

Government of India
Ministry of Environment and Forests
(Wildlife Division)

Parvavaran Bhawan
CGO Complex, Lodhi Road
New Delhi-110003

P.No.6-43/2007 WL-I (29th Meeting)
Dated: 29th July 2013

To
All Members,
Standing Committee of NBWL.

Sub: Minutes of 29th Meeting of Standing Committee of NBWL.

Sir/Madam,

Kindly find enclosed copy of the minutes of the 29th Meeting of the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife held on 6th June 2013 in Room No.403, Parvavaran Bhawan, New Delhi.

Yours faithfully,



(Vivek Saxena)

Deputy Inspector General of Forests (WL)
Telefax: 011-24361727

Encl: As above

Distribution:

1. The Director General of Forests & Special Secretary, MoEF.
2. The Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.
3. Dr Asad Rahmani, Director, BNHS, Mumbai-23.
4. Shri Kishore Rithe, President, Satpuda Foundation, Amravati-442607.
5. The Executive Director, Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore-570 002.
6. Shri Brijendra Singh, 28, Sunder Nagar, New Delhi-110003.
7. Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh, 'Krishnasaar', No.5 Tiger Lane, W6 C Lane, Sainik Farms, New Delhi-62.
8. Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavla, "Suryodaya", 310 Gom Defence Colony, Vaishali Marg, Jaipur-302021.
9. Dr A.J.T. Johnsinh, 101 Magnolia, Esteem Gardenia, Sahakara Nagar, Bangalore-560092.
10. Ms. Prerna Bindra, Environment Journalist, 2/13, Iris, Jasmine Street, Vatika City, Sector-45, Gurgaon-122003, Haryana.

Copy to:

1. PPS to Hon ble MOS (I/C) E&F.
2. PPS to DGF&SS
3. PPS to Addl.DGF(WL) and Member Secretary, Standing Committee (NBWL)
4. PPS to IGF(WL)/PS to DIG(WL)
5. PS to JD(WL)

**Ministry of Environment and Forests
Wildlife Division**

Minutes of the 29th Meeting of the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife held on 6th June 2013 in Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi.

The 29th Meeting of the Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) was held on 6th June 2013 in the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), New Delhi, under the of Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment and Forests. The list of participants is at **Annexure-1**. Chairperson extended welcome to the participants.

The agenda items were then opened for discussion.

Agenda No. 1:

Confirmation of the minutes of the 28th Meeting of Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife held on 20th March 2013.

The Member-Secretary informed the committee that the draft minutes of the 28th Meeting of Standing Committee of NBWL, held on 20th March 2013 were circulated to the members on 23rd April 2013 for their comments within two weeks as decided in the 24th Meeting of the Standing Committee. The comments that were received were appropriately incorporated in the minutes and the final minutes were circulated to all members on 17th May 2013. Further comments were received on the final minutes from Ms. Purna Bindra and Shri Kishor Rithe.

It was decided that the comments may be taken as noted in the minutes of the 29th meeting and could be appended to the minutes of the 29th meeting. This was agreed to by the members. The minutes of the 28th meeting were thereafter confirmed.

Agenda No. 2: Action Taken Report

The Member-Secretary informed that Action Taken Report for the following four proposals were received and could be considered by the committee:

Item 4.2(17): Repair & upgradation of existing road passing through Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary from Tendukheda-Taradehi Maharajpur road km.26, 27, 28/2-4-6, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37 & 38/2=7.80 Km, Madhya Pradesh.

4.2 (18): Diversion of 25.4 ha of forest land from Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary for widening and upgradation of existing Tendukhera-Patan-Rehli road (SH-15A) (km.78/8 to 99/10=21.4 kms) passing through Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh.

The Member Secretary informed that in pursuance to the decision taken in the 28th meeting of Standing Committee of NBWL, Dr.M.K. Ranjitsinh had carried out site

inspections of the above two road sections and had submitted the site inspection report. He added that Dr. Ranjitsinh had recommended the two proposals subject to certain conditions.

The members agreed with the recommendations made by Dr. Ranjitsinh in his site inspection report. The Committee, therefore, unanimously recommended both the above proposals subject to the following conditions, as suggested by Dr. Ranjitsinh:

- i. *The maintenance and repair would be at the existing levels of width of both black-topping and shoulder-sand slopes.*
- ii. *All the material required for maintenance and repair, including moorum, metal, soil etc. and fuel for heating the tar, would be brought from outside the **Sanctuary**. No "borrow pits" for metal, moorum or soil would be permitted in the Sanctuary premises.*
- iii. *All points where the road is traversed by animal trails, and places where animals are expected to cross the roads to reach water for drinking, should have speed breakers. If there is a need, underpasses below the road would also be provided for passage of animals. The site selections in all these cases would be done by the officer in charge of the Sanctuary.*
- iv. *The officer-in-charge of the Sanctuary may prescribe a speed limit of vehicles passing on the roads traversing the Sanctuary.*
- v. *The PWD will put up signages for speed limit, prohibition on blowing of horns, warning of animal crossings and others deemed necessary by the Sanctuary authorities.*
- vi. *The Sanctuary authorities should place manned chowkies at the exit and entry points of both these roads and extra vigilance will have to be exercised at night, especially in view of the fact that illicit extraction of timber was noticed in the Sanctuary.*

