



## **Apathy, inaction and denial – the systemic failures driving India's tigers to extinction**

**An *Animals on the Edge* report, written by Chris Weston**

Type the search string '41 million' into Google and it's surprising what comes up. A quick glance tells us that it's the amount paid at Christies auction house for a Claude Monet painting of waterlilies; that it represents the number of jobs lost in China during the recent global recession; that 41 million viewers watched the US Masters golf and that the same number of people in the US are involved in casual gaming on the Internet. On page two Google tells us that 41 million represents the number of Americans without healthcare and that a further 41 million need colorectal cancer screening. The same number of Americans leave their Holiday shopping until Christmas Eve and 41 million years ago there were no polar ice caps on Earth.

Dig a little deeper and you'll find a report published by the Cambridge Journal stating that between the years 1998 and 2005 an estimated \$41-million was spent by international donors on tiger conservation projects. Add in official Government spending, that figure is likely to double. Now let me give you another number: 1,411, the estimated number of tigers left living in the wild in India - less than half the population that existed in 1998 before the \$41 million was spent. Where the money went, I doubt anyone really knows. What we do know – what the figures tell us – is that current methods of tiger conservation are failing. Badly.

### **Caught in the crossfire**

According to a 2004 poll carried out for the cable network Animal Planet, more than 20% of 50,000 viewers representing 73 countries voted the tiger the "world's favourite animal". So why, then, is this icon of the jungle, the national symbol of India – the world's favourite animal – living so close to the edge of extinction?

One reason might be that tigers find themselves in the crossfire of many conflicting and uniquely varied controversies. Predominant among these is the trade in the body parts of tigers. The global market for tiger product is estimated by Interpol to be worth tens of millions of dollars. Quite literally, tigers are financially more valuable dead than alive. Practically every single part of a tiger can be sold, primarily for use in traditional medicines and tonics – teeth (to treat fever), claws (as a cure for insomnia), penis (to boost virility), bones (used in wine as a stimulant for fatigue), eyeballs (to treat epilepsy and malaria), brains (a cure for laziness and acne), the tail (to treat skin diseases), fat (to treat rheumatism and muscular ailments); even the whiskers (to bring courage and to prevent toothache). The 25kg of bones in an adult tiger alone are worth around \$120,000, the pelt another \$20,000 – \$50,000. Such a significant market, offering huge rewards is always going to attract organised, well funded – albeit illegal – hunting, particularly when the consequences of capture are so negligible.



## **The threat from China**

Implicated in this threat is China – by far the largest market for tiger product – the government of which, after years of unsuccessful overt lobbying, quietly sanctioned the sale of “legally obtained” tiger and leopard skins and their products, a move that conservationists believe will have a direct, negative impact on India’s remaining population of wild tigers, and was made with such clandestine adroitness that despite the official announcement being published in a document from the Chinese State Forestry Administration in December 2007, it wasn’t picked up by international NGO’s or the global media until the summer of 2009. Even organisations that have been in official dialogue with the Chinese over the issue of tiger conservation were unaware of the document’s existence. Ashok Kumar, who represents the Wildlife Trust of India, told The Times newspaper, “In all our communications with the Chinese we have been led to believe that the ban [on trade in tiger body parts] is firmly in place. We were not aware of this document.”

Conservationists were especially concerned with the wording of the document, in particular the ambiguity of the words “and their products”, which they believe were left specifically vague in order to enable trade in tiger parts other than the pelt, a view voiced by Xu Hongfa, of the wildlife trade monitoring network Traffic, when he observed “the wording will be used as a cover by tiger farmers to make tiger bone wine and other tonics, the income from which would dwarf the revenue from tourism”, (ostensibly the principle reason these farms exist at all).

Now that news of China’s decision is out – conveniently after the conclusion of the 2008 Olympic Games, which were held in Beijing – China argues that farming tigers is a viable industry and a measure that aids conservation. Speaking of its 5,000 tigers bred in captivity and living on farms, its representatives claim that sourcing product from captive tigers to fulfil market demand will protect wild tigers from illegal hunting. It is a view that has some support, from the Liberty Institute, for one, an independent think tank in New Delhi, whose director, Barun Mitra, contends that legally farming tigers for profit and opening a legitimate market would reduce the value of tigers on the black market, thereby reducing the financial incentive for poachers. It’s the same argument used by those wanting to see the legalization of narcotics.

