

NATURAL HERITAGE BULLETIN

Information and Updates from World Natural Heritage Sites in Asia and the Pacific Region

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K. Ramesh

GREAT HIMALAYAN NATIONAL PARK CONSERVATION AREA
(GHNPCA), INDIA

**UNESCO Category 2 Centre for World Natural Heritage
Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region,
Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India**

The Natural Heritage Bulletin is a compilation of information on Natural World Heritage Sites in the Asia-Pacific Region which is obtained from free and publicly available sources such as the internet, newspapers and other publications. The publisher of this bulletin does not make any claim on the authenticity of the contents of the secondary sources of information. The information does not necessarily represent any official views of the publishing institution.

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

It is with great pleasure we announce the publication of the inaugural issue of the Natural Heritage Bulletin. And what better day for the launch than World Heritage Day on 18 April! This project has been conceived with the goal to collate, compile and disseminate news and information on natural World Heritage Sites in Asia and the Pacific Region to the wider natural heritage community. It is hoped to fill the information gap from a single platform dedicated to natural world heritage sites in the region.

This quarterly bulletin is designed to carry publicly available published information on key region-wide events associated with UNESCO, a core section on news briefs for natural heritage sites in Asia-Pacific, a feature with select site profiles derived from the World Heritage Outlook, and lastly, highlights of

activities by our UNESCO Category 2 Centre (C2C) in India. We are definitely not claiming that this is exhaustive and would gladly welcome any contributions giving us a heads-up on news and events from sites in the region.

Through this bulletin, we hope to make a start in reaching out to forge new relationships and reinforce old ties with the nations of Asia and the Pacific Region. Please join us in celebrating the publication of our first issue. We hope you find the information in this issue and those that will follow, useful. The bulletin is still a work in progress and we will continue to work on its improvement, for which we would request you to send us your feedback/suggestions.

Happy reading...
The Editors



Ishwari Datt Rai

Fir Forests of *Abies pindrow*, GHNPCA

NATURAL HERITAGE SITE FACTS

Natural World Heritage Sites in Asia-Pacific	
Natural	59
Mixed	11
Transboundary	1
Delisted	0
In Danger	2

New Sites
Two new Natural Sites in Asia-Pacific were added to the World Heritage List at the World Heritage Centre annual session held at Doha, Qatar in 2014. Following are the two sites:
1. Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area, India
2. Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary, Philippines

UNESCO REGIONAL NEWS

World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Sendai, Japan

UNESCO, in partnership with the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA), the Japanese National Institutes for Cultural Heritage (NICH), International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has organized a special session on "Resilient Cultural Heritage" within the framework of the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR), which has taken place between 14 and 18 March at Sendai, Japan. The Conference adopted the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030", the international policy which will orient DRR strategies and

actions at international and national levels for the next fifteen years.

This new international policy for disaster risk reduction includes a number of important references to culture and heritage and provides a solid foundation for UNESCO to advocate for the integration of culture and heritage within DRR and work in this area with the appropriate partners at regional and national levels. This is a significant progress with respect to the former policy document on DRR, the so-called Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA2), adopted in Kobe in 2005.

[Resiliency and Cultural Heritage discussed at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1255>]

"Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030" to guide international policy"



G. S. Rawat

Paraquilegia microphylla, GHNPCA

Workshop on World Heritage and Sustainable Development, Viet Nam

From 22 to 24 January 2015, UNESCO, in cooperation with the Viet Nameese authorities, hosted a workshop on World Heritage and sustainable development at the Trang An Scenic Landscape Complex in Viet Nam.

The workshop responded to the request by the World Heritage Committee at its 36th session in Saint Petersburg to develop a policy on the integration of sustainable development into the processes of the World Heritage Convention. The overall goal of such a policy would be to assist States Parties, practitioners, institutions, communities and networks, through appropriate guidance, to harness the potential of World Heritage properties, and heritage in

general, to contribute to sustainable development, and ensure that their conservation and management strategies are appropriately aligned with broader sustainable development objectives.