5(1) Proposal for construction of Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) at Panvel aluk, District. Raigad in Maharashtra in 10 km eco-sensitive zone/Area (ESA) of Karnala Bird sanctuary (KBS)

The Member Secretary informed the committee that this proposal was discussed during the 28th Meeting of Standing Committee of NBWL and after discussions, the committee had decided that a team comprising of Dr. Asad Rahmani and Shri Kishor Rithe would conduct site inspection and submit a report to the Standing Committee of NBWL for consideration. Subsequently, Dr. Asad Rahmani of Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) informed the MoEF that BNHS had accepted the study from project proponent CIDCO and hence he would be unable to be a part of site inspection team as it would be a conflict of interest for him. Therefore, Additional Director General of Forest (Wildlife), Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda and Kishor Rithe were directed to conduct the site inspection vide

letter (no.6-34/2013WL) dated 3rd May 2013. However, Dr. Chavda could not join the site inspection team due to his other engagements.

The site inspection was conducted on 9th and 10th May 2013 and after inspection, the team had recommended the proposal with certain conditions. An important observation that came out during the site inspection was that Shri.Debi Goenka of the Conservation Action Trust, Mumbai had filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) on mangrove protection which will be applicable to mangrove area to be destroyed by proposed project of NMIA.

The committee, after discussions, unanimously decided to recommend the proposal subject to the following conditions, as stipulated in the site inspection report:

- i. *As there are several project proposals coming to SC-NBWL around KBS, it is recommended that the CWLW should compile the information and proceed to assess the cumulative impact of those projects on KBS landscape (which includes several PAs mentioned by CWLW and surrounding wildlife habitats (together with forest, wetlands and mangroves), and plan about compensating/mitigating the damages collectively. For any further project in 10km ESZ of KBS, this condition must be given due consideration.*
- ii. *Air traffic at NMIA should not use the airspace above the KBS as promised during the meeting. The annual report "Baseline Survey of Avian fauna at and around NMIA" produced by BNHS has, though not sufficient enough, suggested conservation measures in 10 km radius of NMIA. The potential wildlife habitats (wetlands, forest and mangroves) which comes in 10km ESZ of KBS should also be considered for implementing conservation measures.*
- iii. *In order to have alternate site for migratory birds visiting wetland within proposed NMIA site, Sewri coast wetland should be considered to be developed. The Sewri coast wetland of 1037.3 ha is a marshland protected from Arabian sea near the mouth of Thane creek. Thousands of flamingoes along with many other migratory water birds about 150 species (11 are globally threatened) inhabit this marsh partly covered by mangrove. The Government of Maharashtra should nominate the same for Ramsar site.*
- iv. *As per the Hon'ble High Court order dated 27 January 2010 the mangrove is a protected forest. As the project involves mangrove forest land, the state Government should see if any approval from the Hon'ble High Court is required. Mangrove ecosystem has a unique aquatic fauna which carries a great importance. There is dense mangrove cover towards north side of the proposed NMIA site and parts of it also occur inside the NMIA site. To compensate for the loss of important mangrove forest portion inside the NMIA site, the mangrove forest bordering NMIA site (including the mangrove Park) should be declared as a mangrove sanctuary.*
- v. *The project proponent should pay 3% of project cost for a fixed deposit with the wildlife department so that the interest amount can be spent on conservation of mangrove in the entire Mumbai wildlife circle.*

- vi. *The government of Maharashtra has presently notified only 12.11 sq.km area as KBS though there are more wildlife potential forest lands available between the KBS and the NMIA site. As those lands will be vulnerable for encroachments, we recommend that the state government should notify all such forest patches between the KBS and the NMIA as sanctuary before granting the final clearance. This will not only help to stop further encroachments on forest lands around NMIA site (unlike encroachments around existing Mumbai airport) but also will help to reduce the risk of having any air traffic accident due to garbage attracted bird movements.*
- vii. *Looking at the encroachments around SGNP and the existing Mumbai airport, the Government of Maharashtra need to ensure that the families be relocated at relocation site-2 (55 Ha) at Dapoli which requires 40 ha land and at relocation site-3 at Vahai on Amra Marg should not further encroach upon any forest land around these sites or in 10 km ESZ of KBS. There are 10 settlements from 7 revenue villages which need to be acquired for NMIA project and to be relocated at these three sites.*
- viii. *The project proponent should construct the boundary wall specially for relocation site-2 (along with 100 ha non-aeronautical activity area) during the construction of the project. This will also help to minimise the garbage issue which attracts birds and other wild animals and also stop encroachments on surrounding forest areas.*
- ix. *Project proponent should allocate enough display space at the prominent location in the NMIA (As per the requirement of CWLW Maharashtra) free of cost to depict and highlight / publicise the importance of protected areas of Maharashtra to the tourists arriving at NMIA till the lifetime of NMIA.*
- x. *CWLW Maharashtra should incorporate the measures in the Management plan of KBS.*

4.2 (16) Proposal for establishment of 400 KV D/C Rajgarh-Karamsad transmission line passing through Kharmor Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh.