The flaws in the argument for legalising trade in tiger products, however, are numerous and interconnected. For one, breeding and raising a tiger is an expensive process and far more costly than obtaining one from the wild, where a poacher will be paid as little as US\$15 for a dead tiger – an amount equivalent to the cost of feeding one for a week on a farm. Secondly, Chinese tradition stresses the extra potency of tonics sourced from wild animals and a legal market is therefore likely to spawn a niche market with premium prices for wild-sourced products. Together, and coupled with experience that tells us that policing the legal sourcing of tiger skins effectively is all but impossible; a reduction in levels of poaching is unlikely.



The assertion that poaching will remain a significant threat even if farmed tigers are used to supply market demand is supported by the example of the ivory trade in Africa. In 2008, the United Nations Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) temporarily lifted its ban on sales of ivory. CITES's aim was to feed voracious markets in Asia with ivory from existing stockpiles (or from elephants that had died naturally), generating much-needed income for African countries. While the ban has achieved its aim – proceeds of US\$5 million from a single sale to Japan was distributed to Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe – it came at a cost. Official figures from the Kenya Wildlife Service revealed that instances of elephant poaching increased by 60% in the period the ban was lifted – a figure supported by the personal experiences of Service staff. Jonathan Kirui, Assistant Director of Tsavo National Park, told me, "Since the one-off ivory sales from southern Africa countries late last year, we have noted an unprecedented rise of elephant poaching incidents in Tsavo."

For many, the fact that tiger poaching is still rife in India, despite numerous soundly-voiced global outcries, the supposed close attention of powerful international NGO's, and the perilous state of the country's tiger population, is nothing short of alarming. However, for those who understand India and its politics it is far less surprising.

### **Where there's no will there's no way**

Prerna Singh Bindra is one of India's most prolific environmental writers and has written for a phalanx of reputable and respected newspapers and magazines, including *The Asian Age*, *Sanctuary Asia*, *India Today*, *The Week* and *The Pioneer*. In 2006, questioning whether India deserves its tigers she made several observations that pointed to a lack of public and political will towards saving the tiger.

"The Indian Forest Service continues to be the most neglected service in the country. Promotions are delayed from the lowest to the most senior levels, there has been a freeze on recruitment for the past 17 years, and the average age of a forest guard is 53 years. At present there is a 40% shortage of forest staff at ground level, where the real battles are fought."

She continues, "Conviction rates for wildlife crime is less than 1%, tiger numbers continue to be embellished, deaths are almost always reported as being due to natural causes rather than poaching or retributive killing, central [government] investment in tiger reserves remains an abysmal 75 rupees (approx. US\$1.50)/sq. km per year, and, despite only 7% of tigers' original habitat remaining, India continues relentlessly to destroy, degrade and fragment vital habitat, including within so-called sacrosanct tiger reserves." She quotes a Ministry of the Environment & Forests-sanctioned uranium project just 2-miles from Andhra Pradesh's Nagarjunasagar Tiger Reserve, and transport and communications links cut through the heart of the Palamau, Valmiki, Rajaji, Kaziranga and Melghat protected areas, as examples.



## **The 2007 census**

In 2007, an important event happened in India – the all-India tiger census, conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India. Using new, more reliable techniques India properly counted its tiger population. The outcome was devastating but unsurprising to most conservationists and a few dedicated forest staff. Despite local and national government spin that portrayed India's tiger population as stable and healthy, the new official figure of 1,411 wild tigers was less than half the number counted just prior to the setting-up of Project Tiger.

Launched in 1973 Project Tiger was the Indian government's response to the similarly devastating census of 1972. At the time, India's Prime Minister was Indira Gandhi, a staunch conservationist, and, during her two terms in Office, which ended first in 1977 with the electoral defeat of her Congress Party and later in 1984 with her assassination, Project Tiger was heralded a success, with tiger numbers increasing. However, after her assassination conservation assumed a lesser importance in government and by the end of the decade, protections of natural resources that had been put in place began to fall away and tiger habitat was converted for agricultural use, buffer zones and access routes were encroached upon and protected forests were once again logged. Today, Project Tiger is considered by most conservationists in India and around the world to have completely and utterly failed.

