

# USFWS Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund and Teachers for Tigers



## Background

The Government of the United States, recognizing that the world's rhinoceros population is declining at an alarming rate and all 5 subspecies of tiger are threatened with extinction in the wild, passed legislation to provide financial assistance for conservation programmes. These programmes are directed towards countries whose activities affect rhinoceros and tiger populations. The "Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994" was passed in view of the fact that population declines for rhino and tiger populations continued in spite of the fact that these species had been listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The purpose of the program is to enhance conservation of rhinoceros and tigers through strengthening the following: habitat/ecosystem management; surveys and monitoring; conservation education; wildlife inspection, law enforcement and forensic skills; protected area/reserve management; sustainable development in buffer zones of tiger/rhinoceros habitat; and management of human behavior and livestock to decrease conflicts with tigers/rhinoceros. Projects which provide training to strengthen capabilities in these areas receive priority.

Eligible agencies and organisations include federal, state and local governments, non-governmental organisations, institutions of higher education either public or private, etc. The programme supports projects which develop local ability to manage, conserve and research the rhinoceros and tiger through provision of funding, training and equipment.

The Zoo Outreach Organisation and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) had collaborated in February 2003 to conduct two 5-day workshops which provide training for school teachers and non-formal educators, such as ngo educators and zoo educators, in innovative teaching techniques using the tiger as a theme. One workshop was conducted in Coimbatore for 35 local municipal school teachers in collaboration with the Coimbatore Municipal Corporation and the Coimbatore Zoological Park Society. The following week another workshop was conducted at the Arignar Anna Zoological Park and Southern Star Hotel for zoo educators and non-governmental organisations. Both of these workshops were funded by the USA-based Starr Foundation via the Wildlife Conservation Society which also created the "Teachers for Tigers" concept and manual and provided skilled resource persons (Tom Naiman and Nalini Mohan who also developed the manual) to lead the workshops.

Because the USFWS Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund had already approved a grant to Zoo Outreach Organisation to conduct six workshops using the WCS staff and manual in or near Project Tiger areas, it was possible to organise and develop a somewhat longer term strategy for advanced training for particularly interested and talented

participants. Starr Foundation underwrote the cost of the WCS staff to come and lead the workshops again.

## Advanced training component

Therefore, for the USFWS sponsored "Teachers for Tigers" Workshops (now referred to as "T4T" !), a structured programme to provide further training was put into motion. Three levels of training are being provided in the USFWS sponsored workshops:

1. Intern-trainee (for participants who have passed through an earlier T4T training and show particular potential and interest in continuing conservation education at the level of trainers);
2. trainee (for advanced participants who are well-placed to carry out conservation education as organisers and trainers);
3. participant (for teachers and others who are actively involved in public education, either in schools or other organisations, including non-formal education).

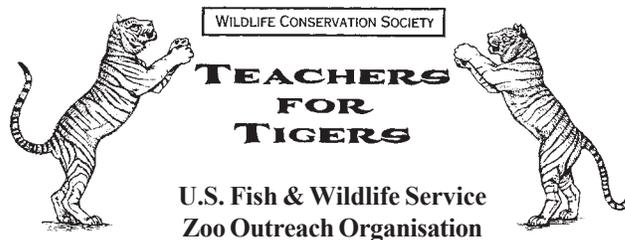
Six educators from the first T4T workshops were selected to participate as ZOO/WCS intern-trainees in the first three USFWS sponsored Teachers for Tigers workshops for protected area networks held in June-July 2003 : B.G. Mridula, B.A. Daniel, Anand Pendharkar, Payal Bhojwani, Padma Priya and Gigi Joseph.

