

ELEPHANT FOUND DEAD

A few days ago, the skeleton of a fully grown elephant was found inside the Similipal Tiger Reserve.

When The Telegraph spoke up chief wildlife warden Suresh Mohanty, he said “ I am unaware of the incident. I will try to find out what happened from my staff before saying anything “

In the Similipal Poaching case, the department was quick to suspend a forester and a guard, the lowest in the hierarchy. In the joda case, Mohanty ruled out the possibility of suspensions as the elephants were “not victims of poaching ”

Source : The Telegraph, dt. 09.10.2006

POACHING SHADOW : ELEPHANT FOUND WITH ITS TUSKS CUT OFF

Wildlife Week came to end today, but there was a little to cheer about as reports of animal killings from the forest of Orissa threatened to cast a shadow on the celebrations.

On Friday, the skeleton of an elephant with its tusks sliced off was discovered at Similipal in Mayurbhanj district, raising concerns over poaching inside the protected forest.

Well – placed sources in the wildlife hub said villagers found fully – grown skeleton of a male elephant, aged between 35 – 40 years, near a canal. The spot was around 5 km from Lulung, a popular picnic spot in the forest.

The villagers brought the matter to the notice of forest officials, who went to the spot and took the remains of the elephant into custody.

Though the forest officials remained tightlipped about the discovery, the villagers pointed out that the tusker could have fallen prey to poachers’ guns or was killed by getting the salt pools, which the elephants frequently visit, poisoned.

Chief wildlife warden Suresh Mohanty was not aware of the tusker find. “ I have received no information yet but I’m trying to contact my staff inside the reserve,” he said, following a spate of calls by The Telegraph.

Yesterday, Mohanty said anti – poaching measures had been straightened with deployment of 150 special officials. Project director of the Similipal Tiger Reserve Debabrata Swain could not be contacted.

During 2004 – 05, 69 elephants died in Orissa but the department registered only 14 cases of poaching and made arrested in only nine offences.

Source : The Telegraph, Bhubaneswar. Dt. Oct. 2

FOUR POACHERS ARRESTED IN SIMILIPAL; IVORY SEIZED

Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) officials have arrested four tribal poachers from three villages located inside the reserve last Thursday after a three – day combing operation.

The poachers were identified as Basudev Singh, Mangal Singh, Jitu Singh & Makra Singh and were believed to be involved in the killing of a bull elephant the carcass of which was found on the bank of a hill stream near Digdiga under Pithabata Range of the STR.

According to STR Field Director Debabrata Swain altogether eight pieces of ivory, weighing a little over five kgs. Two country – made guns and a bottle of poison were seized from the arrested poachers.

Earlier, the STR authorities had placed a forester and two forest guards under suspension for dereliction of duty and their failure in locating the carcass in time.

Referring to the bottle of poison, Mr. Swain said details will be known after investigation were completed.

Conservationists and animal lover were worried over the risks and vulnerability to which the prime bull elephants, with their prized tusks, are exposed in the Similipal reserve.

Conservationists have said recorded evidence confirmed that the tribal poachers in Similipal were accustomed to the use of a deadly poison obtained from a plant called “aconite”, belonging to “renunculaceous” genus.

In the early 1990s, the then Assistant Field Director of the STR, Bitanath Naik, had confirmed that tribal poachers had smeared sharp blades, fixed to their arrow heads, with this poison and liquidated a Similipal tusker.

Beside its status as a tiger reserve, Similipal constitutes part of Mayurbhanj Elephant Reserve, one of the legally constituted elephant reserves of Orissa where the pachyderms are in peril, the conservationists feared.

Source : UNI, Oct.13' 2006