The Member Secretary informed the committee that this proposal was discussed during the 28th meeting of Standing Committee of NBWL held on 20th March 2013, wherein it was decided that the Chief Wildlife Warden Madhya Pradesh ascertain the nesting sites of the Lesser Florican in the Sanctuary. Accordingly, the Chief Wildlife Warden had indicated the nesting sites of Lesser Florican in a map, which was circulated to all members.

The committee decided to take a view on this proposal later.

AGENDA ITEM NO.3

Rules and procedures for functioning of Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife

The Member Secretary informed the committee that the sub-committee constituted under chairmanship of Dr.M.K. Ranjitsinh for framing Rules and procedures for functioning of Standing Committee of National Board for Wildlife, had submitted their draft report, which was circulated to the members.

The chairperson desired to study the report thoroughly. The committee, therefore, agreed to consider this in the next meeting of Standing Committee of NBWL. Ms Prerna Bindra mentioned the urgency to consider and finalise the Rules and Procedures and requested for an early meeting. The chairperson indicated that the next meeting could be convened before 20th July. Dr M K Ranjitsinh, Kishore Rithe, Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda and Dr AJT Johnsingh desired that matters related to Rules and Critical Wild Life Habitats only be discussed in that meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO.4

4.1. Re-consideration proposals

4.1(1) Revised proposal for diversion of 124.054 ha of forest land from Majathal Wildlife Sanctuary for construction of Kol Dam Hydro Power Project, Himachal Pradesh.

The Member Secretary informed the committee that this proposal was rejected by the Standing Committee in its last meeting. However, there was a representation from Hon'ble chief Minister, Himachal Pradesh as well as from the NTPC for re-consideration.

Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda opined that in a previous meeting, the Standing Committee had decided that proposals once rejected should not be considered unless there is some substantial change in the proposal. This proposal does not merit to be reconsidered as it was rejected due to several violations including starting the work without obtaining required approvals. Further, after rejection, there is no change in the proposal.

Chairperson assured that violations of law by the respective agencies will be dealt with separately as per law. The matter before the Committee being consideration of wild life issues related to the project, state of HP was asked to explain to the members as to why the project should be reconsidered at all.

Chief WLW of HP explained that the dam on Satluj river is far away from the sanctuary and the sanctuary area is at the terminal end of the submergence. The particular area going under submergence is not the part of cheer pheasant habitat which is actually about 600 m below. Thus while the cheer pheasant habitat continues to be protected, the submergible area, though part of the sanctuary is outside the habitat of concern.

Dr. M.D. Madhusudan stated that while the issue of destruction of Cheer Pheasant and cutting of trees are matters of concern, the larger issue is that of the blatant violation of the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. He informed that while the Himachal Pradesh Government had issued notification of intent way back in 1974, the authorities had started construction activities in 1990's without acknowledging the fact that the Sanctuary land was involved. There is a lapse on the part of the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department. The proposal had got the clearance under the FC Act and subsequently they had also obtained the EC for the project. They had then approached the CEC, who had in fact pointed out that the sanctuary land was also involved and had directed that the user agency obtain clearances of SBWL and NBWL . The project proponent had started the work on the presumption that

no wildlife area was involved. He added that no agency can initiate work under presumption, especially when such huge public money is involved. He urged the committee to take these serious violations by the HP Forest Department and the NTPC into consideration when making its decision.

Dr. M.K.Ranjitsinh opined that a sanctuary is sacrosanct and an ecological entity and that it is not only for the purposes of the conservation of individual species, even if the sanctuary be named after that species. If a part of the sanctuary does not happen to be the habitat of the main species that the sanctuary strives to protect, that would not be a ground for excluding it for non - forestry purposes. He also clarified that once a preliminary notification of the establishment of the sanctuary is issued, all legal provisions under the Wildlife Act that apply to a sanctuary, would come into effect in respect of it. He also pointed out that since project is now a *fait accompli* and huge amount of public money has been spent upon it, it would serve no purpose if it is rejected. He, therefore, suggested that since both the State Forest Dept. and the NTPC are guilty of acts of commission and omission when they should have set an example, the NTPC being a PUC, they have violated the legal norms. He suggested that NTPC should acquire a 500 hectares outside of the PA in consultation with the Wildlife Institute of India and the State Govt. should add it to the sanctuary. Likewise, the State Forest Dept. should also identify 10sq. km of suitable forest land and notify it as a sanctuary. Both this should be done prior to the impounding of the water in the dam. He also indicated that the entire submergence area which is a part of the sanctuary, should continue to remain as a sanctuary.

Ms Prerna Bindra mentioned that there had been a violation of the law. The user agency had begun work on the project without taking the mandatory permission under the Wildlife Protection Act, and had continued the work inspite of being rejected by the Standing Committee, NBWL, which was a very serious issue. She added that being 'unaware' of the area—in this case a sanctuary—to be submerged by the project was unacceptable and did not speak well of both the user agency and the concerned authorities.

The representative of NTPC explained about the project in detail from its inception. He said that at the time when Himachal Pradesh Electricity Board had handed over this project to NTPC, they were not aware of involvement of sanctuary land.

