

MINUTES OF THE 10TH STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF PROJECT ELEPHANT

The 10th meeting of the Steering Committee of Project Elephant was held on 18.07.2006 in Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister of Environment and Forests.

List of participants is annexed.

Before taking up the discussion of Agenda Items a book titled "Turtles of the Indian Sub-continent" was released by Hon'ble Minister. This book was outcome of the GOI, UNDP Sea Turtle Project during the years 1999-2003. This book was edited by Dr. B.C. Choudhary of WII and Dr. Kartik Shanker, the then Research Associate in the Project. Dr. Ravi Chellam of the UNDP gave a brief outline of the book.

Hon'ble Minister welcomed all the members of the newly constituted Steering Committee in its first meeting and thereafter discussion was taken upon the agenda items.

Agenda Item No. 1

Confirmation of the minutes of the 9th meeting of the Steering Committee.

The minutes of the 9th meeting of the Steering Committee were confirmed.

Agenda Item No. 2

Action taken on the recommendations made in the 9th meeting

(i) Taking discussion on this agenda item Chief Wildlife Wardens of some of the States stated that the issue of compensation for crop damage is a major problem. They were of the view that Ministry should re-explore the possibility of covering compensation through Agriculture Insurance Schemes or Insurance Schemes of the Companies. It was explained by Secretary (E&F) that this issue has been discussed with Ministry of Agriculture Insurance Companies and it may not be possible to cover this

under the Insurance Scheme. However the States can discuss this issue with local Insurance Company and in case any Insurance Company agrees to cover the crop damage under their schemes they can inform this to the Ministry. Minister of Environment & Forests agreeing to the views of the State Government that compensation is a major issue, offered to take up the matter with Planning Commission for an enhanced outlay in the 11th Plan to meet the ex-gratia payment. The DGF & SS stressed upon the state representative that the matter needs to be taken up by them with their Governments also to meet the requirement of fund for insurance from State Budget.

(ii) The committee was of the view that amendment in Section 43 of the Wildlife Act to remove restrictions on sale and purchase of elephants should be done immediately in view of the fact that a lot of captive elephants are suffering because of this ban. Minister of Environment & Forests directed that the matter should be pursued on priority with Ministry of Law so that amendment is in place.

Agenda Item No. 3

Finalization of enumeration of elephants in elephant reserves done in 2005.

Director (Project Elephant) informed the Committee that in the Census Report given in Annexure IV, figures in respect of some of the Elephants Reserves are missing as the information had not been received from the respective States. However, now it has been received which has been circulated and the figures in respect of these Elephant Reserves are as follows:

Mayurjharna	-	96
Eastern Dooars	-	300-350
Garo Hills	-	1047
Mysore	-	4452
Shivalik	-	1610

It was also explained by Director (PE) that the enumeration figures of 2005 cannot be compared with the figures of 2002 census as this is the first time enumeration has been carried out in Elephant Reserves. The figure of the 2002 census has been taken from the State's census figures. It was also

explained by Director (PE) that the 2005 figures given in Annexure IV pertains to Block sampling method only. The census figures obtained from the State by Dung decay rate are being analyzed.

Secretary (E &F) suggested that like Tiger census, elephant census should also be done on scientific methods in future for which appropriate methodology should be developed. It was decided that Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun in consultation with experts involved in the last year census on new methodology should further refine the census methodology.

Agenda Item No. 4

Progress of Elephant Reserves

Director (PE) apprised the members of the committee that now notified Elephant Reserves in the country is 25 and Government of India has given approval for notification of three more ERs viz. Baitarni and South Orissa in Orissa and Ganga-Jamuna in U.P. but the State Governments are yet to notify these reserves. Proposal for two more ERs namely Khasi hills in Meghalaya and Deomali in Arunachal Pradesh is under consideration of the Ministry. In case of Khasi Hills wanting informations have just been received and are being processed but for Deomali similar informations are awaited from the State. It was decided to pursue with States of Orissa and UP for notification of the ERs and with Arunachal Pradesh to furnish wanting informations.

Agenda Item No. 5

Request for funding under the PE Scheme from non-PE States like Chattisgarh and Maharashtra.

The committee was of the view that it is necessary to provide technical and financial assistance to States like Chattisgarh, Maharashtra Goa and all other States adjoining Project Elephant States where wild elephant population frequently moves. It was also decided that proposal of the Government of Chattisgarh for creation of Elephant Reserve should be re-examined by experts.

Agenda Item No. 6**Creation of rescue centre for elephants.**

The concept of creation of rescue centre for elephants was welcomed by all the members of the Committee. Director (PE) informed the members of the committee that preliminary meeting to discuss the concept has been convened on 19th July, 2006 and model guideline for rescue centers will be framed so as to facilitate the State Governments in creating such centers. DGF & Special Secretary opined that there is a necessity to create such centers for captive elephants and and pleaded with the Chairman that Government of India must provide necessary support to states in creating such centers.

Agenda Item No. 7**Revising guidelines for problematic elephants.**

Director (PE) informed the Committee that Ministry has already received comments from Shri M.K. Appayya & Shri S. Chowdhary which has been circulated to the members. However, the Ministry is yet to be received views from third member Shri Subimal Roy. There was general agreement that guidelines needs to be revised/ updated . However, CWLW, Tamil Nadu suggested that there are different methods of capturing wild elephants in Tamil Nadu which also should be taken into consideration while revising the guidelines. It was decided that after receipt of inputs from the experts, the draft guideline should be framed and circulated to all the members for their comments before finalising the same . Director (PE) requested all the CWLWs including CWLW of Tamil Nadu to send details of the different models existing in their State.