The workshop in Trang An gathered 22 World Heritage experts, practitioners and site managers from all regions of the world who discussed and tested a first draft of this policy. The recently inscribed World Heritage site of Trang An provided the overall case study where the practical applicability of the proposed policy was put to test. The feedback and suggestions from the workshop in Viet Nam will be used to finalize the document for submission to the World Heritage Committee at its 39th Session in Bonn, Germany, in 2015.

[Experts and practitioners draft policy on World Heritage and sustainable development, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1223>]

UNESCO Director General at the World Parks Congress, Sydney, Australia

Sydney, 13 November - UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova today called for a global commitment to “restore, revitalize and safeguard one of the planet’s most precious resources: protected areas”, at the opening session of the World Parks Congress, in Sydney, Australia.

The Congress is organized by the International Union for the Conservation for Nature (IUCN), one of the advisory bodies to UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee. It takes place every ten years and is considered the world’s most influential gathering of people involved in protected area management. This year’s edition (12-19

November) focused on the theme “Parks, People, Planet: Inspiring solutions”, and emphasized the fundamental role and knowledge of indigenous people in the management of these sites.

Ms Bokova highlighted the part played by UNESCO’s World Heritage sites and the global network of Biosphere Reserves in conserving protected areas. “In all, there are some 2,000 UNESCO protected sites across the world,” she told the Congress. “These span all continents, in almost every single country, covering millions of square kilometres of unique ecosystems.”

[Protected areas key to safeguarding the global environment Director-General tells Parks Congress,

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1200>]



Waterfall, GHNPCA

“Securing Protected Areas are key to safeguarding the global environment”

ASIA-PACIFIC SITE UPDATES

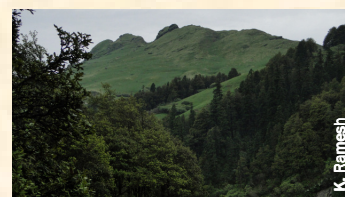
Australia committed to saving Great Barrier Reef

Australia has submitted its long-term plan to arrest the decline of the Great Barrier Reef, with Tony Abbott stressing to the international community that the government is “utterly committed” to the reef’s preservation.

The Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan has been compiled to allay concerns from UNESCO over the fading health of the reef, with the organisation’s world heritage committee set to meet in June to decide

whether the reef is to be listed as “in danger.” The plan sets a number of targets to reduce pollution running on to the reef, including an 80% reduction in nitrogen and a 50% cut in sediment by 2025.

The strategy has been re-written to include the policies of Queensland’s new Labor government, which has pledged to ban the dumping of dredged sediment in the reef’s world heritage area and to provide \$100m over five years to improve water quality. There will also be a new independent scientific panel, headed by the government’s chief scientist, Ian Chubb, which will



Sub-alpine forest, GHNPCA

oversee the work of the Reef Trust.

"Australia is telling its international partners that we are utterly committed as an entire nation to the protection of the Great Barrier Reef, one of the natural wonders of the world," he said. "If there was only one thing in the world that was heritage listed, this would be it. Abbott said representations had been made at the "highest level" to countries that comprise the world heritage committee to ensure the "in danger" listing is avoided. Greg Hunt, the federal environment minister, said he was in the process of visiting "a great number" of the 21 countries that sit on the committee and that the feedback so far had been "very positive".

The Great Barrier Reef is considered by government scientists to be in poor and worsening condition, having lost half of its coral over the past 30 years. Pollution, coastal development and a plague of coral-eating starfish have been blamed for its decline. The greatest long-term threat to the reef is climate change, with

scientists criticising the draft reef 2050 plan for its lack of attention to the issue.

Reef experts have voiced concern over the potential development of nine large mines in the Galilee Basin region of Queensland which would, if all operated at full capacity, produce coal that would emit an estimated 705m tonnes of carbon dioxide a year – far more than Australia's national total.

Abbott stressed that climate change "impacts upon our entire world, it's relevant for all reefs including this, the world's greatest reef". But he added that it was "important to continue to strengthen our economy because a strong economy and a better environment should go hand in hand".

