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Natural Heritage Bulletin

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

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Year 2016 brings with it new opportunities and challenges for World Heritage Sites. Addressing the destruction of ancient cultural monuments amidst the West Asian conflict remains a prime concern for the World Heritage Centre. As the world moves closer towards recognizing the need to condemn and ban the use of cultural antiquities as a source of revenue by violent extremist organizations, the need to protect cultural heritage is gaining momentum. Several developed countries led by the United States have initiated national policy amendments that call for ban on trade or import of such items.

In the Asia-Pacific, four sites are under consideration for inscription as WHS in 2016. Mainstreaming rights-based approach in the World Heritage system is a new initiative by ICOMOS and IUCN. UNESCO C2C India was active during the quarter which included, among others, a first on-site workshop in the Sundarbans on Coastal and Marine World Heritage Sites. Looking forward to and wishes for a fruitful year ahead.....

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

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UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE NEWS



Cultural Heritage damage in Syria.
<http://www.mei.edu>

UNESCO and ICRC partner on the protection of culture heritage in the event of armed conflict

UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Peter Maurer, signed a partnership agreement paving the way for the two organizations to undertake joint projects to enhance the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1454>

Understanding rights practices in the World Heritage system: International dialogue and Call for action

The International dialogue on "Understanding rights practices in the World Heritage system: lessons from the Asia-Pacific and the global area" took place in Caux, Switzerland from 18 to 19 January 2016. The meeting was organized by the University of Lucerne in cooperation with ICOMOS and IUCN, with support from the Swiss Network for International Studies, ICOMOS Norway and the Swiss National Science Foundation. Participants included researchers from Australia, Belgium, India, Norway, Philippines, Switzerland, the United States and Viet Nam as well as institutional representatives from the World Heritage Advisory Bodies as well as the World Heritage Centre and the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Preliminary findings and draft policy briefs were given by the international research team. The meeting ended with the identification of possible follow-up opportunities as well as a shared call for action.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1437>

New Policy on Sustainable Development for World Heritage

Towards the end of 2015, the States Parties to the World Heritage Convention adopted a policy on sustainable development. The integration of sustainable development principles in the management of natural World Heritage sites will support social and economic development in the long term, by taking into account the needs of local communities.

Source: http://iucn.org/about/work/programmes/wcpa_worldheritage/news/?22355/Why-the-new-policy-on-sustainable-development-for-World-Heritage-is-a-crucial-step-forward



Shola Forests, Mukurti National Park, Western Ghats-Right based Approach

Twelve nomination files reviewed for Natural World Heritage in 2016

IUCN's World Heritage Panel gathered last December to consider 12 files for possible inscriptions of natural sites on the World Heritage List in 2016 during the World Heritage Committee meeting due to take place in Istanbul, Turkey from 10 to 20 July 2016. A total of 10 candidate sites across the globe have been nominated for consideration as new natural or mixed sites on the World Heritage List. Sites from Asia-Pacific include:

China, **Hubei Shennongjia**

India, **Khangchendzonga National Park** (Mixed site)

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, **Western Tien-Shan**

Turkmenistan, **Mountain Ecosystems of Koytendag**

Source: http://iucn.org/about/work/programmes/wcpa_worldheritage/news/?22354/Twelve-nominations-on-files-reviewed-for-natural-World-Heritage-in-2016

Cyclone Winston Hits Fiji and its World Heritage Property

A severe tropical cyclone struck the Island Nation of Fiji in late February 2016, causing catastrophic destruction and human loss. More than 340,000 people (i.e. roughly 40% of the population) have been affected in the archipelago, which numbers around 300 islands, and tens of thousands of people lost their homes and remain in shelters.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1457>

Reactive Monitoring Mission to The Sundarbans World Heritage property (Bangladesh)

As requested by the World Heritage Committee at its 39th Session in 2015 (Bonn, Germany), a joint Reactive Monitoring Mission involving the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the IUCN took place from 22 to 28 March 2016 to assess the overall state of conservation of the property. The mission focussed on issues that could seriously threaten its Outstanding Universal Values, and especially the planned development of a coal-fired thermal power plant in the immediate vicinity of the property. The mission will also assist the national authorities with the preparation of better management and conservation policies by developing a set of recommendations with short- and mid-term priority actions.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1470>