Agenda Item No. 8**Agenda items suggested by members of the Steering Committee**

Director (PE) informed the Committee that CWLW, Karnataka had faxed a letter informing his inability to attend the meeting because of the on-going Assembly Session. It was also explained by Director (PE) that Ministry has not received any feed back from CWLW, Karnataka on the agenda item suggested by Dr. S Vincent regarding elephant corridors in Karnataka. It was decided that the same should be obtained from CWLW,

Karnataka and sent to Dr. S. Vincent for his perusal. Since Dr. K.C. Panicker was not present in the meeting discussion on the agenda items suggested by him could not be discussed. On the agenda item suggested by Shri P.K. Ghosh CWLW, Uttaranchal had circulated a detailed status report which was circulated to all the members in the meeting. Mr. Ghosh expressed satisfaction on the status report submitted by CWLW, Uttaranchal. CWLW, Uttaranchal apprised that Ministry of Defence has already identified land for relocation of Raiwala ammunition dump and they are likely to submit proposal under Forest Conservation Act for diversion of the land. He also apprised that the State Government has recommended widening of NH 58 and 72 subject to the condition that NHAI will construct two flyovers - one on NH 58 from motichur Railway Crossing towards Raiwala to link the chilla motichur corridor and other on NH 72 linking Kansaru Barkot elephant Corridor. As regards to fencing of railway track between Motichur station and Motichur Rau, he informed that Ministry of Railways has refused to supply rails free to forest department for the purpose. Minister for Environment & Forests assured the members that he will take up the matter with the Minister of Railways and Ministry of NH on supply of free rails for fencing and construction of flyovers respectively. He also assured the representative of West Bengal of similar intervention who wanted supply of free rails for fencing in West Bengal also.

Mr. Ghosh was of the view that although under the Project Elephant Scheme a lot of work is being done but somehow general masses are not aware of the activities being undertaken under this scheme. Thus there is need to give more publicity to all the efforts being made to conserve elephant's habitat and its population. He wanted involvement of NGOs in this publicity campaign.

The meeting ended with Vote of Thanks from the chair.

List of Participants in the 10th Meeting of the Steering Committee of Project Elephant on 18th July, 2006.

S. No.	Name and Designation	Address, Telephone No. & E-mail Id
1.	Minister	Environment & Forests
2	Secretary (E & F)	Ministry of Environment of Forests, New Delhi-3
3	DGF & SS	Ministry of Environment & Forests, New Delhi-3
4	Sh. A.N. Prasad IGF & Director (PE)	Ministry of Environment & Forests, New Delhi-3
5	Dr. S. Vincent Reader	Department of Advanced Zoology & Biotechnology, Loyola College, Chennai-600034 svincent_loyola@yahoo.co.in (Mob. 9444141517)
6	Sh. B.N. Talukdar Asstt. Conservator	Assam Forest Department, CF, CAC, Guwahati-1
7	Sh. R.C. Meena Director (IFD)	Ministry of Environment & Forests, New Delhi-3
8	Sh. K.S. Rao PCCF & CWLW	Dept. of Forest, Aranya Bhawan, Saifabad, Hyderabad- 500004, Mob. 9440810002
9	Sh. A.V. Joseph Addl. PCCF (WL)	Mob. 9440810012
10	Sh. S. Kumar CCF WL & CWLW	O/o PCCF, Meghalaya, Sylvan House, Lower Luchimiere, Shillong-793001. 0364-2227332
11	Sh. M.C. Malakar CWLW	Chief Conservator of forests(WL), Assam, Rehabari, Guwahati-781008. 0361-2517064(O), 2263433 (R), Mob.09864066350, pccfassam@sify.com
12	Smt. Alka Bhargava Joint Director (WL)	Ministry of Environment & Forests, New Delhi-3
13	Sh. P.R. Sinha Director	Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun. 0135-2640910 (O), 2642659 (R). dwii@wii.gov.in
14	h. V.K. Yadav Dy. Chief Wildlife Warden	Bikash Bhawan (North), 3 rd floor, Salt Lake City, kolkata- 700091. wildlife@cal.vsnl.net.in
15	P.K. Ghosh	C-1, Konark Classic, Bund garden Road, Pune-411001
16	Sh. V. Gopinathan CWLW	Forests Headquarters, trivandrum-695014 vallilgopinath@hotmail.com
17	Sh. K.D. Singh Addl. PCCF & CWLW	Chief Wildlife Warden, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar- 791111. kds_1976@yahoo.com
18	Sh. K.N. Thakur Conservator of Forest	Elephant Reserve, Singhbhum Jamshedpur
19	Dr. M.K. Saha Dy. Commissioner	Department of Animal Husbandary, Gate No.32, 1 st floor, J.N. Stadium, New Delhi-110003 Ph. No. 24635491
20	Dr. Sukhdev PCCF & CWLW	Principal Chief Conservator of Forest & Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Tamil Nadu
21	Sh. S.K. Sehrawat Addl. Resident Commissioner	4, Bordulai Marg, chankya Puri, New Delhi. 23010479
22	Sh. S. Chandola Chief Wildlife Warden	5, Chandrabani, Dehradun Ph. No.0135-2644691. E-mail: s_chandola2002@yahoo.com
23	Sh. Ajay Desai Wildlife Management Consultant	BC 84, Camp Belgaum-590001 E-mail: ajayadesai@hotmail.com