The chairperson expressed concern over such blatant violations and desired to know who are responsible for such violations.

The Addl. Chief Secretary, Himachal Pradesh indicated that there has been an omission which was primarily on the part of the Government of Himachal Pradesh and NTPC was not guilty. This ought not to have happened and presently 80% of the work of the dam had already been completed. However no work has been started in the wildlife area, and only when the dam is impounded, the wildlife area would be submerged. Flooding in the area was inevitable.

Dr. A.J.T Johnsingh mentioned that the State Government should agree to add more land as Protected Area or one or two villages in key wildlife areas should be resettled to make the area disturbance free. Dr Asad Rahmani clarified that the identified area should be a good habitat of Cheer Pheasant and needs to be adjacent to the WLS.

Shri Kishor Rithe stated that as the huge amount of public money had been spent, which is why it was placed before the SC-NBWL and was likely that the committee's decision to reject the proposal may be overruled. In which case, both the state government and project proponent, shall notify the amount of area mentioned by Dr.Ranjitsinh as an extension of Majathal WLS prior to impounding the dam. He pointed out that in case of Narmada Sagar Dam, the State Government had agreed for creation of four Protected Areas, but till date none of them have been notified. This case cannot be repeated here and the State Government should notify the area first before any submergence.

Ms Prerna Bindra pointed out here that the Standing Committee had already rejected the proposal twice, both from the point of view of the importance of the sanctuary for wildlife, including the cheer pheasant, a Schedule I species, but also due to the violations by user agency. It was not fair, or acceptable to present a *fait accompli* to the Standing Committee. The SC, NBWL could not endorse such violations. Also, there was the risk of setting a precedent. Huge amounts of public funds had already been spent, which is perhaps why it was placed before the SC, NBWL again for consideration and was likely that the committee's decision to reject the proposal may be overruled. In which case, both the state government shall notify area greater than the diversion in Majathal, WLS and the user agency must acquire habitat greater than the area to be submerged and hand it over to the state government for notifying as a PA as explained by Dr Ranjitsinh. This must *precede* any continuation of work, or submergence.

After discussion, the committee decided to recommend the proposal as it was a *fait accompli* case and since huge public money was involved, subject to the following:

- i. *NTPC shall identify 500 ha. of Cheer pheasant habitat, in consultation with Wildlife Institute of India and Chief Wild Life Warden. NTPC shall purchase and hand over this land to the State Government, who shall get it notified as a Sanctuary prior to submergence.*
- ii. *The State Forest Department of Himachal Pradesh shall identify another 10 sq.km wildlife habitat, in consultation with Wildlife Institute of India and get it notified as a Sanctuary prior to submergence.*
- iii. *The State Government of Himachal Pradesh shall inform the Government of India the details of officials who have violated the provisions of law in this case and also take strictest possible action against such violators as per law.*
- iv. *This fait- accompli situation should not be a precedence for other projects.*
- v. *The Standing Committee shall review the status after three months.*

4.2(2) Construction of intake well near left bank of Chambal river at Kota barrage reservoir falling in National Chambal Ghariyal Sanctuary, Rajasthan.

The Member Secretary informed that this proposal was considered by the Standing Committee in its 28th meeting and was rejected. However, subsequently, Hon'ble Urban Development Minister of Rajasthan had made a representation that the project was for drinking water requirements and may be reconsidered.

Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda pointed out that this was yet another case of reconsideration and that it was not correct to say that this project was for drinking water alone. There are several industrial units in and around Kota city and this water would also be used for meeting the needs of the industry. He added that study by WII was amply clear that no new projects should be allowed on Chambal river as it would adversely impact the Gangetic dolphins and the Gharials. Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh while agreeing with the comments opined that there were already three dams across the river in Rajasthan and more and more water withdrawal would be catastrophic.

Dr Asad Rahmani indicated that there would be no end to such mushrooming projects along Chambal river and the river would become dry very soon, if such situation continues.

Ms. Prerna Bindra mentioned that any further withdrawal of water would be fatal to the survival of the critically endangered Gharials and Gangetic Dolphins. She added that suitable habitat for both species was already compromised by more than 50% especially during the lean season, and also there was a sharp drop annually in the flow of the river, The WII study was clear on the grave impacts to both species if there were to be further withdrawal of water, and other disturbances. She stressed that the committee's rejection of the proposal remained.

Mr. Kishor Rithe while agreeing with Ms. Bindra opined that too much of withdrawal of water from the river would render it dry soon.

The chairperson opined that, since it is a drinking water project, special consideration is to be given. State Government should ensure that water availability to wildlife remains unchanged.

Since there were no representatives from the Rajasthan Forest Department, the members felt that the views of the members be communicated to the State, and the views of the State Government obtained on this as soon as possible.

4.2 PROPOSALS OUTSIDE PROTECTED AREAS

4.2(1) Proposal for widening and improvement of the existing PWD State Highway-31 (Jorhat-Morjoni), Assam using additional 3 ha of non-forest land falling within 10 kms from the boundary of Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary.

