

venturing 1 km away from the release sites within 3 months.
 Source: *Psitta Scene*, November 1997, 3–4.

Lemurs released

Black-and-white ruffed lemurs *Varecia variegata variegata*, bred at Duke University Primate Centre in the USA, were released into the Betampona Natural Reserve in Madagascar during November 1997 as part of a model programme to manage a small geographically restricted population. The five animals were released into the 2000-ha reserve, which is one of the few remaining fragments of lowland rain forest in eastern Madagascar and is surrounded by rice fields. The lemurs will enhance the gene pool of the small population of c. 30–35 black-and-white ruffed lemurs in the park. The project's international sponsor, the Madagascar Fauna Group, plans to introduce as many as 20 lemurs over the next 3 years.
 Source: *Wildlife Conservation*, January/February 1998, 14.

SOUTH & SOUTH EAST ASIA

Goral killed by mushroom collectors

The Himalayan goral *Naemorhedus goral* is the most frequently encountered mammal in the Great Himalayan National Park, India, and numbers are estimated at c. 600. However, these ungulates are being killed illegally by people and their dogs entering the park to collect wild mushrooms between April and June.
 Source: *Caprinae* (IUCN/SSC Caprinae Specialist Group Newsletter), August 1997, 5–6.

Protection follows turtles' failure to breed

The 35-km-long Gahirmatha coast in the Bhitara Kanika Sanctuary, Orissa District, India, is the world's largest rookery for olive ridley sea turtles *Lepidochelys olivacea*. In 1997, however, the mass nesting events, which normally take place in early January and April, failed to occur. Mating aggregations took place off the coast of the sanctuary in October 1996, as normal, but the turtles did not lay their eggs. Offshore fishing is thought to be partly to blame and, despite a ban on fishing within 20 km of the coast between October and April, hundreds of trawlers and gill-netters operated illegally in the area throughout the closed season of 1996–97. Thousands of turtles were entangled in these nets and more than 4000 dead turtles, and several dolphins, were washed ashore during the nesting season. The Orissa Government has recently declared Gahirmatha Beach a marine sanctuary with the hope of providing this endangered turtle with safe habitat.

Source: *Marine Turtle Newsletter*, January 1998, No. 79, 1–4 & 32.

Fish in the Western Ghats

Freshwater fish populations in the Western Ghats of India have been devastated by an outbreak of disease (Epizootic Ulceric Syndrome). Many species have been affected and *Channa striatus* has been almost wiped-out from the wetlands of Kerala. Fish have also suffered losses due to large-scale deforestation, which has lowered the water-carrying capacity of the forested areas, the use of explosives, poisons and small-mesh nets to catch

fish, and the construction of dams, which are especially damaging to the hill stream fishes. The present status and distribution of freshwater fish in the Western Ghats is unknown and the Bombay Natural History Society has initiated a research project to collect information needed for fish conservation in the area.
 Source: *Species*, December 1997, 13–14.

Tiger predation of rhinoceroses

As for rhinoceroses elsewhere poaching is a major threat to the greater Indian one-horned rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* in Kaziranga National Park, Assam, India. Conservation efforts in recent years have reduced this threat and during 1997 only 12 rhinos were killed by poachers in the park. However, data collected from 1985 to 1995 has revealed that tiger *Panthera tigris* predation is the second largest threat to the rhino population after poaching. In the 11-year period 178 rhinos were killed by tigers in the park, 149 (83.7 per cent) of them calves. Studies on tiger predation are continuing.
 Source: Bibhab Kumar Talukdar and Nilom Bora, Aaranyak Nature Club, EVER GREEN, Samanwoy Path (survey), PO Beltola, Guwahati-781 028, Assam, India.

New frogs in India ...

Three new species of frog have been described from India: *Limnonectes orissaensis* from Orissa State, *Nyctibatrachus vasanthi* from Tamil Nadu, and *Philautus sanctisilvaticus* from the headwaters of the Narmada and Sone rivers in Madhya Pradesh State.
 Source: *Hamadryad*, July 1997, 22 (1), 1–8, 9–12, 21–27.