[Tony Abbott unveils plan to save Great Barrier Reef',

Saturday 21 March 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/21/tony-abbott-unveils-plan-to-save-great-barrier-reef>



Tuberous root of *Asparagus racemosus*, GHNPCA

Government of India unveils measures for rhino protection in Kaziranga National Park

Admitting that rhino poaching in the Kaziranga National Park is a big problem, Union Environment and Forest Minister Prakash Javadekar said the government has taken a slew of pro-active measures, disclosing that a comprehensive Bill amending the Wildlife Protection Act is being introduced in the Parliament. In a discussion in the Lok Sabha, Javadekar said poaching is a big problem and it has to be stopped. Therefore, the Wildlife Crime Bureau and the government have taken pro-active measures by creating a Rhino Protection Force with the assistance of the State of Assam. The Rhino Task Force has submitted a report," he said.

"We have an insurance scheme for the forest guards. 'Friends of Rhino' is a new movement we have created. We are doing time monitor-

ing to keep a regular check on threats to Rhinos. Further, in encounters, more than 22 poachers were killed last year. All illegal trade has to be banned. Admitting that existing legal provisions were inadequate, therefore we have to amend the Wildlife Protection Act. Some amendments were proposed by the earlier government, but we thought that it needs a comprehensive review and we must make it stricter, take comprehensive action, and the punishment must be severe.

[Centre's move to stop rhino poaching in Kaziranga National Park, India
Spl Correspondent
NEW DELHI, March 17, 2015]

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=mar1815/at054>

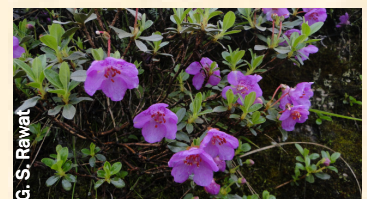
"Australia is telling its international partners that we are utterly committed as an entire nation to the protection of the Great Barrier Reef, one of the natural wonders of the world,"

Komodo National Park threatened by felling of Mangrove trees

Komodo National Park in West Manggarai regency, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), is being threatened by the cutting down of mangrove trees around the park's perimeter. The park office has been urged to immediately take measures against those who cut down mangrove trees in the park or its buffer zones as felling mangrove trees is against the law. West Manggarai community figure Pastor Marselinus Agot, who once received an environmental award from the Forestry Ministry reported that law enforcers in the regency never took action against offenders.

Cutting down mangrove trees was detrimental to the environment because mangrove forests acted as buffer zones for Komodo National Park, which was declared one of the New Seven Wonders of Nature in 2011.

[Mangrove clearance threatens Komodo National Park, Markus Makur, The Jakarta Post, West Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara | Archipelago | Tue, March 03 2015,
<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/03/03/mangrove-clearance-threatens-komodo-national-park.html>]



Rhododendron lepidotum, GHNPCA

Political support in Western Australia for Kwongan's nomination as a World Heritage Site

The Western Australian opposition has thrown its support behind a bid to get a large swathe of West Australian Kwongan region on the UNESCO world heritage list.

A group of WA scientists is campaigning to have a stretch of land from Shark Bay, 1,000km north of Perth, to Esperance, 700km south-east, considered for nomination on the basis of both its environmental and cultural values.

Tallentire said UNESCO world heritage status was an internationally recognised tourism asset and would provide an economic boost as well as protecting an important ecosystem.

Bradshaw, a zoologist, said the area was home to a number of unique animals as well as a diverse plant life. The most notable species is the honey possum, a tiny 10-gram marsupial. It's Australia's sole honey- and pollen-eating mammal and gets by with hardly any teeth, just a long tongue to feed on the flowers of plants that only grow in the Kwongan. There are also 145 reptile species in the area, 31 of which are endemic and 30 frog species, 28 of which are endemic. Bradshaw said most of those species were under threat from habitat loss.

