

The month of November was as far as IUCN is concerned, dominated by the Council meeting in Delhi. IUCN's outgoing president Ashok Khosla invited us all over to his fascinating country which was fascinating for its unique combination of nature and culture. In what other densely populated country can we see wild animals like monkeys quietly passing by while car-drivers are losing patience and blowing their horns during traffic-jams? Unfortunately, I could not enjoy much of India outside Delhi because I had to go to Mali for a project evaluation in the Timbuktu-region. A project that restores wetland ecosystems at the edge of the Sahara desert, building hope for a large number of people surviving in that beautiful but harsh setting. It was sad that while I was there a number of visitors were taken hostage. I do hope that such acts do not scare off donors. The poor people of Timbuktu should not be robbed of a brighter future because of discontent inspired by global conflicts.

#### ***CEM matters***

At the time that I am writing this, the decisions are coming in on the WCC-Jeju programme. I do not envy the organisers at this moment. There are such good suggestions for the programme that one would like to have them all on board, and still a majority have to be turned down simply because the time is too short. I do receive requests for help, and I promise to do my utmost for you, but as for the outcome of the process, I must be a bit modest about my potential influence on the final decision.

#### ***From the Thematic Groups***

The Ecosystem Red List is going strongly. Jon Paul and his team, with gratefully acknowledged support from the secretariat, have landed a large project from the Moore Foundation which will give their/our work on the RLE a big boost. We are very grateful to this Foundation for their wisdom and vision to support this new development that is exciting so many people around the world, researchers and policy-makers alike.

Karen Sudmeier, Theme leader on Disaster Risk Reduction, obtained her PhD from the University of Lausanne on a Disaster Management related thesis. Having a family life, doing PhD research and still leading one of our more successful thematic groups: Congratulations Karen!!

The Fisheries Expert Group has come to an agreement with a publisher to produce a book on Fisheries and Conservation Governance.

We found Dr. Subir K. Ghosh willing to take up the challenge of leading our thematic group on capacity building. Dr. Ghosh holds a PhD in aquatic ecology and is actually working in environmental education in India. He has got off to a very enthusiastic start and I am looking forward to the realization of the ideas that Dr. Ghosh will put forward for this important thematic group.

#### ***From the Regions***

The French National Committee is recruiting three young professionals for a stage in ecosystem management.

Ms. Mo Essen, a new CEM Intern (PhD student) from the University of Moscow (Idaho, USA) is writing a report on results of the McCall workshop on "Resilience of Social-Ecological Systems".

*General IUCN-matters*

**From Council in India, all the best wishes for you for 2012!**



*Question: Why do Canadian councilors always watch the sky?*