

# LifeLines from **LifeForce**

Issue No.2  
1998-1999

## Actions in India, reactions potentially worldwide

For some readers this newsletter will be the first contact from the LifeForce team in India, to others it will be the second update of our activities which have now entered their fourth year - whichever it is, we thank you for your interest and support. As you read on we hope that you may identify ways in which you can help us, the projects we are involved in or those we are about to embark upon.

The tiger is an indicator of health for the whole ecosystem it inhabits because of its position at the top of the food web. Whilst our primary focus is on tiger conservation in India, this can only be achieved by adopting an holistic approach to the welfare of villagers and preservation of the environment, which are part of global systems which ultimately sustain life on earth. Therefore whilst LifeForce is concerned with one vital area of conservation in a location which may seem extremely remote to you, your support of us indirectly contributes towards your own welfare, wherever you live on the earth.

## Personal

LifeForce has been fortunate to enjoy a steadily growing number of active supporters, some of whom you will learn about in this newsletter.

Long term associations and friendships on the ground here have helped to instil a confidence with the local people whilst giving us a greater insight into the best way of ensuring effective application of our resources. We believe that it is our presence here which differentiates us from any other charity that may operate from either a remote location or via intermediaries. As 'your representatives in the jungle' we guarantee that your hard-earned money gets through and is made best use of.

It will be no surprise to learn that LifeForce continues to need funds to achieve the targets you will read about below. However, because we have never taken any of your money from LifeForce for our own personal or living expenses, unless someone or some company / institution sponsors us, for whatever period, we cannot continue LifeForce's valuable work. To keep all of us alive for one year costs less than ten thousand pounds.

## Tiger times

We continue to investigate tiger activity at our base next to Satpura National Park in the central highlands of Madhya Pradesh. Regular visits into the jungle over the last two years have enabled us to identify some individual tigers and parts of the beats they regularly patrol. Pug mark (paw print) identification together with scent marking and scrapes (hind paw scratch marks on the tracks sometimes accompanied by scats or

droppings) all help to identify territorial claims. We have identified two tigresses in particular by their distinctive pug marks, one of which displays an unusually pointed toe, the other unusually long toes and have named them Nukila and Lumba accordingly. This ready identification enables us to keep an eye on their habits, variations in behaviour and possible extent of territory. Over a period we were able to determine that a two week beat existed and set about anticipating their future movements in the hopes of achieving a sighting. The chill of early winter mornings in India differ little from English ones and a well wrapped team, only eyes visible beneath many layers of clothing, manned our well concealed lookout position. One does not appreciate mobility until one attempts to be completely motionless and soundless for a period of hours. Parts of the body, previously unnoticed, raise a series of painful objections to enforced rigidity. Successive dawn and dusk forays into the Park nevertheless repeatedly failed to reward us with a single sighting of these cats, despite some very near misses. The threat of rigor mortis remains but our vigil continues.

Whilst we have been encouraged by the visible signs of tiger activity we are nevertheless distressed by the increasing incidence of cattle kills in and around the Park, suggesting that habitat is being degraded and the natural prey base displaced. Plans to address these problems are part of our target list.

As well as supporting those whose duty it is to protect India's wildlife (the Indian Forest Department) we also concentrate on those who share the jungle with its wildlife - local villagers - who live in



The elusive tiger - this one shot only on film (as of spring '99) in Kanha National Park

twenty five different locations around the Park. Without their understanding and support no amount of protection work will prevail. In our opinion the future of the tiger is largely in their hands. Traditionally those who suffer most from depredations and outside pressures, village people enjoy little by way of basic food resources, healthcare, education and freedom to improve their lot; yet they are the direct link between the jungle and our commercial world which exploits their distress for profit. We believe that by helping to ensure their health and survival and improving the harsh conditions which they endure, negative impacts on the forest can be reduced. By gradually illustrating the link between their health and the health of the forest we hope to encourage their assistance in it's protection and reduce if not eliminate their collusion with poachers.