In response to the 2007 census, the government once again wanted to be seen to act. It announced a number of new initiatives, including the amendment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to provide for the constituting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, and a provision being made enabling state governments to prepare Tiger Conservation Plans, which included staff development and deployment to ensure protection of tiger reserves, while ensuring compatible forestry operations in adjoining areas. Further, safeguards have been provided for ensuring the agricultural, livelihood, developmental and other interests of the people living inside a forest or in and around a tiger reserve. Additionally, fifteen years after a Prime Ministerial directive was given for its establishment, the government constituted a statutory body, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, to complement the efforts of the state governments, primary enforcers of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and other enforcement agencies of the country.

## **Illusions**

Two years on, I pose to Prerna Singh Bindra the question, "Is India finally taking the action needed to save its tigers?" Her response isn't promising.

"The dawn of 2009 only brought despair for the tiger", she says. "One shocking revelation is the unprecedented level of poaching in the past three months [November 2008 to January 2009].

# Animals on the Edge

Skins and bones of seven tigers have been seized, plus three killed by poachers – and they're the ones we know about. After the government's solemn promise to save the national animal, it fares no better, only worse.

She continues, "Local extinctions are being played out in Panna, which has only one tiger. Buxa would be so lucky — last heard, officials mumbled something about tigers migrating to Bhutan. The list of problem reserves is long: Indravati in Chhattisgarh is out of bounds for the officers, naxals (a communist group whose activities include damaging property, killing and mass massacre of civilians) have taken over; it's almost as bad in Palamu in Jharkhand, and Nagarjunasagar in Andhra Pradesh. Sundarbans is touted as the largest tiger population of the world at 274. Simply put, that's a lie. No more than 50 survive there — and under constant fire. The western part of Rajaji is devoid of tigers — save one female; and there is disturbing news that 10 tigers have gone 'missing' in Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve.

"A very disturbing trend today is that the tigers' safest havens, Corbett, Kaziranga, and Kanha are under siege. Most of the tragedies I mention have been in these reserves. In the past year, captured poachers confessed to killing three tigers in and around Corbett. Nine tigers have died inside three months in Kaziranga, a park that prided itself on its stringent protection. Never has the tiger been so vulnerable. According to my sources, seasoned tiger poachers – the Bahelias – are currently operating out there.

"A missive has been sent to all tiger reserves to be alert. Not that it matters. The states don't even bother to respond to such alerts. No strategies, no extra force, nothing. Quite the contrary, parks like Corbett have had an absentee leadership for the past month. And while some brave individual directors take up the cause, they are severely constrained in their battle. Our weaponry to fight poachers, backed with the might of trade cartels, is our rag-tag green army, with defunct weapons and *dandas* (batons). Some not paid for months, nearing retirement, and still no fresh recruitment."

During a recent visit to India's largest tiger reserve, Kanha, I wanted to corroborate Purna Singh Bindra's observations on the parks' anti-poaching initiatives and spoke to forest officials who introduced me to some of Kanha's anti-poaching guards. All were close to retirement age, were badly armed (if armed at all) and operated on foot, covering an area roughly 11 sq. km in size. Speaking to one of the men, he told me, "It's a thankless task. With so much land to cover I have no real hope of ever catching a poacher. And, if I do encounter poachers, how am I supposed to defend myself from their automatic weapons when all I have is a stick?"



## **Apathy, inaction and denial**

There are other stories that substantiate Singh Bindra's accusations. In June (2009), sources revealed that a Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) report into the reasons behind the spate of tiger deaths at the beginning of the year (previously referred to) and the possible involvement of organized gangs in the killings was "gathering dust" in the WCCB office, holding up further action on the matter. This was the first time since its inception in 2008 that the WCCB had been entrusted with such a sensitive task. Rajesh Gopal, member secretary of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), reacted by saying, "It indicates the apathy of officials regarding wildlife conservation".

Apathy in one state is compounded by inaction in another. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> September (2009), the Deccan Chronicle, the regional newspaper for Andhra Pradesh, reported that the state Forest Department had yet to set up the Special Tiger Protection Force stipulated in a government directive, despite several reported instances of poaching. In response, the Chief Conservator, Mr C. Siva Shankar Reddy said, "Correspondence is still going on with the Centre regarding force set up" – or, in other words, yes, nothing was being done.