The Member Secretary gave a brief outline of the proposal. Ms. Prerna Bindra mentioned that there was a railway line passing through the sanctuary that was causing fragmentation to this tiny 30 sq km sanctuary. The railway line is an impediment to the free movement of wildlife in the sanctuary particularly in the case of gibbons who are **arboreal** creatures. The track has broken the canopy. She desired to know if some aerial connectivity could be created for the movement of the Gibbons, and requested if this matter could be taken up by the state on a priority basis in consultation with experts.

The Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam mentioned that provisions for aerial movement had been made, however, accidents due to train hits can not be ruled out.

After discussions, the committee decided to recommend the proposal since it was an existing road subject to the following conditions, as stipulated by the Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam:

- i. *Camping of construction labours is not to be allowed within 10 kms from the boundary of Hollongapar Gibbon Wildlife Sanctuary.*
- ii. *Improved technology and engineering tools shall be used during the construction phase to minimize the adverse impacts on noise, air and water pollution.*
- iii. *Speed breakers and speed limit shall be religiously followed and monitored to ensure safety of wildlife and its movement across the road.*
- iv. *Necessary signages shall be put up by the PWD along the road alerting people about the safety of wildlife.*
- v. *Road side plantation shall be raised by the PWD after completion of the road work.*

4.2 (2) Proposal to set up an 80,000 TPA capacity plant for manufacturing Viscose Staple Fibre at Additional Patalganga Plot No.M1 and M2 at village: Sarsai, Dist.: Raigarh, Maharashtra.

The Member Secretary gave a brief introduction about the proposal. Mr. Kishore Rithe mentioned that the area of Karnala bird sanctuary is just 12.11 sq.km and several other projects have been proposed around this small sanctuary. The SC-NBWL has just recommended the Navi Mumbai airport too. Though the project is proposed in MIDC area, state has to reconsider about such polluting industries in this MIDC specially after recommending the Navi Mumbai international airport in ESA of Karnala. The project location is just 1.5 km from the boundary of KBS and it has a captive power plant (which will use 265 tonne of coal per day) inside it. The CWLW has already expressed concerns on the fact that the plant will release solid waste of 1095 tonne/year and sludge waste of 3200 up to 58,400 tonne/year from coal fired boiler. The treated industrial effluents released into saline water zone of the Patalganga River which flows near the sanctuary. The plant would seriously impact the nearby Patalganga river and wetlands such as Apta lake and Jambhawali river where sanctuary animals/birds do visits. He said that we should reject this proposal on this ground.

Dr. Asad Rahmani mentioned that since the nearby areas of the sanctuary is Maharashtra State Industrial Development Corporation area, not much wildlife is seen in the vicinity but discharge of effluent in Patalganga is a serious issue.

The representative of the user agency informed that the project had already obtained Environmental Clearance and that their plant had the capacity for double effluent treatment before discharging into the sea and it is being ensured that no toxic materials are released into the river. He added that as far as gaseous emissions were concerned, it was mainly Hydrogen Sulphide and Carbon-di- Sulphide. He added that there would be a 16 MW power plant with coal being imported from Indonesia as well as taken from India and lime injection systems will be established to reduce Sulphur emission.

Ms. Purna Bindra expressed her concern about monitoring of affluent and its impacts, and desired to know who would be monitoring the effluent and gaseous discharges. Dr. M.K.Ranjitsinh desired to know about the proposed system for solid waste management, especially of fly ash. He gave the example of the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal where

the monitoring of emissions was a failure. He suggested that the monitoring committee should have members of State Board for Wildlife, a good NGO and representatives of State Wildlife Department. Project proponents explained that the world class environmental safeguards are being used in the project and assured that any conditions laid in this respect will be abided. The technical aspects were elaborated on query from Secretary E & F.

Chief Wild life Warden clarified that the project is within the already established MIDC industrial area and any effluents of the project are not affecting the WLS.

Taking note of the observations of the members, Chairperson asked for the final views of members. Shri Kishor Rithe was of the view that the project should be rejected. It was decided to take a view on this matter later.

4. 2 (3) Proposal for widening & strengthening of NH-31 Rajauli-Bakhtiyarpur road part (47.677 km to 154.00 km) from 101.800 km. to 115.500 km, Bihar. The boundary of Pant Wildlife Sanctuary is about 1.44 km from the proposed project site).

The Member Secretary gave a brief introduction regarding the proposal. The Chief Wildlife Warden mentioned that Pant Wildlife Sanctuary was about 35 Sq.kms and had good ungulate population. Dr Rahmani desired to know if the size of the sanctuary could be increased. The chairperson indicated that she would write to the Hon'ble Chief Minister with this request.

After discussions, the committee agreed to the proposal subject to the following conditions, as stipulated by the Chief Wildlife Warden:

- i. *Signages should be displayed in portions of road passing adjacent to the sanctuary (101.800 km to 115.50 km).*
- ii. *Speed limit of vehicles should be kept within 40 km/hr.*

4. 2 (4) Proposal for upgradation to 2-lane/2-lane with paved shoulders configuration and strengthening of Munger to Mirzachauki of NH-80 (section 65 km to 93 km.) in the Eco-sensitive zone of Bhimbandh Wildlife Sanctuary, Munger. Bihar.