SPECIES DISCOVERY

The Western Ghats region in India shows speciation related to the breakup of the ancient landmass of Gondwanaland in the early Jurassic period. It contains exceptional levels of plant and animal diversity and endemism. Recently Priti et al. (2016) discovered a new cryptic species of bush frog *Raorchestes honnametti* from the south-eastern part of the Western Ghats World Heritage Site, India. This newly described species belongs to the *Charius* clade and is morphologically similar to other clade members—*R. charius* and *R. griet*. The species is nocturnal, arboreal and a direct developing frog. The dorsum colouration varies from light grey to dark brown. It is found in shola forests, evergreen forests, semi-evergreen forests and around human habitations. Including this new described species, at present there are 60 species of the genus *Raorchestes* of which 50 species are from the Western Ghats.

Source: Priti H, Roshmi RS, Ramya B, Sudhira HS, Ravikanth G, Aravind NA, et al. (2016) Integrative Taxonomic Approach for Describing a New Cryptic Species of Bush Frog (*Raorchestes*: Anura: Rhacophoridae) from the Western Ghats, India. PLoS ONE 11(3): e0149382. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0149382



Khangchendzonga National Park, Sikkim



Raorchestes honnametti



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](http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/web/iucn/understanding-ratings)



One Horned Rhino in Kaziranga National Park

WORLD HERITAGE OUTLOOK

Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes (Republic of Korea)

(Inscribed in 2007), Criteria vii, viii

Conservation Outlook: Good

Jeju Volcanic Island and Lava Tubes together comprise three sites that make up 18,846 ha. The site, of outstanding aesthetic beauty, also bears testimony to the history of the planet, its features and processes. The Outstanding Universal Value and attributes of the property are well recognized, are under no significant threats and are effectively managed and protected. Inscription of the property has had a very positive outcome in raising awareness of conservation and the World Heritage Convention among the general public and key stakeholders.

Source: http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/search-sites/-/wdpaid/en/903130?p_p_auth=fD7TnXm7

Kaziranga National Park (India)

(Inscribed in 1985), Criteria ix, x

Conservation Outlook: Significant Concern

In the heart of Assam, this park is one of the last areas in eastern India undisturbed by a human presence. It is inhabited by the world's largest population of one-horned rhinoceros, as well as many mammals, including tigers, elephants, leopards and bears, and thousands of birds. The Kaziranga National Park is considered as one of the better managed Protected Areas in the country and elsewhere. However, after decades of conservation success the recent spike in rhino poaching in the site is of particular concern. The changing dynamics of the surrounding landscape, particularly with regard to the anthropogenic elements, will be placing increasing pressure on the ecological integrity of the site.

Source: http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/search-sites/-/wdpaid/en/10744?p_p_auth=fD7TnXm7

UNESCO C2C INDIA: CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Coastal and Marine Workshop



Coastal and Marine Workshop, Sunderbans

A Consultative Workshop on 'Enhancing Capacity for Effective Management of Coastal and Marine World Heritage Sites of the Asia-Pacific Region' was organized from 26th to 28th, February, 2016 at Sunderbans National Park and World Heritage Site, West Bengal, India. This workshop was jointly organized and funded by UNESCO C2C at Wildlife Institute of India, German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) and West Bengal Forest Department. The workshop was mainly intended to build capacity of various stakeholders to enhance the participatory management of Marine Protected Areas in India. Globally renowned eminent resource persons with specific domain expertise and Site Managers from World Heritage

Sites in India and South Asia participated in the Workshop. The overseas resource persons included Mr. David Sheppard, Former Director General, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Mr. Stuart Chape (Director, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management, SPREP) and Mr. Peter Shadie, IUCN Senior Advisor,

Workshop on Ecotourism in Uttarakhand

The University of Montana (UMT) in collaboration with the C2C organised a "Workshop on Ecotourism in Uttarakhand: Responding to Environmental and Social Changes" at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India from 3rd to 5th March, 2016. The aim of the workshop was to assess the needs for ecotourism development in Uttarakhand in the context of rapid environmental and social changes occurring in the State and initiate a process for the development of a long term road map for ecotourism development in Uttarakhand. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Keith Bosak and Dr. Jennifer Thomsen from the University of Montana (UMT).

Participants at the workshop included representatives from Government Departments, NGOs, community-based organizations, ecotourism entrepreneurs, university research scholars, UNDP, FRI and WII.