Tourism risk for limestone caves in Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, Viet Nam

The limestone caves of Southeast Asia and southwest China are home to scores of plants and animals, many of them rare. But a rise in tourism, mining and other human activities is placing these biodiverse environments at risk. Botanist Li-Bing Zhang and his team found about 10 specimens, including a cave fern that his team had found in Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (World Heritage Site) in central Viet Nam, were probably unknown to science.

As tourism expands in response to demand from a growing Asian middle class, caves across Southeast Asia and nearby Chinese provinces are being developed as scenic attractions. In

Sunderbans benefitting from Poachers converted to Conservationists in India

Poachers have turned conservationists in the Sunderbans, giving a ray of hope to conservationists for saving the world's largest mangrove forest which is facing threat from rising sea level and climate change and wildlife poaching.

Hopper said the area was rich in Noongar cultural history (Kwongan is a Bibbulmun Noongar name for the region) as well as being a global biodiversity hotspot. "It clearly meets the criteria for the world heritage listing, for both natural and cultural heritage," he said.

There are 19 existing UNESCO world heritage sites in Australia qualified on both natural and cultural grounds, including the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Parks. WA already has three sites listed for natural values alone: Ningaloo Reef, Shark Bay and Purnululu National Park.

The process for UNESCO world heritage nomination is a long one. Once the group builds a case, it will need public support to convince the state government to pick up the proposal and in turn lobby the federal government, which can submit the nomination.

[Kwongan world heritage listing proposal in Western Australia wins Labor support, Wednesday 11 February 2015,

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/feb/12/kwongan-world-heritage-listing-proposal-in-western-australia-wins-labor-support>]

October, for example, officials in central Viet Nam announced that a local company planned to build a \$212m (£135m) cable car in Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, where Zhang recently collected ferns in limestone caves. The cable car would ferry tourists to the world-famous Son Doong cave. Duong Bich Hanh, an official in UNESCO's Viet Nam office, says the IUCN has asked the country's UNESCO delegation for further explanation of the plan. Because the park, and the caves within it, are a UNESCO World Heritage Site, any plan would need to comply with UNESCO's operational guidelines for such sites, Hanh adds.

[Asia's fragile caves face growing development risks

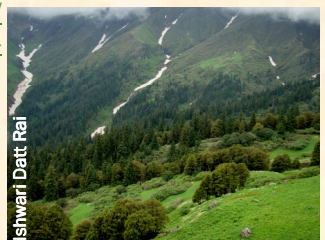
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/dec/18/asias-fragile-caves-face-growing-development-risks>]

Anil Mistry, a resident of Bali island in the Sunderbans is one such poacher-turned-conservationist. He is now working hard along with his friends to stop illegal poaching. "After I left poaching, I convinced my friends to work for conservation. Now we have a team of 12 people spread across Sunderbans and we work with different NGOs to fight against poaching and sensitise people about climate change," said Mr. Mistry, who now works with Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI).



Rare orchid *Cypripedium himalaicum* (Lady's Slipper), GHNPCA

"Poachers have turned Conservationists in Sunderbans"



Mixed forest comprised of *Quercus semecarpifolia*, *Abies spectabilis* and krummholz of *Rhododendron campanulatum*, GHNPCA

State Sunderbans Affairs Minister Manturam Pakhira praised the efforts of Mr. Mistry and his team for conserving the biodiversity of the UNESCO world heritage site.

They are called 'Bono Bondhu' (Friends of the Jungle) as they not only work for the protection of biodiversity but also for environment friendly capacity building of the people of the Sunderbans. His contacts in the area have helped a lot in controlling poaching," Honorary Director of WPSI, S Banerjee said. He elaborated on how coordination between Mr Mistry and the forest officials have helped in saving several

Oil spill in Sunderbans, Bangladesh

An oil spill occurred in The Sundarbans, Bangladesh on Tuesday, 9 December when a small coastal oil tanker sank after being rammed by another vessel from behind, releasing approximately 400,000 liters of oil in the water.