The Member Secretary gave a brief introduction. The road proposed for upgradation is a NH and 4 km distance is about 1 km away from the sanctuary while distance of about 24 km is at various distances upto 10 km.

After discussion, it was agreed to recommend the proposal subject to the following conditions as laid down by CWLW:

- i. *As High speed vehicles may prove to be hazardous for the wildlife inside the sanctuary, speed breakers at regular and short intervals should be constructed on the proposed road.*

- ii. *Appropriate signboards should be displayed along the road passing through the safety zone of the sanctuary to make the vehicle drivers cautious about the presence of wildlife in the area.*
- iii. *Strict vigil should be maintained that stones and pebbles to be used in widening of the road must be brought from outside of the sanctuary area.*

4.2 (5) Upgradading to 2-lane/2-lane with paved shoulders configuration and strengthening of Munger to Mirzachauki of NH-80 (section 65 km to 190 km.) of NH-80 in the eco-sensitive zone of Vikramshilla Gangetic Dolphin sanctuary, Bihar.

The Member Secretary gave a brief introduction regarding the proposal. The road proposed for upgradation is a NH and is within 10 km from the sanctuary, where primary habitat of the sanctuary is aquatic.

After discussion, it was agreed to recommend the proposal subject to the conditions laid down by CWLW. However, keeping in view the aquatic ecosystem as main focus of the sanctuary, appropriate conditions to safeguard the riverine ecology and in particular the flagship species, the Gangetic dolphin will be added by the CWLW. Particular attention must be paid to the disposal of debris:

- i. *Speed breaker at regular and short intervals should be constructed on the proposed road.*
- ii. *Appropriate signboards should be displayed along the road passing through the safety zone of the sanctuary to make the vehicle drivers cautious about the presence of wildlife in the area. Signanges should caution against disposal of litter into the river.*
- iii. *Strict vigil should be maintained that sand, stones pebbles and other material to be used in widening of the road must be brought from outside of the sanctuary area.*

4.3. PROPOSALS WITHIN PROTECTED AREAS

4.3.(1) Diversion of 5.1709 ha of forestland from Gautam Budh Wildlife Sanctuary for erection of 11 KV transmission line under RGVY, Jharkhand.

The Member Secretary gave a brief introduction. Dr. Ranjitsinh indicated that this was only 11 KV line and so it could very well be insulated and laid underground. Shri Kishor Rithe also suggested this.

Ms. Perna Bindra informed that it had come to her knowledge that in the same Sanctuary, in case of permission for widening of NH-2 from two lane to four lane, certain conditions were stipulated, however, till date these conditions had not been fulfilled. She requested that the State Government should submit a compliance report to the Standing Committee.

The representative of the user agency mentioned that since this transmission line was under the Rajiv Gandhi Vidyutikaran Yojana, they did not have enough budgetary provisions for laying it underground. He also explained that the line is to be drawn along the national highway for a distance of about 7 km.

After discussion, the committee recommended the proposal with the condition that the transmission line within the forest area would be laid underground. It was also agreed that the status of the land would not change and would continue to remain a PA In the rest of the area also along the NH, conditions recommended by CWLW will be followed. The Committee also requested the State Government of Jharkhand to submit a compliance report on the conditions stipulated while recommending the widening of NH-2 road passing through the sanctuary.

4.3.(2) Diversion of 7.60 ha of forest land from Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary for upgradation/widening of road from Kupup to Tri-junction, East Sikkim.

As there was no representative from Government of Sikkim, the proposal was deferred.

4.3.(3) Diversion of 24.1268 ha of forest land from Borail Wildlife Sanctuary for upgradation of Harangajao-Udarband-Silchar Section from 244 km to 275.00 km of NH-54 (E), Assam under East West Corridor Project of NHAI.

The Member Secretary introduced the proposal. The Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam informed that the road was of pre-independence era and was part of the East-West corridor and that it passes through the Borail river.

After discussions, the committee took a view that as a sub-committee under Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh was looking into the aspects of roads passing through Sanctuaries/National Parks, till the report of this sub-committee was submitted, this proposal may be deferred.

4.3.(4) The proposal is for removal of bamboos in areas of gregarious flowering in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala.

The Member Secretary gave a brief about the project. The Chief Wildlife Warden, Kerala indicated that dried bamboo was becoming a fire hazard and required to be removed and that the revenue generated through this would be used for the benefit of the local community.

Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda indicated that on earlier occasions, such proposals have been rejected and so this should also be rejected. Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh mentioned that the State Forest Departments were well capable of stopping fire incidents. Ms. Purna Bindra mentioned the gregarious flowering of bamboo in Bhadra Tiger Reserve in 1999-2000, and there was no extraction or removal of bamboo, but complete scope was given for natural succession and regeneration of vegetation in the Reserve. There were no incidents of fire (or spurt of rodent population), despite the presence of over 450 families in 13 villages inside the

sanctuary at that point of time. Natural ecosystems ensured excellent bamboo regeneration. All this was achieved by strict vigilance and protection. Shri Kishor Rithe mentioned that there are several case studies in PAs which do not recommend bamboo on flowering to be removed as it do not help wildlife. One of such studies was conducted in Tadoba National Park of Maharashtra.

