

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE STATE BOARD FOR WILDLIFE HELD ON 21-12-2009 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER, J&K STATE IN THE MEETING HALL, 2ND FLOOR, CIVIL SECRETARIAT JAMMU.

The first meeting of the State Board for Wildlife was held on 21st December, 2009 under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Chief Minister. The list of members and others who were present is attached at Annexure-I.

The meeting started with a brief presentation made by the Commissioner/Secretary to Government, Forest Department, J&K, Jammu highlighting the background of the status of the wildlife conservation in the Jammu & Kashmir State. Thereafter the Board discussed the Agenda set for the meeting.

Agenda No: 1 Constitution of a Standing Committee.

The Board considered the constitution of the Standing Committee and approved to recommend it to the Government to set up this committee as proposed in the Agenda. However, it was suggested that an officer of the rank of the IG, Police or above should be included in the Standing committee as well as an NGO representative from outside the State

Agenda No: 2 Revision of Entry fee and rates charged for shooting of films and documentaries in the Protected Areas of the State.

After discussion, the Board recommended that this proposal should be reviewed by the Wildlife Protection Department and should be placed before the Standing Committee for decision.

Agenda No: 3 Handling of Man-Wild Animal Conflict Situations.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister observed that in the man-animal conflict one should also see that casualty of wild animal should also be prevented and that both damage to human and animal life should be kept in mind while managing the conflict.

- a) The Board decided to recommend to the Government for issuing the orders for ensuring cooperation of the District Administration, Police Department, Forest (Territorial) Department, Forest Protection Force to assist while handling the man-animal conflict

in the State in view of the paucity of the staff in the Wildlife Department.

- b) The Board considered the proposal regarding creating the conflict resolution squads. The Board decided that this proposal may be reviewed and put up to the Government and it may be considered whether such force should be raised through Gram Sabha or village eco-development committees.
- c) It was also suggested to examine if a part of CAMPA funds could be utilized for this purpose. The Board observed that this proposal was required to be revised and extra item such as Helicopter should be excluded. The Board also recommended that the scheme may be renamed as Rescue and Rehabilitation Scheme.
- d) It was also suggested that the assistance of the security forces may also be sought for dealing with this conflict.

Agenda No: 4 Ex-gratia / Compensation for loss of Life / Livestock / Crop.

The Board agreed that the orders regarding rate of compensation for loss of life and property injuries and livestock killing should be issued. However, there was no agreement on compensation for crop damage which Board recommended to be examined further.

The Board also recommended that financial allocation of Rs. 1.20 Crores for settling the old outstanding claims for the period prior to 2005 should be made urgently by the Finance Department.

Agenda No: 5 Determination / Settlement of Rights in the National Parks and Sanctuaries.

The Board advised that the entire process of determination of rights should be completed within a period of six months to apprise the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The question of payment of compensation for acquisition of land rights was also raised and it was felt that it might involve huge financial implications. Chief Secretary pointed out to notification of large areas of Ladakh as Protected Areas which led to agitation. The Board felt that next time the notification should be done with care. The issue of relocation of villages should be looked into before the final notification. The Board decided that a detailed status note on the subject should be prepared and a meeting should be taken by Chief Secretary on this issue.

Agenda No: 6 Proposal for setting up of a Asia's Largest Solar Telescope by Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore near Pangong Lake in Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary, Ladakh.

While discussing this item, some members raised the issue of possibility of further expansion if such a project is approved at the Pangong Lake, as has been done at Hanle. Members agreed that the construction of this project may cause damage to the eco-system. It was also felt that there should be specific conditions that no expansion or land use change allowed after the project construction. Following decisions were reached:-

- a) A committee should be set up under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary for high level discussion.
- b) A feasibility study should be prepared.
- c) Independent Environment Impact Assessment study should be carried out to assess adverse ecological impacts due to the proposed project. With this, decision of the proposal was deferred.

Agenda No: 7 Proposal for diversion of Protected Area Land for construction of Chusumle-Demchock Road passing through Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary, Ladakh.

- a) This proposal was discussed and the Board recommended to send it to the National Board for Wildlife with additional conditions as proposed by Dr. M. K. Ranjitsinh, Chairman, WTI. The additional conditions are as follows:-
 - 1. The BRO shall be responsible for the conduct of the manpower that would be deployed for the projects during the entire period of execution. The workers will be housed in locations that would be approved by the Conservator Wildlife, Ladakh and would not cause any undue disturbance nor fire; and will not poach wildlife nor cut or remove any vegetation.
 - 2. As human habitation is invariably followed by dogs which harass and even kill wildlife, it must be ensured that domestic dogs do not live in any labour camps or any habitation created for these projects.

3. No quarrying for stones shall be permissible in the Sanctuary.
 4. As far as possible, the cut and fill method for widening and construction of road should be employed.
 5. Only controlled blasting, if necessary, should be undertaken, and all disturbances should be minimized to the extent possible.
- b) While discussing this proposal the issue of road of the track running through the Kalak-Tartar also came up on which concerns were raised about survival of Tibetan Gazelle (Gowa).