Seven individuals from different organisations and backgrounds were invited as trainees: Anwarul Islam, M.M. Feeroz and Sajeda Begum all from Bangladesh universities were selected in view of their potential contribution to developing educational programmes and material as well as organising future training programmes for Sunderbans tiger and other wildlife themes; Shalini Nair, Preetham Doshi from Erach Barucha's organisation 'Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University' which has submitted a grant for conducting tiger education in India, Mowdudur Rahman, who runs an NGO near Bangladesh Sunderbans and Rajeshree Sharma who is Officer on Special Duty in the Forest Department of Assam and a graduate of the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust International Zoo Educator Training (1993).

About 30 - 35 teachers from each of the Project Tiger and other areas were selected for the training by the Project Tiger area personnel only. Outstanding teachers are also eligible for advanced programmes in future.

A variety of options for Intern-trainees and trainees will be put into motion over the next two years by Zoo Outreach Organisation. They will be given different opportunities to assist, organise, conduct, and design education programmes in collaboration with ZOO, WCS, and USFWS programmes in India as well as South and South East Asia.

The Wildlife Conservation Society is running an intern programme sponsored by the Staff Foundation in which exceptionally talented trainees will be selected as Interns sponsored by Starr Foundation. Ms. Payal Bhojwani who runs workshops under a soon to be registered NGO called "Go Wild Workshops", visiting USA with family, was selected as the first intern from India and underwent a two-week intensive training in a variety of educational techniques related with all levels of public education. Other interns from Asia, Africa and South America will be selected soon.



In the workshops, training was organised in the following way. Intern-trainees were given a full range of responsibilities from fetching and carrying, setting up the room, assisting the primary trainers in conducting exercises, planning and delivering presentations and leading exercises, clearing away and writing reports. Trainees taking the course for the first time participated in the first workshop for the most part as ordinary participants and in the two subsequent workshops were given some other responsibilities including an opportunity to lead exercises. This method worked very well and by the end of the workshops, every Intern-trainee and trainee had had several opportunities to practise their skills as trainers.

#### The "Monsoon Session" T4T training workshops

Project Tiger areas in Southern India were prioritised on the basis of quite different criteria with one workshop held in a city which is well connected via its institutions and geography to two Project Tiger Areas. It was intended to cover the three Southern Indian states, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The 200-page manual "Teachers for Tigers" was translated into Malayalam, Kannada and Tamil for the occasion of these workshops.

The Project Tiger areas which hosted the first two training workshops were Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady, Kerala and Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. In Karnataka, the Regional Museum of Natural History in Mysore was invited to host the workshop due to Mysore's nearness to both Bandipur Tiger Reserve and Nagerhole Tiger Reserve, RMNH's ongoing teacher and village outreach programmes and RMNH's close relationship with the famous Mysore Zoo and its excellent volunteer programme.

Each of the three workshops had its own identity and "personality" due to the unique qualities contributed by the Project Tiger and RMNH venues. The following much abbreviated Report was written entirely by intern-trainees. A complete version of the Report including colour photographs of the various exercises can be ordered from Zoo Outreach Organisation for Rs. 250.00 plus Rs. 50 postage and cheque charges.

The next series of three workshops, also sponsored by USFWS will be held in another region of India to be decided in consultation with USFWS and potential hosts. Following this an attempt will be made to organise the workshops in Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan in South Asia, and afterwards, Indonesia, Malaysia and Hong Kong in South East /East Asia.

Throughout this period Intern-trainees will be encouraged by ZOO and WCS to organise their own training programmes for teachers and ngo's and given assistance in finding funding and generating the necessary materials by the two collaborators.