After discussions, the committee decided not to permit removal of bamboo from the sanctuary.

- 4.3.(5) Proposal for widening and strengthening of Malayapur-Barhat-Lalmatia-Khadigram, road from 9.750 km to 10.60 km (total-0.850 km passes through Bhimbandh Wildlife Sanctuary, Bihar.**
- 4.3.(6) Proposal for up-gradation and black topping of existing road from Ramgarh to Kotadol passing through GuruGhasidas National Park, Chhattisgarh.**
- 4.3.(7) Proposal for upgradation and black topping of existing road from Odgi to Biharpur passing through Guru Ghasidas NP, Chhattisgarh.**
- 4.3.(8) Proposal for upgradation and black topping of existing road from Kotadol to Murkil passing through Guru Ghasidas NP, Chhattisgarh.**
- 4.3.(9) Proposal for upgradation and black topping of existing road from Biharpur to Rasouki-II passing through Guru Ghasidas National Park, Chhattisgarh.**
- 4.3.(10) Proposal for upgradation and black topping of existing road from Mahuli to Baijanpat-II passing through Guru Ghasidas National Park, Chhattisgarh.**
- 4.3.(11) Diversion of 2.275 ha of forest land from Bhimbandh Wildlife Sanctuary for widening and strengthening of NH-72, Jamui-Laxmipur-Kharagpur Road from 19.80 km to 23.00 km, Bihar.**

The Standing Committee decided to await the report of the sub-committee under the chairmanship of Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh, before considering these projects.

5. ANY OTHER ITEM WITH THE PERMISISON OF CHAIR

5.1. Agenda items proposed by Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda:

(i) Status of endangered species:

Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda mentioned that during the CBD COP-11, Hon'ble Prime Minister had assured that species recovery plans for critically endangered species would be in place. However, no action seems to have been taken by the MoEF so far. He added that this agenda was taken up for discussion during several previous meetings and even now the situation has not improved much. He desired that unless the MoEF designates a nodal person and takes this on a war footing, no progress seems possible.

The Member Secretary clarified that this matter had been taken up with the State Governments time and again but the response was poor. Even during the recent video conference of the DGF&SS, this issue was taken up and the States were urged to submit status reports at the earliest.

Dr. M.K.Ranjitsinh said that merely writing letters to the states and awaiting their response with regard to the conservation of gravely endangered species, would not serve the purpose. Detailed recovery plans must be prepared in consultation with experts and its implementation funded and regularly monitored by MoEF, who should appoint a special nodal officer for this task. He mentioned that many of the species now have very low populations and some are on the verge of extinction. He quoted the example of the Hangul, whose population was perhaps less than 150.

Dr. Asad Rahmani also while agreeing to this, mentioned that even several bird species were extremely threatened and immediate action to save them was warranted.

After discussions, the committee decided that the Addl. DGF(WL) be made the nodal officer and would coordinate with the states. It was also decided that some members of the Standing Committee could also be co-opted for undertaking this task.

(ii) Rationalization of boundaries of Desert National Park:

Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda mentioned that a committee under the chairmanship of Dr.M.K. Ranjitsinh had visited the site, discussed the matter threadbare with all concerned stakeholders and submitted a report to the MoEF. However, no action was seen after that. He added that the local villagers wanted that the sanctuary be denotified as they were being deprived of road, drinking water etc. Dr. Asad Rahmani also agreed to the points made by Dr. Chavda. He added that the villagers should be given due benefits and it has now reached a point where people are seeing wildlife as an enemy.

After discussions, it was decided that the Addl. DGF(WL) shall immediately convene a meeting with the State Government of Rajasthan, wherein Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh, Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda and Dr. Asad Rahmani shall also be invited, to discuss this issue and take further view on the matter.

5.2. Agenda items by Ms. Prerna Bindra:

(i) Forest Frontline Staff- Indian Green Army.

Ms. Prerna Bindra explained that forest guards or the frontline staff –India's Green Army protect tigers, elephants and other endangered wildlife as well as our precious forest wealth. Yet, they are poorly paid, underequipped, untrained and consequently demotivated. Their duty is tough, demanding, and risky. They serve in the remotest of forests, largely in the absence of a protection plan, without even the basic facilities such as proper housing, clean drinking water, toilets, electricity, communication systems, protective rain/winter gear, medical aid, etc. She said that ensuring the welfare of the forest staff is a prerequisite to secure our endangered wildlife and ecosystems, and crucial for the perspective of human welfare. She added that most of the forest staff including the daily wagers, are drawn from local communities on whose good will, and cooperation we depend on for wildlife and forest

conservation. And this was important from the point She urged that some urgent action needs to be taken in this direction. The Chair agreed that the matter was of utmost concern and priority and asked for suggestions on how best to take this forward.

The Addl. DGF(WL) mentioned that staff welfare activities are covered under the IDWH and IFP Schemes. He also added that funds from 13th Finance Commission grants and CAMPA could be utilized, if approved by NCAC and the Supreme Court.