It was pointed out that only about 30-35 is the population of (Gowa) (Tibetan Gazelle) in the upland bowl called Kalak-Tartar through which the track runs from Hanle to Zarsar. PWD have been trying to construct road on this track through this area which is threatening survival of species. The movement of vehicles through this track is the main cause of disturbance in the population of this species.

The survival of the Gowa in Western Himalayas depends upon the maintenance of the sanctity of Kalak-Tartar. Operating a road right through Kalak-Tartar not only allows personnel to perhaps take pot shots at the animals but it disturbs them whenever a vehicle passes through the bowl, which would be even more harmful in the winter months when food is scarce and the animals are driven away from the valley bottom where the food is and where the road runs.

The following suggestions were made in this regard:-

- a. The present road /track running through Kalak-Tartar must be diverted through another adjacent valley.
- b. The conservation of the Gowa must be a joint responsibility of both the Govt. of J&K and the Armed forces deployed there.
- c. The State Govt. must appoint by designation officers of the armed forces deployed in the area, as honorary wildlife Wardens of the regions concerned.

- d. The armed forces should make Goa as an emblem; just as some units have done in the case of black-necked crane, the ibex, etc.
- e. There should be more awareness in the armed forces and interaction between the armed forces and wildlife authorities.
- f. The grazing by livestock in Kalak-Tartar should be banned if possible, failing which at least restricted.
- g. The wildlife authorities at least should have a wildlife guard in Hanle, with the specific charge of protecting the Goa and other wildlife in the Hanle valley. At present there is only one guard in the whole of the Changthang.

The Board accepted these suggestions and recommended that Government should take necessary action in this regard

Agenda No: 8 Proposal for laying of 220 KV D/C Zainakote-Alsteng Mir Bazar Transmission Line (ZAMTL) via Zabarwan Hills.

Board agreed to recommend for sending it to the National Board for Wildlife.

Agenda No: 9 Matters relating to Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.

- a. It was approved to associate the representative to the Crime Control Bureau in the meeting of the State Board for Wildlife in future.
- b. Board recommended to examine the possibility of amendment to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1978 to create a State Level Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.

Agenda No: 10 Identification of critical Wildlife Habitat including constitution and functions of expert committee, scientific information required and resettlement and matters incidental thereto.

- a. Board approved for constitution of a State Level Committee for identification of critical wildlife habitats and suggested that the committee should be broad based and even non-official members like Mr. A.R. Wani and Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh and some others may be members of the committee.
- b. More critically endangered species be included like wild yak, Gowa, Argali, Brown Bear, Himalayan Tahr and Western Tragopan etc.
- c. The Board also recommended that a State Wildlife Action Plan should be developed giving road map, and resources required etc for conservation of wildlife in the State.

Agenda No: 11 Strengthening of the Wildlife Protection Department.

Board agreed in principle to strengthen the Wildlife Protection Department and recommended setting up a committee to examine this important matter.

Meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

List of Members and other officers

1. Mian Altaf Ahmad, Hon'ble Minister for Forests, Environment & Wildlife
2. Shri Nasir Aslam Wani (Sogami), Hon'ble Minister of State, Housing & Urban Development, PHE, Tourism, Revenue & Relief
3. Shri Abdul Gani Vakil, Hon'ble MLC
4. Ch. Gulzar Bajar, Rezin Kangan
5. Ch. Mohammad Rafiq Baken, Jindra, Jammu
6. Shri S.S. Kapur, IAS Chief Secretary, J&K Government
7. Shri Kuldeep Khoda, IPS Director General of Police, J&K Government
8. Shri Shantmanu, IAS Commissioner/Secretary to Government, Forests Department.
9. Smt. Tanveer Jahan, IAS, Secretary, Tourism Department.
10. Shri B.D. Sharma, IAS Secretary Sheep Husbandry Department.
11. Shri Mohammad Yaseen, Additional Secretary to Government, Social Welfare Department.
12. Shri Irshad A. Khan, IFS Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Department of Wildlife Protection.
13. Shri Jagdish Kishwan, IFS Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial).
14. Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh, Chairman, WTI, New Delhi
15. Shri A. R. Wani, Retired PCCF & CWLW
16. Shri P. P. Sharma, Retired PCCF & CWLW
17. Dr. C. M. Seth, Retired Chairman PCB
18. Brig. C. B. L. Sahel, Representative of Army, Northern Command

19. Shri Kartik Satyanarayan, Co-founder, Wildlife SOS New Delhi
20. Shri Parikshit Gautam, Director, WWF-India
21. Dr. Dhananjai Mohan, Representative of WII Dehradun
22. Dr. J. R. Sharma, Joint Director, Botanical Survey of India

Besides above the following officers were also present:

01. Shri Khursheed Ahmad Ganie, Principal Secretary to HCM
02. Col. Vinay Mehta, Representative of Army, Northern Command
03. Dr. Rahul Kaul, Director WTI
04. Shri Deepak Khanna, Chief Conservator of Forests Ecotourism / Wildlife
05. Shri P. K. Singh, Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Jammu
06. Shri Jigmet Takpa, Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Ladakh