#### T4T Agenda

##### **DAY 1**

09:00 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 - 10:45	Inaugural
10:45 – 11:00	Tea
11:00 – 11:45	Introduction of participants
11:45 – 12:15	Workshop themes, Materials; Schedule
12:15 – 1:00	Evaluation activities
1:00 – 1:30	Guest speaker
1:30- 2:15	Lunch
2:15 – 3:15	Mini Drama preparations
3:15 – 3:45	Mini Drama performances
3:45 – 4:00	Tea
4:00 – 5:00	Tiger Ranges: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

##### **DAY 2**

09:00 – 10:30	From Big cats to Little cats
10:30 – 11:30	Tiger Timeline
11:30 – 11:45	Tea
11:45 – 12:45	Tigers In culture
12:45 – 1:30	Guest speaker
1:30 – 2:15	Lunch
2:15 – 3:15	Global perspectives Role Play
3:15 – 5:00	Observation Game/Spots & Stripes/Color Challenges

##### **DAY 3**

09:00 – 10:00	Pugmarks and Camera Traps – Censusing Tigers
10:00 – 11:30	Food Web Activity
11:30 – 11:15	Feeding Ecology of Tigers
11:15 – 11:30	Tea
11:30 – 12:30	Nagerahole Citizens Debate
12:30 – 1:00	Resource Round-up
1:00 – 1:30	Guest speaker
1:30 – 2:15	Lunch
2:15 – 3:15	Conservation Conference / How to make a difference
3:15 – 4:15	Evaluation Activities
4:15 – 4:45	Future Expectations
4:45 - 5:30	Closing ceremonies - Certificate and Pledge



# Report (Abridged) Teachers for Tigers Training Workshops for Southern India - Monsoon Session

Anand Pendharkar\*, B.A. Daniel\*, Gigi Joseph\*, B.G. Mridula\*, Padma Priya\*, Payal Bhojwani\* and Sally Walker\*\*

## Agenda and Venues:

The "Monsoon Session Teachers for Tigers Training Workshops were conducted from 23 June – 4 July 2003, in Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady, Kerala; Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu ;and the Regional Museum of Natural History, Mysore, Karnataka.

A standard Agenda (previous page) was laid out for the three workshops but in each one, different opportunities and circumstances dictated the daily activities. Boat rides in Periyar, jungle walks in Anamalais and zoo visits in Mysore provided both variety for the intern-trainees as well as challenges to fit all teaching modules into the abbreviated schedule. The earlier workshops took place over five days, but as this was a strain on teachers' schedules, a three-day workshop was designed.

## Workshop 1 : Periyar Tiger Reserve, 23-25 June 03



Periyar Tiger Reserve is located in Thekkady, Kerala and has long been famous for the vast and vastly beautiful Periyar River which runs through the sanctuary. Everyday-tourists see the reserve from a boat and, depending on their luck, may sight a large variety of animals, both large and small, even tigers and elephants which come for a drink or a bath in the river. Hardier tourists and wildlifers can opt for a variety of walks and treks through the forest. In recent years the PTR has made many changes to the built up area of the reserve, providing facilities for researchers, tourists, and training programmes. As Dr. Vinod K. Uniyal



commented in his inaugural talk, the Forest Department of Kerala has adopted a more liberal and non-conventional approach to the people of the area by liaising with local NGOs and communities. People's participation is increasing making the whole process more transparent and interactive so that saving wildlife becomes a common task as wildlife belongs to all.



Many of the changes in PTR are due to the Eco-Development programme, both philosophy and funds. Pramod G. Krishnan, Eco-Development Officer who participated as Resource Person in the Coimbatore workshop and spoke at the inaugural, urged participants to develop a burning desire within them to conserve the tiger and its habitat. He announced that a conservation strategy could be worked out after the workshop, which could involve all the participants about tigers.

Periyar Tiger Reserve is very rich in biodiversity about 63 species of mammals, 45 species of reptiles, 27 species of amphibians, 38 species of fishes, 150 species of butterflies and 324 species of birds within an area of 777 sq. km.