And, if apathy and inaction aren't enough, we can add denial into the mix, amply illustrated by an incident in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, where, in reply to a Calling Attention motion by the Opposition against state Forest Minister Rajendra Shukla, put forward after he had refused to act against officials responsible for the local extinction of the tiger in Panna reserve, the MP made the outlandish claim that "every year 60 cubs were born in Panna". After pointing out that such a birth rate was biologically impossible given the number of adult tigers that had existed in Panna, Congress MLA's (Members of the Legislative Committee) said that the 'Tiger State', as Madhya Pradesh is known, was in danger of losing that tag because "the government not only failed to save the big cat but also remained in denial", a statement supported by the findings of a report written by the Special Investigative Team, which accused the state government of denying any crisis in Panna even as tigers were regularly being poached between 2002 and 2009.

Taking denial a step further, the state government of Orissa, in eastern India, in an attempt to discredit the official Wildlife Institute of India survey of 2007 and prove its yearlong denial of a 40% drop in the tiger population of Simlipal Tiger Reserve, set out to produce its own census. Eighty-one counting teams comprising officials of four forest divisions, staff of Simlipal sanctuary and teachers and students of North Orissa University set to work in January (2009). In July they reported back with news that the 40% figure was indeed wrong – their findings showed there had been a 50% drop.



## **The judiciary**

Besides apathy, inaction and denial, the fight against poaching is further hampered by India's judicial system, which has by some at times been accused of being at best inefficient and at worst infected by corruption.

In 2007, IBNLive, the online arm of Global Broadcast News in India, reported that as many as 15,000 wildlife crimes remained pending in Indian courts, including those of large-scale poachers trading in tiger skins. "None of these [people] face harsh sentence or speedy trial by the courts", they commented.

For those that make it to trial, with a conviction rate of less than 1%, the outcome is close to a foregone conclusion. Avinash Basker is a lawyer working with the Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI). In a recent conversation, he explained to me the problems facing the courts.

"Although there is no right to bail in cases involving Schedule 1 or 2 species, it may be granted at the court's discretion. And, because they are presented with insufficient reason to refuse it, bail is often granted. Many poachers are from nomadic tribes, which increases the risk of them absconding."

A contact in Madhya Pradesh told me that another ploy used by the poaching ringleaders was to buy up small parcels of very cheap land – something India has plenty of in the countryside. If a poacher is caught, title to one of these parcels of land is signed over to him so that when he comes to court, he can claim to own land in the state, perceivably making him a lower flight risk and making the granting of bail a practical certainty. Once released, the poacher is moved on to another state and the ringleaders draft in a replacement from elsewhere – in a kind of poacher's merry-go-round.

If the state does manage to bring a poacher to trial, prosecutions often fail because of technicalities surrounding the available evidence. Avinash Basker describes the challenges facing the courts:

"We find that problems often arise prior to the prosecution of the case, during its investigation. Like most countries, India's criminal justice system is based on the presumption of innocence. Therefore, it's critical that the collection and documentation of evidence at the outset is both thorough and meticulous. Forest Department officers require better training in the techniques and processes involved."



When a case is successfully prosecuted, jail terms and fines are often lenient, rarely ever being the maximum available. My source in Madhya Pradesh told me of one instance where a locally notorious poacher was caught, prosecuted and jailed for three years, only to be released after six months. Subsequently he was again caught red handed and again jailed for three years. On this occasion he served only three months.

A more internationally prominent case involves a man named Sansar Chand. Sansar Chand is considered India's most notorious and prolific wildlife criminal. Diaries seized from his family by the Rajasthan police in 2004 allegedly showed transactions for 40 tiger skins and 400 leopard skins in an eleven-month period between 2003 and 2004. Then, during a 2006 CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) interrogation, Chand is alleged to have admitted to selling 470 tiger skins and 2,120 leopard skins to just four clients from Nepal and Tibet.

