

## **Project Update: March 2006**

1. We have successfully assisted the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department in establishing a new high altitude wildlife reserve called the HH Tsangyang Gyatso Biosphere Reserve. This reserve has been established in the high altitudes of Western Arunachal Pradesh that was identified to be a very important biodiversity area during our expeditions in the region in 2003, which were also supported by the Rufford Foundation. You might recall that the expeditions, among other species, had resulted in the discovery of the Arunachal Macaque, *Macaca munzala*, a species new to science. The proposal for the Biosphere Reserve, which we assisted the state government to develop under the current project, has recently been approved by the Government of India.

2. One of the important conservation threats in this region is the conflict between the local pastoral people and endangered wild carnivores including the snow leopard *Uncia uncia* and the dhole *Cuon alpinus*. This is due to the significant financial losses incurred by the local communities due to livestock depredation, and the high levels of retaliatory persecution of these carnivores. We have completed human wildlife conflict surveys of over 60 villages in this region, documented the extent of losses, the persecution of carnivores, and outlined the efforts needed to address this conflict. The final data analysis and report writing is going on, and the results will become by June. The report will be used to develop a conflict management programme for the region, to promote peoples' tolerance towards the carnivores, and to integrate them with conservation efforts.

3. The initial exploration project, and this subsequent continuation grant have so far led to three scientific publications (which will be a part of the final report) including international journals such as *Oryx* and the *International Journal of Primatology*, and the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*. At least two other papers/ articles are expected published from the data currently being analysed.