### Look at what **you** have achieved this year

**Presentations** To follow up on the reference made in our last LifeLines, we undertook to make presentations to the full complement of Forest Guards and personnel within the Forest Department of Satpura National Park / Bori and Pachmarhi Sanctuaries. These presentations were aimed at putting the Guards' work into a larger context, to give them a new perspective on the importance of their work with respect to their nation



*Woods today, World tomorrow. Giving Forest Guards a broader understanding of their world*

and the world at large, as well as boosting their morale into the bargain. A number of locations around the Park were chosen and a total of around three hundred Forest Department personnel attended. At some of these presentations the guards were asked what equipment they needed to do their work to maximum effect. From their responses, six Gypsy 4WD vehicles and accommodation (to keep them and their families together in remote locations) were identified as the priorities. Gypsies cost the best part of £5,000 each and accommodation blocks housing 4 families cost approx. £12,000 each. LifeForce has already purchased the first two Gypsies. Some requests from the guards for published transcripts of the presentations were received as well as invitations to give further talks at educational establishments and institutions within a fifty mile radius. On our behalf Archana Gour put sterling work into Hindi translations at the

presentations and for the transcripts which have now been made available to the guards. The resulting booklet explaining why tiger conservation is people conservation comprises 16 sides of A4 including diagrams and is available to any interested reader on application to the LifeForce London address, for £5,000 - or any amount above or below! (providing it is not less than £3.00 - the cost of production and postage)



*Pile of '98. Class of '99, project completed*

**Schoolrooms** A short term project, which because of labour difficulties became long term but nevertheless is now complete, was the rebuilding of a set of classrooms for a local school which teaches Forest Guards' and other village children. The building, which should have been completed before the rains last year is now ready for their onslaught this year and again, we have the efforts of local individuals to thank. Donations from England, coordinated by Mrs Heather Cremer-Evans have helped to equip the schoolrooms with basic materials such as blackboards, benches and desks.

**Computers** Standard Chartered Bank must be thanked for the gift of ten non-year 2000 compliant computers. With the help of Shakir at our local computer centre who thoroughly cleaned and checked them, they have now been distributed to several educational institutions for basic training purposes.

**Compensation** LifeForce maintains it's offer to the Forest Department of compensation to villagers for cattle killed by tigers or leopards where official compensation is inadequate or delayed. We have also offered support for the programme of voluntary relocation of villages from the National Park (awaiting State Government go ahead) to ensure that villagers enjoy a planned and healthy future, thereby solving the problem of habitat degradation previously mentioned.

**Medical Camps** Following the holistic strategy outlined above, as far as your donations permit, we were extremely pleased to be able to arrange the first event in what promises to be a long term commitment to villagers' welfare. As a direct result of the tenacity and compassion of a friend in Bombay, Mr Jayasinh Mariwala we were able to enlist the time and professional skills of a team of highly qualified medical specialists (Doctors



Vibhakar, Mehta, Momaya and Shah Malkar) from The Bhatia Charity Hospital in Bombay. This team endured the rigours of life and extensive travel in the National Park to bring much needed medical care to numerous villagers and Forest Guards' families, administering to over six hundred patients over a four day period, some of whom were seriously ill. Many general health deficiencies and solutions were also identified and it is now our intention



*Open wide, Sofia dispensing with care - if only we could all take our environmental medicine as easily*



to work towards providing basic nutrition and hygiene education within the villages. The ultimate success of this landmark event will lie in the follow up to many cases, some sixty plus of which need care ranging from cataract operations through to hysterectomy. We are assured of the continuing support of Bhatia Hospital, not only for further camps but also for the backup necessary to turn diagnosed conditions into cures. For this undertaking we can only extend our heartfelt thanks. We were also extremely fortunate to enjoy the support and considerable efforts of a number of volunteers, Archana Gour, Andrew Morgan, Sofia Spirou, Aashik Khan and Vikish Sharma without whose hard work the camps would never have been the success they were. For our part as the architects of this event it was a truly humbling experience to witness teamwork from such a disparate group sharing a common commitment with no other incentive than helping one's fellow humans.



