Bihar Forest Department

Valmiki, Bihar: Evidence of three more species has been found in the once-neglected Valmiki Tiger Reserve during the past two months. A crab-eating mongoose (*Herpestes urva*),

a yellow-throated marten (*Martes flavigula*) and a Himalayan serow (*Capricornis thar*) were photographed through camera traps placed by the Bihar Forest Department, WWF-India and Wildlife Trust of India (WTI). Yet another, a hoary-bellied squirrel (*Callosciurus pygerythrus*) was photographed earlier by WTI's Regional Head for Bihar, Dr Samir Kumar Sinha.

The camera trapping by WWF-India was carried out as a part of the Phase IV monitoring exercise in collaboration with Department of Environment & Forests, Bihar and National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), Government of India.



THE BAR-HEADED GOOSE IS KNOWN TO BE ONE OF THE HIGHEST FLYING BIRDS IN THE WORLD. IT CAN FLY AT ALTITUDES OF 22,000 FEET, WHILE MIGRATING OVER THE HIMALAYAS, WHERE OXYGEN LEVELS AND TEMPERATURES ARE EXTREMELY LOW.



We are excited by these discoveries. Valmiki has excellent potential for tiger recovery and given its contiguity with the Chitwan National Park in Nepal, will be a critical site for undertaking transboundary approaches for tiger conservation. WWF will strengthen its partnership with the management of Valmiki and intensify conservation efforts.

Dr Dipankar Ghose, Director, Species and Landscapes, WWF-India

THE WESTERN GHATS ARE
HOME TO AROUND 30%
OF THE WORLD'S ASIAN
ELEPHANT POPULATION 
AND 17% OF THE WORLD'S
EXISTING WILD TIGERS 

WWF-India has been active in the Western Ghats since the early 90s, working to identify and map critical wildlife corridors, manage human-elephant conflict, strengthen Protected Area management, promote sustainable livelihoods and assess the status of key species.

THE POWER OF REPETITION



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Wireless communication technology is a critical requirement for India's frontline forest staff and enables them to respond to challenges quickly. The extensive use of the wireless protocol has been in place for many years along the entire strip of the Nilgiri range in the southern Western Ghats region. However, the efficiency of the system was affected due to interference caused by increasing use of mobile telephone networks.

The efficiency of wireless communication can be improved by deploying wireless repeaters, which, in turn, helps expand the strength and reach of the installed routers. Therefore, after discussion with the Tamil Nadu Forest Department, WWF-

India helped in setting up wireless repeaters across the Nilgiris, in areas such as Glen Morgan, upper and lower Sigur plateau, Moyar Valley and the Sathyamanglam forests.

To make sure that the system functions without any hitch in the long run, WWF-India is also undertaking regular training of the forest staff in the usage, maintenance and basic repair of the wireless repeaters.

GREEN DAYS

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2013

OCTOBER

World Wildlife Week	1-7
World Habitat Day	4
National Dolphin Conservation Day	5

NOVEMBER

World Ecology Day	1
World Fisheries Day	21

DECEMBER

Ocean Care Day	1
International Mountain Day	11

CAMPAIGNS AND EVENTS

GLOBAL TIGER DAY

On the occasion of Global Tiger Day, WWF-India organized awareness events in four tiger landscapes across India to honour and recognize forest guards for their contribution towards tiger conservation. These events were organized under WWF's global campaign, Cards 4 Tigers, launched in 2012, which aimed to raise awareness about the life of forest guards and encourage appreciation amongst the general public towards their work. More than 500 school and college students participated in awareness rallies, drawing and painting competitions, skits, debates and discussions on the topic of tiger conservation and the role of forest guards.

Events were organized with guards from Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (Uttar Pradesh), Kanha Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh), Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) and Pakke Tiger Reserve (Arunachal Pradesh). Students from various schools handed over the post cards received for these guards from across the world, along with a memento and binoculars from WWF-India, in the presence of senior officials of the



A forest guard receiving a memento postcard from a student

State Forest Departments. The Cards 4 Tigers campaign came to a close with these events.

EARTH OVERSHOOT DAY



WWF, in partnership with the Global Footprint Network, launched a campaign for Earth Overshoot Day 2013, which fell on 20 August this year. Earth Overshoot Day is

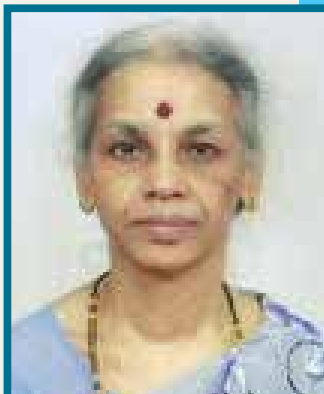
the approximate date our resource consumption for a given year exceeds the planet's ability to replenish its resources. It is, therefore, the approximate date after which all use of the Earth's resources goes into overdraft. To raise awareness, WWF-India launched The Green Gene Quotient Contest on their website, promoted through social media. The objective of the quiz was to create user engagement by increasing awareness about the Earth's depleting resources and the various ways in which one can lead a more environment-friendly lifestyle.

The quiz asked the user some very basic questions about their everyday habits to calculate their "green gene quotient" and led them to a page where they received tips to improve this quotient to live a "greener" life. More than a thousand users took the quiz and three winners were announced.

100%
RECYCLED



© WWF-India



DONOR SPEAK

I have a great love for wild animals and wish to do something for my fellow human beings and WWF-India has helped me achieve both. I am grateful to the organization for giving me the opportunity to help with the conservation of tigers and prevention of human-wildlife conflict. I have contributed towards one bio-gas plant and one camera trap – a small contribution from me. I urge everyone to join hands to help save tigers and prevent human-wildlife conflict.

Mrs Pushpa Selvam, Home Maker, Chennai