In April 2004, a trial court in Amjer found Chand guilty of offences under the Wildlife (Protection) Act and sentenced him to five years imprisonment. Chand unsuccessfully challenged the judgment in an appeal followed by a criminal revision petition in the Rajasthan High Court – to the relief of everyone concerned with conserving tigers. Then in 2009, the Supreme Court suspended Chand's jail sentence and ordered that he be "enlarged on bail to the satisfaction of the trial court." This despite the fact Chand is standing accused in several other pending cases of wildlife crime in the trial courts, and his having two previous convictions for wildlife crime, in 1982.

Belinda Wright, WPSI's executive director, stated, "His imminent release from prison in Jaipur, coupled with the dismal track record of conviction in wildlife cases, will only hasten the demise of the tiger."

### **The search for scapegoats**

Seeing that a large proportion of the criticism for the failings in controlling tiger poaching was aimed towards them, the government looked for a scapegoat. They found one in an unlikely source – tourists. In mid-2009 the state-run NTCA announced plans to severely restrict access to India's 37 national tiger reserves, effectively banning tiger-centric tourism. In an interview with The Sunday Times newspaper, Sab Prakash Yadav, joint director of the NTCA, pointed the finger of blame for the declining tiger population squarely at tourists saying, "Tourism creates a disturbance through vehicles, noise pollution, garbage and the need to provide facilities." However, statistics don't support the Authority's view. The highest concentration and populations of tigers in India are in the main tourist parks, such as Bandhavgarh and Kanha. On the other hand, in lesser-known parks, such as Panna and Buxa, which attract little tourism, tigers have suffered or are facing local extinction.

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There is an old environmental maxim, "If it pays, it stays", the point being that if wildlife has a financial value then it will be protected. Managed properly, tourism can provide that worth, as has been proven to great effect in Rwanda, where government-backed gorilla-centric tourism provides financial and social benefits to local people, and is the government's third largest source of export income. Without gorillas, Rwanda would be a far poorer country financially and so they avidly protect the source of their wealth. It is no coincidence that poaching in Rwanda has been all but eradicated and the country's population of mountain gorillas is increasing.

In India, if tourism is a problem it is not the fault of tourists. In his argument put forward to The Sunday Times, Sab Prakash Yadav cited disturbance from tourist vehicles as a cause of declining tiger populations and yet the government, which runs the NTCA, for whom Yadav works, continues to build new roads through protected forests, such as a proposed 6-lane highway through Pench Tiger Reserve.

Lack of resources is also to blame for the disorganized state of tourism within the parks. In Bandipur Tiger Reserve, for example, where holiday resorts are mushrooming, the Forest Department put a cap on the number of vehicles and visitors allowed into the Reserve at any one time. But, on the ground, nobody is counting vehicles or checking numbers – rules are only effective if they are enforced.

But perhaps the greatest failing of the tourism industry is that it fails to support local communities – the people who can actually make a difference when it comes to conservation, as Rwanda has proved. In a village abutting Bandipur Tiger Reserve, I spoke to one of the residents, Melkamanahalli. On the subject of tourism he said, "It has been of no use for people of this village. Big people from outside have bought the land and built the resorts. They made the resorts, brought their own people and gave no jobs to anybody in the village." Lack of jobs for local people is a criticism aimed not just at the resort operators. Of the thousands of people employed in India's national parks, less than 1% live in local communities. Compare this figure with 76% in Rwanda, and again we get a glimpse of where India is failing its wildlife.

This view is supported by a report written by Nagothu Udaya Sekhar into local people's attitudes towards conservation and wildlife tourism around Sariska Tiger Reserve. The report found that national and state government wildlife conservation policy in India does not view tourism in protected areas as a source of revenue for the local communities. Elsewhere in the report, results showed that two-thirds of respondents from the local villages were positive towards tourism and support for conservation. In its conclusion, the report argues that where the benefits of tourism are properly and fairly directed, protected areas also benefit.



## **A developing trend**

But, not only are India's tigers under threat, so too are its protected areas – its forests. After years of encroachment, state-sponsored agricultural expansion, and large-scale logging, more recent policies and programs of development, rapid industrialization, urbanization and growing consumerism have resulted in wide-scale destruction of the forests, leaving them fragmented and diminished. It is estimated that as little as 4% of tigers' original habitat remains today.

