

## Agenda items for discussion in the Standing Committee meeting

### **1. Denotification of GIB sanctuary in Maharashtra**

The Maharashtra state Board for Wildlife has decided to denotify 8496.44 km<sup>2</sup> GIB sanctuary in Solapur district of Maharashtra state and maintain the area of 1222.61 km<sup>2</sup> under this sanctuary. Due to this decision, there would be drastic decrease in the area under the protected area (PA) network in the Maharashtra state, from 4.97% to 2.6% i.e. from 15,332.49 km<sup>2</sup> to 8,058.66 km<sup>2</sup> -a sharp drop by 60.55%.

The Committee on Rationalization of Boundaries of National Parks and Sanctuaries of Ministry of Environment and Forest while recommending denotification of two sanctuaries (including GIB sanctuary) in Maharashtra had noted the condition of declaration of six new sanctuaries in the state, which is not sufficient to maintain the required PA network in the state.

This committee had suggested the state to declare Mansinghdeo (182.29 km<sup>2</sup>), Rajmachi (122.96 km<sup>2</sup>), Sudhagarh Tamni, Western Ghats (220.18 km<sup>2</sup>), Tipagarh (52.4 km<sup>2</sup>), Kopela-Kolamarkha ( 90.93 km<sup>2</sup>) and Isapur Bird Sanctuary (121.55 km<sup>2</sup>). The state has notified Mansinghdeo sanctuary. However six areas recommended by this committee does not help to maintain the required PA cover of Maharashtra state.

The area recommended for Kopela-Kolarkha sanctuary is too small for survival of wild buffalo. However W. A. Rodgers & H. S. Panwar of Wildlife Institute of India had prepared a report for MOEF and suggested following list of wildlife potential areas from Maharashtra (in March 1998) which can be upgraded or newly created (notified). Other NGOs also have demanded several areas to be declared as PAs in this state.

<b>Sr.No.</b>	<b>Name of proposed PA</b>	<b>Area km<sup>2</sup>.</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Circle</b>
01	Mansinghdev	182.29	Nagpur	Nagpur
02	Mahendri	69. 17	Amravati	Amravati
03	Malkhed	144.16	Amravati	Amravati
04	Kopela-Kolamarka	300	Gadchiroli	South Chanda
05	Navegaon expansion	81.12	Gondiya	Nagpur

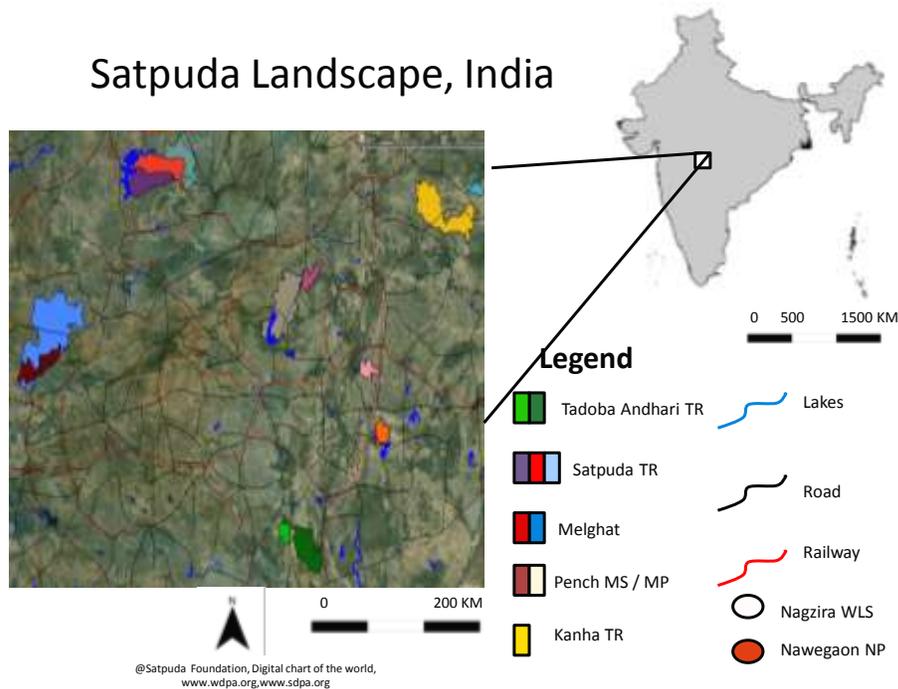
06	Tipagarh WLS (134) Itiadhoh –Rajoli WLS (388)	522	Gondia	Nagpur
07	Nagzira expansion	235.48	Gondiya	Nagpur
08	Darekasa	100	Gondiya	Nagpur
09	Akola Grassland	100	Akola	Amravati
10	Rajmachi (Fr. Santapau)	122.96	----	Kolhapur
11	Mahabaleshwar	50	Satara	Kolhapur
12	Kolhapur	50	Kolhapur	Kolhapur
13	Lalling Dhulia	30	Dhule	Dhule
14	Isapur	122.04	Yawatmal	Yawatmal
15	Ujani	100		
16	Tamhani Sudhagad	220.18		Mumbai
17	Bhimgad	?	Sindhudurg	Kolhapur
18	Melghat	526.90	Amravati	Melghat
19	Irai	16.03	Chandrapur	Chandrapur
20	Indapur	10	Pune	Mumbai
21	Dasgaon	05		
22	Mayni Lake	04	Solapur	
23	Vikroli	07	Mumbai	
24	Mula-Mutha	01	Pune	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2999.33</b>		