Your support could help this child walk again

"If every man would mend a man, then all mankind were mended." (Anon).

### The things people do

Whilst we have been active in India there has been a considerable amount of effort on the part of individuals elsewhere which gives us the ability to continue our work:- from the invaluable silent support of Bob Dearsley, Anne Lovell and Cathy Rustom who enable LifeForce London to function, the constant work and enthusiasm of Giles Clark, the eccentric activities of the Cain and Reeve families who cast aside all thoughts of personal discomfort to brave the outdoors on fundraising events, the magnanimous donation by Juliet Roper-Caldbeck of a Gypsy 4WD vehicle to LifeForce which has transformed our ability to work effectively, Jane Simms of Beasley & Christopher who has strengthened our links with Ecover, Lex Hiby of Conservation Research Limited who took time out from his computerised tiger I.D. programme to visit (leaving his scooter for us) and

numerous associations with people who have made a difference such as Geoffrey Liley, Joanne Finch, John Quinn, John Barnes, Theresa Gardner, Chris Howard, and companies such as Ecover, Securicor, Qm., Sillson Communications, Dyer family printers and B.A. (who kindly supplied a couple of flights).



Thoughts turned into actions. The Cain family on the streets for LifeForce

The lengths that some of you have gone to in order to raise funds for LifeForce has been an education in itself and greatly appreciated by all of us. Whilst we would not advocate too many extended periods of sponsored starvation such as Anna Jones endured we are sure that if you are inclined towards a little creative thought then whatever you raise will make a difference to the plight of the tiger - whether it's ensuring that Nukila's habitat is protected or a little child walks again, every coin will make a difference, every note will help right a wrong.

In April '99 we received our largest ever single donation of £2400 from Doctor Enid A. Marshall to whom we are most grateful, as well as to the wonderful organisation she used to make the donation: ShareGift, brainchild of the Orr Mackintosh Foundation, of 24 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH, which offers to collect all those small and stray shares which sometimes litter people's

investment portfolios and would cost the owner more to sell than they are worth. ShareGift collect these remnants as donations from their owners, turn them into money and distribute it to selected charities. As co-founder Clare Mackintosh says, "We do not appeal to people's charitable instincts but their 'tidy' ones." (For more information Tel 0171 461 4501 Fax 0171 461 4479)

Annie Henry organised presentations of our work at her home (as well as graciously accommodating LifeForce members when in London during the summer) and gigs of the Dogmandu Band in local pubs to raise money whilst Juliet and Rory are throwing open their gardens to the public in a fundraising effort. Our heartfelt and sincere thanks to each and every one - could you possibly do anything to help us or help LifeForce?

### Targets 2000 and what you could achieve!

Above all we must help to change attitudes, increase awareness and modify practices which are harmful to the environment if the tiger, and perhaps humans, are to survive.

The vital and overwhelming need to ensure our own personal survival in India must be a priority.

Our target of the remaining four Gypsies for the Forest Department needs a big boost if we are to achieve it.

Guard's family accommodation comes high on the list and will depend solely on the level of donations we receive.

*The first of many? Only you can help.*



Ongoing medical care via camps, village visits and follow up activities can only happen if we secure sponsorship for travel, surgery, villages and villagers.

Educational support in the form of school equipment is always on our wish list.

If you choose to help, most of the above targets don't require you to do anything more than support us financially by kindly completing the panel on this page. Although the above may seem like a catalogue of requests for you to help us, there are a number of things which you can do to help yourself if you are truly concerned about the quality of life for you and your family at home.