Deforestation has a direct, negative impact on tigers. The 2007 census incorporated a range of assessment tools, including habitat evaluation, and established an inverse link between the presence of livestock and tiger populations, and between the presence of human trails and tiger population. Additionally, it showed a direct correlation between the density of forest cover and the number of tigers in an area.

Protection of the forests, then, is essential to conservation of the tiger. According to figures from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, 20.6% of India's land mass is forested. Of this, rampant farming, livestock grazing and forest fires have eroded approximately half. In 2002, in order to try and check the level of deforestation, the government drafted a National Forestry Action Program, with the aim of increasing total forest coverage to 33% of landmass. The scheme is failing. A State of Indian Forest Report released in April 2008 showed that the government had failed to achieve its 10<sup>th</sup> Plan target (for 2007) of 25% forest cover. Worse still, the report revealed that India had lost an additional 728 sq. km of forests to dam construction and natural causes (namely the 2004 tsunami).

Bittu Sahgal, editor of India's largest wildlife magazine, *Sanctuary*, identifies what he believes is a particularly worrying cause of the continuing decline in forested land – the World Bank. The World Bank describes itself as, "... a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world" and its purpose being "to provide low-interest loans, interest-free credits and grants to developing countries for a wide array of purposes that include investments in education, health, public administration, infrastructure, financial and private sector development, agriculture, and environmental and natural resource management."

It has an enormous presence in India, funding numerous economic infrastructure development projects. But activists say these threaten fragile ecosystems and tiger habitat while, at the same time, "throwing up a green smokescreen of concern for biodiversity." The projects they refer to include the construction of 495 new coal mines that threaten tiger migration routes in Hazaribagh National Park; financing of the Kotku Dam in the state of Bihar, which will drown the best forests of Palamau Tiger Reserve; and funding of a forestry project that aims to convert tiger habitat to a monoculture, designed to boost commerce rather than biodiversity.

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It's not just activists that are unhappy with the World Bank's involvement. In August 2009, Jairam Ramesh, Environment Minister, said that India would not accept any fund from the World Bank for the country's tiger conservation program, apparently agreeing with conservationist views that the World Bank's move to invest in tiger conservation is just an attempt to meddle with India's green efforts.

In response to the poor figures exposed by the State of Indian Forest Report, in its Year Plan (2007-2012) the government increased the money available for tiger conservation to \$151 million. It notified eight new tiger reserves and upped the budget for resettlement of people within forest areas from \$2,565 to \$25,641 per family. On the face of it, it would appear that the government is at least trying. However, in the spring of 2009 I visited Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh, a location for one of these resettlement programs. A source told me that although the families targeted for resettlement outside of the park had agreed – indeed were eager – to move and the money to pay the necessary compensation had been made available, it had been sitting in a bank account for several months, gaining a significant amount of interest. My source implied that those controlling the money were using it for personal, financial gain.

The figure of \$151 million sounds impressive, nearly four-times the \$41 million donated to tiger conservation between 1998 and 2005. However, unless the approach to tiger conservation changes, one might question whether this money will truly make a difference. Effective conservation projects are based on action rather than words. The reason I was in Kanha in 2009 was to oversee a water distribution and tiger habitat creation project in two of the non-tourist core zones of the park. Animals on the Edge had been contacted in April by a local NGO with a plan to increase the available habitat for tigers by introducing year-round water sources that would attract prey species, the lack of which was the prime reason for the paucity of tigers in the area. Within six weeks, we had agreed funding, drawn up a plan, employed a workforce, begun digging and completed the project – just in time for the annual monsoon rains to fill the new waterholes naturally. The total cost of the project was just under \$10,000.

## Conclusion

A 2009 on-line survey run by NDTV (New Delhi Television) revealed that around three-quarters of Indians believe that the greatest threat to tigers is trade-driven poaching. In reality, a far greater threat is the almost universal lack of will at government level to actually solve the problem at ground level. Even the government's own body, the National Tiger Conservation Authority, in September (2009) suggested that the government is unsure how to fulfill the mandate of protecting the tiger. And, as ministers and officials stand by inactive, apathetic or in denial, every day the number of tigers in the wild continues to fall. At the current rate, India's wild tigers will be gone within our generation. The time to act is now – before it's too late.