NBWL had discussed the issue earlier and had expressed the opinion that while accepting this denotification proposal, an equivalent area should be brought under PA network. State Government should inform the standing committee of NBWL about their plans to maintain the required PA network in the state. The Standing Committee may resolve to request MoEF to pursue with the State Govt. of Maharashtra to get equivalent area notified as PAs **before granting denotification.**

## **2) The vital corridors of Satpuda landscape in central India are threatened:**

The corridors of Satpuda landscape in central India is listed as one of the priority tiger conservation areas in India. It incorporates Tiger Reserves (TR), including the Kanha,

Pench Satpuda, Melghat, Pench (Maharashtra), Nagzira-Nawegaon (newly accepted TR) and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (map below).



The corridors between the tiger reserves are important for the genetic exchange among the meta-populations and thereby long term survival of tigers and other carnivores. However there are many projects which are either under consideration or being discussed due to violation of FC act 1980 as the agencies were simply pushing the projects without getting necessary permissions under FC Act 1980 and EP Act 1986.

The corridor between Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR), newly accepted Nagzira-Nawegaon and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) is said to be the most important for the connectivity of the central Indian (Satpuda) and the south Indian tiger meta-population. National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) found pushing widening of national highway (NH-6) by violating provisions of FC Act 1980. No action in this case has helped to build the morale of the agency as they have now declined to even accept the mitigation measures suggested by wildlife department of Maharashtra.

The corridor between Pench MP and Kanha TR, and Pench Maharashtra- Nagzira-Nawegaon and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve is threatened by proposed widening of national highway (NH-7) again by the same NHAI. They ignored the instructions of NTCA and also pushed the work even when the matter was being discussed in the CEC.

Several mining and irrigation / canal project proposals are under consideration with the MoEF. Standing Committee may request MoEF to pursue with the forest departments of State Government of Maharashtra as well as Madhya Pradesh to work jointly on preparing Satpuda landscape tiger conservation plan and clearly demarcate the tiger corridors in consultation with NTCA, WII, Satpuda Foundation and other expert agencies. They should also suggest the mechanism to standing committee of NBWL to keep such proposals on hold till they complete this task.

### **3) Implementation of FRA 2006 for declaration of Critical Wildlife Habitats (CWH).**

Maharashtra state has designed a public consultative process to declare the CWH and the state has made very good progress in declaring CWH along with very few other states. However after MoEF's instructions even these processes are halted. Now Ministry has designed an Implementation Protocol and an expert committee to study them. The said protocols should be implemented only after being discussed them in the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife and after seeking its approval.