On a personal level it was not until faced with the dilemma of disposing of rubbish and the absence of any 'dustman' that we were faced with the implacable truth that there is no 'away' to which things are thrown. So we have adopted the following practices: We refuse polythene

bags from shop vendors to carry our purchases in. We encourage every form of recycling which, because of India's inherent poverty, is well established (does our Western affluence breed 'waste' in every sense, that will eventually lead to the 'want' that the proverb relating the two predicts?). So, every month or so Cherrie will load up the cart of the tin and bottle wallah and pocket the filthy and ragged recycled 5 rupee note paid in exchange, reflecting on who could have emptied all the beer bottles balanced on the rickety old cart creaking out of our gate. All our kitchen waste is effectively cleared by the stray dogs which have adopted us, the wandering and ubiquitous cows of India and a range of furred and scaled visitors. The only item which confounds us are the plastic ones. Burying, burning or hiding do not remove the problem - reduction of volumes used and responsibility in purchasing does. In the West convenience immunises us from the reality but not the problem or effects of massive and increasing waste disposal requirements. Even if you already have

your own solutions to similar problems, the following section may still interest you, a plastics and pollution solution.

### The Bigger LifeForce

In each issue we will focus on just one aspect which will make a beneficial difference to your world. For this issue - cleaning up when you clean up: Ecover cleaning products are as environmentally friendly as is currently possible, as is the factory which produces them and the biodegradable plastic containers which hold them. We enclose a product summary of ingredients Ecover will and will not use and why. Approximately 90% of existing products contain known harmful ingredients, casting our whole system of government and commerce into a disturbing light - how can dangerous poisons be knowingly sold in vast tonnages to the detriment of every living thing on earth, including the vendors? The answer, we believe, involves abuse of power, irresponsibility, misconceived self interest, short term perspectives and greed, compounded at every level by apathy - producing, literally and metaphorically, poison. You can help change this by choosing how you spend your money - all the formidable array of problems just mentioned are rendered irrelevant to this particular issue if they cannot sell the poison they make: if you don't buy it, they won't make it.

Some of the Ecover range is available in supermarkets while a more extensive range is available in health food shops. Beware other supermarket 'green' brands which are not as completely harmless as Ecover. Many companies are now exploiting the 'green' market niche but are still willing to make other, environmentally harmful, products - provided they sell. Perhaps, we need to re-evaluate our perspective on what is truly important - can anyone justify helping to dismantle and destroy the life support system of the planet for the sake of a cleaning agent, especially when an alternative is available? On the positive side, its a great feeling to know that even in the simple act of pouring your washing-up water away, you are not harming your environment, yourself, your children, your tigers (for all things are connected) or your world. So here is a simple choice you can make next time you go shopping and help every living thing on earth without changing your lifestyle.

Perhaps summing up the principle underlying much of this issue of LifeLines we would like to remind you of the slogan coined, we believe, by Friends of the Earth or Greenpeace:

"Think globally, act locally".

### I would like to extend a lifeline to LifeForce

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms.....Initials.....Surname.....

Address.....

Postcode.....Tel.(inc.STD).....

I would like to make a single donation of £..... to help protect tigers in the wild and I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to: 'LifeForce'  
(Please send direct to our London office)

I would like to make a regular donation to help protect tigers in the wild  
(Please send a copy to the LifeForce office or the original which we will forward to your bank)

£2  £5  £10  £20  £50  Other

Frequency (eg. Monthly):.....

First Payment Date : 4th.....(month)

Expiry date:.....(or until further notice)

Account to be debited:

Name:.....

Address:.....

Bank / Branch Name and Address.....

Sort Code:.....Account Number.....

Signature(s).....

Please pay: **The Cooperative Bank, Olympic House, 6 Olympic Court, Montford Street, Salford, M5 2QP**

Sort Code: **089250** Beneficiary: **LifeForce** Account Number: **65031742 50**

**LifeForce Charitable Trust**