## Workshop 2 : Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve - 26-28 June 2003

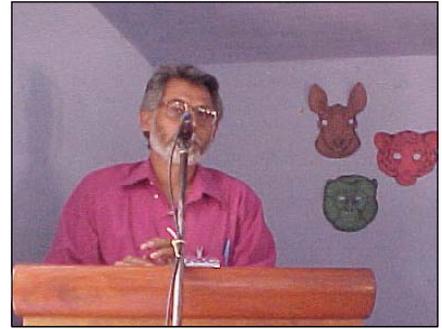


Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve KMTR is located about 50 km from Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu. As Manoj Misra pointed out in his inaugural address, the 14 rivers emerging from the forest provided its name of the water or river sanctuary. Highlighting the importance of water, he commented that saving the tiger would save the forest that would further save the water and if the teachers here could explain this to the people around and spread the message of tiger conservation it would not only help save this creature but also help the community. Field Director and Conservator of KMTR, Dr. R. Annamalai, in a presentation of KMTR tiger habitat related that man-animal conflict began in 1972 when the first tiger was killed in KMTR.



During In 1995, a jaw trap, which was kept in the waterhole by poachers, to kill tigers was identified. Currently

\*Intern-trainees of the T4T workshops  
\*\*Organiser, T4T workshops, India



poaching is decreasing as a result of law enforcement and today KMTR has less poaching and revenge killing but more problems with forest fires in the dry deciduous forest. Fires set to catch monitor lizards for trade develop into wide-spread forest fires. He described eco-development in KMTR, that was started in 1994 with a Village Forest Committee (VFC) having come about and conducting village infrastructure development.

**Workshop 3 : Regional Museum of Natural History, Mysore, 2-4 July 2003**

The Regional Museum of Natural History, Mysore is the second in a series of regional museums founded and funded by the Ministry of Environment, Government of India. The Museum was originally destined for Bannerghatta National Park but shifted to Mysore when officials viewed the beautiful 100 acre Karanji Tank which is adjacent to the Museum and its proximity to the famous Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens.

The Museum was inaugurated in 1995 and is the regional centre covering all southern states of India. The Museum occupies an area of 5.23 acres and the exhibition area is about 17000 sq feet.

The main function of the Museum is to create an awareness about environment especially the local fauna of flora of South India. They have both indoor and outdoor activities

**Indoor activities-** One of the major attractions of the Museum is the Discovery Center. Its Discovery Room which provides opportunities for visitors, especially children to examine specimens, participate in creative activities like painting, modelling etc. They have an eco-theatre which screens two environment-related movies twice a day, free of cost.

Their outreach programmes include programmes for the mentally retarded, visually challenged and other handicapped people. They also organise Teacher Orientation Prorammes (TOP) for primary and secondary school teachers.

The chief guest for the workshop at RMNH was Mr. Krishnavattam, Editor - *Prajanodi/Mysore Mail*) and a long-term associate of the Regional Museum of Natural History. Hunting was a favourite sport of the Maharajahs even after the Indian independence. Due to strong measures taken by the then Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, National Parks and Sanctuaries were created to conserve wildlife. "Project Tiger" an ambitious project to save tigers in the wild, was started in 1973. This is one of the successful conservation strategies undertaken by India and this helped to increase in the number of the then animals. He concluded saying that tigers do not live in isolation and hence need to be conserved for the betterment of the earth.

Mr. Manu, Secretary, Mysore Amateur Naturalists Society spoke on behalf of RMNH. He was of the opinion that teachers can teach generations of people and carry the message and hence are the flagbearers of such programmes.

The participants at the Mysore programmes were selected from many, many applications received and it was the hard work of Dr. Sethuramalingham to filter and sort out 25 best teachers. The teachers participated with great enthusiasm and even wished the workshop would have been for five days.

Dr. Manoj Misra, I.F.S. (Retd.), pictured above, a well-known wildlife conservationist and forester, was a specially invited guest lecturer for the

tiger workshops at PTR and KMTR. He is the former Director of TRAFFIC-India, a organisation dealing with wildlife trade, especially trade on wild cats. He gave two informative and interesting presentations in both the workshops, on Tiger Conservation in India and Tiger Trade. He also participated in all the sessions of the workshops and clarified the doubts of the participants about tigers and workshop sessions.