Ecotourism Workshop

Training on Economic Valuation of Ecosystem Services

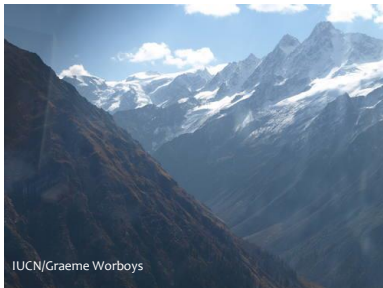
A Training Programme on "Economic Valuation of Ecosystem Services" was organized jointly by the C2C and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH at Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun on 14th to 17th March, 2016. The theme of the programme was established on the backdrop created by field based research undertaken by The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity – India Initiative (TEEB- India Initiative) as the need for incorporating economics based and ecosystem services approaches to addressing policy challenges in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The objective of the programme was to familiarize the participants with the basics of economic valuation of ecosystem services through modules of Values project and Conservation Strategy Fund (CSF), Germany. The participant group was a combination of scientists, professionals, foresters and researchers having diverse background from applied to social sciences. The overseas resource persons included Ms. Kim Bonine, Training Director - Conservation Strategy Fund, California and Dr. Alejandro von Bertrab, Advisor – Values, GIZ, Germany.

Consultation on Nomination of Kailash Sacred Landscape as World Heritage Site

The Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) is a trans-boundary collaborative programme between China, India, and Nepal, coordinated by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu. Dr. Edwin Marshall Bernbaum, a globally renowned expert on cultural landscapes in mountain regions, has been working as a senior consultant for KSLCDI since February 2015 to prepare the application for KSL as a WHS. In this context, the UNESCO C2C at Wildlife Institute of India in collaboration with ICIMOD hosted a scoping session for the nomination of KSL as a trans-boundary WHS on January 27, 2016.



Consultation on Nomination of Kailash Sacred Landscape as World Heritage Site



Great Himalayan National Park
Conservation Area

Various Government and Non-Government agencies participated in the one-day session held at WII, Dehradun. It was decided to carry forward the dialogue on this process and establish synergy between the various agencies.

Consultation on Nomination of Garo Hills, Meghalaya as World Heritage Site

The first ever Garo Hills Elephant Reserve Action Plan workshop was conducted at Tura, Meghalaya from 23rd to 25th February, 2016. The workshop was organized by Meghalaya Forest Department in collaboration with CIFA (The Conservation Initiative for Asian Elephants) International Elephant Foundation and UNESCO C2C. Along with eminent Government and Non-Government experts, more than 150 Nokmas (Village headmen) from 100 Akhings actively participated in the workshop.

Technical Support to States for SoC Preparation

UNESCO C2C provided technical back-stopping to States, Himachal Pradesh (Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area), Rajasthan (Keoladeo National Park) and Assam (Manas National Park) in preparation of State of Conservation (SoC) reports to be submitted to World Heritage Centre as per the deadline of February 1, 2016.

Training for Frontline Field Staff of GHNPCA World Heritage Site

UNESCO C2C organized a training programme from 8th- 10th March, 2016 for development of skills and enhancing knowledge of wildlife habitat management, population estimation survey/ census methods in the Himalayas and wildlife crime control forensic tools for the front line staff of Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA). This programme was attended by 29 forest staff members including ACF, Ranger Officials and Forest Guards of GHNP circle.

INTERVIEW

Mr. Jon Day, ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, James Cook University, Australia, who has been a Protected Area Manager has developed an unique assessment tool by breaking down the OUV of a site for more effective reporting and monitoring on World Heritage Sites. Ms. Jyoti Negi and Mr. Niraj Kakati from UNESCO C2C India interacted with Mr. Jon Day during his visit to the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun on 21st January, 2016. Following are the excerpts:

Q1. What kind of tools do you suggest in terms of how we can assess trend of a site getting better or declining and how do they fit in different criteria of Good, Poor, Very Poor?

Ans. The assessment tool I spoke about can be quite subjective at a high level. It can be applied quickly but behind it should be a whole lot of other assessment techniques and information such as published reports, research data, survey, etc. to show whether these values are improving and whether the current condition is Good, Poor, Very Poor.

Q2. Is this assessment strategy beneficial for assessment of cultural sites as well?

Ans. The assessment that I have developed is yet to be tried on cultural sites, but I think it has every potential and certainly my colleagues who are cultural experts have suggested this. Yes, it has every reason to work on cultural, natural and of course on mixed sites as well.