The Sundarbans was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1997 and is one of the largest mangrove forests in the world. It lies on the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers on the Bay of Bengal, and is adjacent to the border of India's Sundarbans National Park. The site is intersected by a complex network of tidal waterways, mudflats and small islands of salt-tolerant mangrove forests, and presents an

World Heritage Committee rejects delisting of part of Tasmanian Wilderness in Australia

Prime minister Tony Abbott made a "captain's call" over Tasmanian forestry policy which globally humiliated Australia, the Greens and a conservation group claim. The Wilderness Society (TWS) says Freedom of Information documents reveal Abbott pushed forward with election commitments in the sector despite departmental caution. One pledge included delisting 74,000 hectares of Tasmanian

Indonesia underlines plans to protect Sumatra Rainforests in Danger

The Forestry Ministry has pledged to improve conditions in the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (TRHS) to save its status as a world heritage by carrying out a five-year master plan. The rainforest is currently at risk of being excluded by UNESCO due to rampant illegal logging and infrastructure construction. Jakarta UNESCO deputy director and senior program specialist for the ecological and earth sciences unit Shahbaz Khan expressed appreciation for the Indonesian government's efforts to be removed from

tigers and other wild animals that had strayed into human habitations. As a result of sensitization, no tiger which had strayed into a village has been killed since early 2002-03," he added.

[Poachers-Turned-Conservationists Help Preserve Bio-Diversity in Sunderbans

<http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/poachers-turned-conservationists-help-preserve-bio-diversity-in-sunderbans-749137>

excellent example of such ongoing ecological processes. The area is known for its wide range of fauna, including 260 bird species, the Bengal tiger and other threatened species.

Regional experts indicate that there is likely damage to the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, which must be evaluated. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre is seriously concerned about the impact of the oil spill on the World Heritage area, and is working with national authorities to ascertain the status of the situation and the best measures to be taken.

[Serious concern for oil spill in the Sundarbans, Bangladesh,
Thursday, December 18, 2014

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1209>

wilderness world heritage area, an application swiftly rejected by the United Nations' world heritage committee in June last year. Greens leader Christine Milne says the revelation is another example of a "captain's call" by Abbott.

[Tony Abbott's 'captain's call' over Tasmanian forest humiliated Australia,

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/mar/01/tony-abbotts-captains-call-over-tasmanian-forest-humiliated-australia-say-greens>

world-heritage-in-danger status. Shahbaz said TRHS should be conserved because its presence was not only beneficial to Indonesia but also the world. The TRHS is one of the UNESCO world heritage sites and encompasses three national parks in Sumatra — Mount Leuser National Park (TNGL), Kerinci Seblat National Park (TNKS) and Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park (TNBBS).

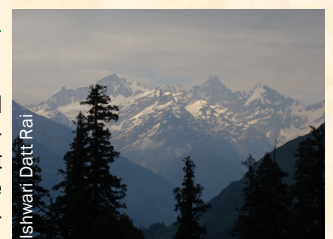
[Sumatra rainforests in danger, Apriadi Gunawan, The Jakarta Post, Medan | Headlines | Thu, September 25 2014,

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/09/25/sumatra-rainforests-danger.html>



Medicinal plant *Dactylorhiza hatagirea* (Salampanja), GHNPCA

"Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra should be conserved because its presence was not only beneficial to Indonesia but also the world".



Snow capped mountains of GHNPCA

WORLD HERITAGE OUTLOOK

The IUCN World Heritage Outlook is the first global assessment of all natural World Heritage sites and the action needed to achieve excellence in their conservation.

Launched in 2014, the assessment was undertaken in order to fill the current knowledge gap on natural World Heritage Sites and provide a global overview of their state of conservation. Conservation Outlook Assessments are a projection of the potential for a natural World Heritage Site to conserve its value over time. This projection is based on desk-based assessments of the state and trend of values; threats affecting those values; and effectiveness of protection and management.

Chengjiang Fossil Site, China (Inscribed in 2012), Criteria viii

Conservation Outlook: Good.