Manoj Misra was one of the three Indian participants at the International Zoo Educator Training Course at Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust in 1993 along with Rajashree Sharma.

Rajashree Sharma participated in the tiger workshop at RMNH, Mysore. She was the Zoo Information Officer at Assam State Zoo and is now Officer on Special Duty for the Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam and an active wildlife educator.

**Participants of the summer workshops as hosts of the monsoon workshops:**

Dr. Sethuramalingham, Director, RMNH was a participant of the earlier workshop at Chennai in February, 2003 and agreed to organise this tiger workshop at his own institute. He also agreed to host another workshop with his staff, who also participated.

Dr. R. Annamalai, I.F.S. was a special Guest lecturer at the T4T Chennai workshop in February, 2003. He gave an interesting presentation on Tiger Conservation and later on agreed to host the same workshop at KMTR.

Dr. Pramod G. Krishnan, I.F.S. was a special Guest lecturer at the T4T Coimbatore workshop in February, 2003. He gave a presentation on Tiger Conservation and later on agreed to host the same workshop at PTR.

## SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF ALL THREE 'TEACHERS FOR TIGERS' WORKSHOPS

The main activities of the T4T workshops of the monsoon sessions were:

**Inaugural:** The inaugural session included information about the Resource Persons, workshop background and about the organisers.

**Introduction:** The participants and the organisers introduced themselves to one another through an activity which included a short note about themselves and the animal they like the most, and some environment-related question.

**Workshop themes:** The workshop was introduced by Tom Naiman or one of the trainees. The various sessions and the agenda was discussed briefly.

**Mini-dramas:** The participants were split into groups and given a themed drama on tigers (hunting, courtship, parental care, poaching) and asked to prepare a live drama in 20 minutes. The participants of all the three workshops did an excellent job. The drama preparations helped participants good team spirit and also to get familiar with one another by learning at the same time.

**Tiger Ranges:** An exercise on tiger ranges (100 years ago and now) was conducted based on the maps provided in the Manual which participants had to



Mini-drama at RMNH

assemble and extract information. They also had to answer questions based on ranges from the maps.

**From big cats to little cats:** This was a series of fun exercises where participants learnt about tiger habits, features and behaviour (hunting, teeth pattern and functions, running, camouflage etc.). Children would learn

the concepts very well and fast through these exercises.

**Tiger timeline:** Getting children to remember dates is quite a difficult task. A series of dates (with some significance about tigers) was given to



Activity to show leaping

participants and they had to present it as creatively as possible, and at the same time learn about them. The final products were displayed in the right sequence as an exhibition.

### Tigers in culture:

The tiger as a symbol of courage, strength and beauty is used for various



Tiger Timeline session at PTR

reasons: literature, art, culture, mythology and advertisements. The participants read stories on tigers and interpreted them, analysed paintings on tigers and listed out the places where tigers were symbolised like songs, poems, culture, advertisements etc.

### Global perspectives role-play:

Participants were given various roles to play in relation to tigers like, biologists, farmers, song-writers, marketing people, etc. They had to present their views as creatively as they could.

**Exciting activities:** Few activities dealing with their observational capacity were also played like: Spots

and stripes/Colour Challenge, etc. A game to demonstrate food web was also played.

**Camera traps/pugmark methods:** The various methods of censusing tigers, the pugmark method and usage of camera traps, were explained by a demonstration and a power-point presentation. This was very new to the participants.

**Nagarahole citizens' debate:** A hypothetical situation about tiger-human conflict was given to each working group which they had to enact from their own perspective as creatively



Pugmark method explained at PTR

as they could. This was a very exciting session which participants of all the workshops could enjoy.

**Conclusion:** The workshops concluded with a "what you can do to help tigers" session. An evaluation session was conducted where the participants gave their opinion about the workshop and how it could be improved.