Q3. Based on your experience have you applied this tool on any site? Are there any specific results that could be shown as an outcome by using this tool?

Ans. I think, first is that it is raising people's awareness about OUVs, both in staff of the site and in other stakeholders. Second thing is that it helps to recognise that some values are improving while others are deteriorating. So it will be useful to focus the attention on improving the latter. Another benefit is that you can recognise where you might need information and hence, prioritise research projects.

Q5. As we understand that OUV is a global concept, but what about its importance for local people for whom OUV is just another medium of livelihood or sustainability?

Ans. I don't think the OUV assessment I am talking about is directly useful for the local population of these sites, but I think an important part of doing this assessment is recognising that they are part of the World Heritage Site. I think you can use the same approach to assess how you are involving local communities in many World Heritage Sites as these communities are absolutely part of these sites.

Q6. How and when do you envisage that this tool that you have developed could be made formally applicable through the IUCN, UNESCO framework to the State Party of the sites?

Ans. Well, I am working with my colleagues from IUCN Switzerland and the World Heritage Centre to turn this into a guiding document to help better understand, apply and use OUV, which is such a central part of the World Heritage Convention.

Q7. How does this assessment tool compare or contrast with some other tools which are currently existing in the global framework?

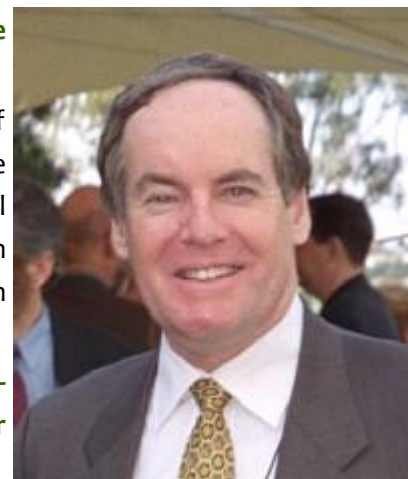
Ans. Well, I can certainly start with Periodic Reporting, which is a formal report every 6 years and I am suggesting the approach I am taking is less formal, much more easily applied, and potentially do it every 1 or 2 years. In fact, this approach will help the Site Manager better understand the periodic report. So, it can complement the other existing assessment tools like Conservation Outlook.

Q8. You informed about the assessment tool for Criteria and Integrity of OUV. Is there a comprehensive tool for assessment of Protection and Management of PA's or WHS?

Ans. Sure, you are probably aware that IUCN has a major focus on management effectiveness. The sort of thing that I am developing with my colleagues from India in WII and GIZ is a simpler way of looking at management effectiveness for Marine and Coastal areas where we are developing a very simple checklist to help people understand basic elements of effective management.

Q9. What message you would like to give to people who are associated with conservation and specifically related closely to World Heritage Sites?

Ans. Well, I think World Heritage is such an important concept. People have to recognise that this is not just for the local community or the Nation, it is for the World. It is not just for today, but for future generations. It does make some obligations. It makes it hard in some people's perception but I think if I had that awareness, I have an obligation to look after these areas for the future and for the benefits that can flow from them.



Mr. Jon Day



HOSTED TALKS

“Developing a better understanding of Outstanding Universal Values”

Mr. Jon Day, ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, James Cook University, Australia

21st January, 2016

“Nomination of Kailash Sacred Landscape as World Heritage Site”

Dr. Edwin M. Bernbaum, Senior Fellow, The Mountain Institute and Co-Chair, IUCN Specialist Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas

27th January, 2016

“Opportunities and Challenges of SPREP”

Dr. David Sheppard, Former Head of Protected Area Programme, IUCN and Former Director, SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme).

29th February, 2016

“Engaging local communities in World Heritage: Fostering Stewardship and Capturing Benefits”

Mr. Peter Shadie, Director, Odonata House Consulting and IUCN Senior Advisor, World Heritage

29th February, 2016

COLLABORATIONS

- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) India
- University of Montana, USA

ANNOUNCEMENT

UNESCO C2C India introduces a **“Visiting Fellows Programme”** at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India for scholars and practitioners working on subjects relevant to World Natural Heritage. The Centre invites up to two experts a year, for fellowships which are available for terms not exceeding 3 months. For details, please visit: www.wii.gov.in/unesco_category_centre.

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