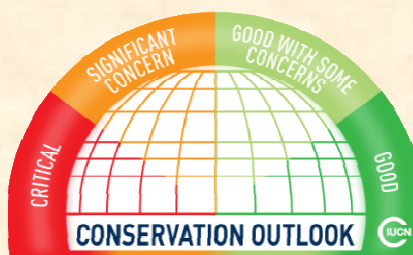
A hilly 512 ha site in Yunnan province, Chengjiang's fossils present the most complete record of an early Cambrian marine community with exceptionally preserved biota, displaying the anatomy of hard and soft tissues in a very wide variety of organisms, invertebrate and vertebrate. They record the early establishment of a complex marine ecosystem. It opens a palaeobiological window of great significance to scholarship.

Keoladeo National Park, India (Inscribed in 1985), Criteria x

Conservation Outlook: Good with some concerns.

This former duck-hunting reserve of the Maharajas, Keoladeo is one of the major wintering areas for large numbers of aquatic birds from Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, China and Siberia. Some 364 species of birds have been recorded in the park. Keoladeo is an artificially created and maintained wetland site.

The park's water requirements are being met from several different sources of water. Nevertheless there is a need for further comprehensive data to demonstrate the sustained supply of the minimum required



The assessments have classified the sites according to five rating categories namely, (i) Good; (ii) Good with some concern; (iii) Significant concern; (iv) Critical; and (v) Data Deficient.

This Conservation Outlook Gauge has been reproduced from:

<http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/web/iucn/understanding-ratings>

The site is protected under law and relatively effectively administered by a management authority with the guidance of comprehensive management plans. Former low-level threats have been overcome, but new threats such as the illegal collection of fossils and future demand for more infrastructure development associated with growing visitor numbers will require careful management.

http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/search-sites/-/wdpaid/en/555547989?p_p_auth=atjB3dpg

550 mcft p.a. of water to the property. Further, there is a need to standardize ecological monitoring methodologies.

http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/search-sites/-/wdpaid/en/10746?p_p_auth=uZhOoc5Q



Assemblage of avifauna in wetlands of Keoladeo National Park

"First global assessment of all natural World Heritage Sites undertaken by IUCN in 2014"

UNESCO C2C INDIA

The UNESCO Category 2 Centre (C2C) on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region was established at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun with the laying of the foundation stone on 30 August 2014 by Shri Prakash Javadekar, Minister, Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India. The Centre is the world's first dealing with natural heritage and aims to build capacity for the 50 nations of the Asia-Pacific Region in the area of Natural Heritage conservation and management.

A. Workshops

i) A two-day workshop on Conservation and Management of World Natural Heritage Sites in the Western Ghats was held at Periyar Tiger Reserve, Thekkady, Kerala from 23 to 24 February, 2015. The Workshop was jointly organized by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Kerala Forest Department, Periyar Foundation and the C2C to facilitate experience sharing amongst site managers of the World Heritage Sites in the Western Ghats and initiate the development of a roadmap for holistic management of natural heritage.

ii) A workshop on Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes of the Himalayas was jointly organised by the Uttarakhand Forest Department and C2C from 27 to 28 February, 2015. The workshop involved experts and stakeholders with extensive experience in ecotourism activities in mountain landscapes in India. The outcomes of the workshop will be used to develop strategies for sustainable tourism in Himalayan states.

B. Advisory and Technical Role

C2C has provided technical inputs on World Natural Heritage issues to the Ministry of Forests, Environment & Climate Change such as the preparation of the revised nomination dossier for Khanchendzonga World Heritage site and State of Conservation Reports for Manas World Heritage Site and Keoladeo Ghana World Heritage Site. In addition, technical inputs regarding a variety of issues such as the status of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Site, Western Ghats serial site were provided. Scientists from C2C participated in meetings and provided inputs on World Natural Heritage issues in the Advisory Committee on World Heritage Matters (ACWHM).

“First UNESCO C2C exclusively for Natural World Heritage Sites established at Wildlife Institute of India”



Workshop on “Sustainable Tourism Management in Mountain Landscapes of the Himalayas ” organised by UNESCO C2C in Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun on 27-28 February, 2015.