Dr. M.D. Madhusudan mentioned that this would involve financial commitments on the part of State Governments and therefore, it would be very helpful if the Honourable Chairperson writes to State Chief Ministers who chair the State Boards for Wildlife, and requested that this matter be discussed there in order to enable necessary financial commitments from states.

Shri Kishore Rithe while supporting these views mentioned that certain states like Maharashtra have actually shown us how this can be done at the state level. They have recruited several guards and foresters during the last three years and also cleared the promotion backlog among different cadres. The infrastructure for them have also been improved. Other States could take this as an example and work on the same direction. He added that the States should give priority to this issue.

Ms. Bindra pointed out that while some states like Maharashtra and Karnataka had taken the lead, in most states the conditions in which the forest staff worked was abysmal. She agreed that the onus of such measures fell on the states—which is why her agenda note suggested that each state should have a well-defined policy for the appropriate management and welfare of the uniformed forest staff. She urged the SC, NBWL to take a decision to ask the state governments to formulate a plan on the suggestions given in her agenda, or any other additional point they consider appropriate, and submit the same to the SC, NBWL through the MoEF, along with the financial implications. She also stressed that the centre must take certain initiatives, and provide some funding support to the states. She mentioned that the NTCA provides hardship allowances in Tiger Reserves and had also taken up other initiatives for staff welfare. She said that such provisions should be available for other Parks and Sanctuaries as well. Dr A.J. T. Johnsingh added that good models were there in Tiger Reserves and could be replicated in other Parks and Sanctuaries as well.

Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda mentioned that many buildings in the Parks and Sanctuaries need renovation. Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh was of the opinion that local people need to be involved in protection machinery as they know the terrain very well. He added that there was an embargo on recruitment in the States and there were large number of vacancies and States should take immediate steps to fill up these vacancies.

After discussion, it was decided to form a sub-committee under the chairmanship of DGF&SS to look into the issue of personnel in FDs including WL areas and take this forward. Some members of Standing Committee of NBWL shall also be included.

(ii) Protection of Great Indian Bustard:

Ms. Perna Bindra stressed the need for concrete and immediate measures to save the Great Indian Bustard. She said that with only about a 100 GIBs left, the urgency of the situation could not be stressed enough. She said that if concrete actions are not taken on priority, these would become extinct. She said one immediate measure was the strict protection of GIB habitat, (which are grasslands, and very vulnerable) and zero disturbances to its lekking sites. She urged that both *ex-situ* and *in-situ* conservation measures should be taken up simultaneously to save these birds from extinction. She particularly stressed on immediately initiating a scientifically robust GIB Conservation Breeding programme, -as even currently the founder population was very less, and given the trend, declining further. She urged the centre to take urgent steps to initiate a national level program, bring GIB states to a common platform, get the best experts, establish a time line to initiate and establish such a programme, and importantly, commit adequate, timely and consistent funds for the project.

Dr Ranjitsinh pointed out that for conservation/ captive breeding programme, we would have to bring in expertise from outside the country. Dr Rahmani while agreeing to this suggestion, mentioned that earlier one expert from FAO had come for conservation breeding of crocodiles. He added that an action plan for the next 15 years needs to be worked out.

Dr. Madhusudan opined that scientific and conservation expertise had been used to identify threats to bustards and a recovery plan was drafted to reduce these threats. However, the biggest obstacle to actual implementation of these plans was that no institutional structures and processes were set up to ensure that the recovery plans were decisively implemented in a time-bound manner. He therefore urged the MoEF to create an institutional framework for bustard recovery, empower this institution legally and financially to act as NTCA has done in the case of tigers, and finally hold it accountable to its mandate.

After discussion, it was decided that a meeting be convened on 25th June 2013 under chairmanship of the Addl. DGF(WL) wherein relevant experts, Chief Wildlife Wardens and a few members of Standing Committee of NBWL would be invited and this matter would be discussed.

(iii) Key wildlife Corridors to be brought under the purview of the Standing committee, National Board for Wildlife:

Ms. Perna Bindra pointed out that this agenda had been brought up in several meetings before, but little had moved forward on this. She understood that a committee had been set up for the purpose—but the terms of reference of the committee were restricted only to elephant reserves and corridors, while this agenda item had proposed key wildlife corridors including tiger and elephant corridors and elephant reserve being notified as Eco-Sensitive Zones. She added that the time frame for giving recommendations for this sub-committee was a year, and we continue to lose key elephant and tiger habitats and corridors. Wildlife concerns are not factored in development in such areas, which has deleterious impacts not only on wildlife, but has also accelerated human-wildlife conflict. Dr Madhusudan mentioned that the committee of experts set up to make recommendations to the Standing Committee on how to provide legal cover to elephant reserves and elephant corridors had virtually been defunct, and

had not met after its initial meeting in February 2013. He urged that this committee be reactivated urgently to fulfil its mandate within its term.

The Committee decided to take up this matter later.

(iv) Strengthening the notification process for Eco-Sensitive Zones around Protected Areas:

Ms. Prerna Bindra mentioned that MoEF should constitute Regional Review Committees with representatives largely from the relevant region/states to look into proposed ESZs of their respective regions to see the proposals for eco-sensitive zones around Parks and Sanctuaries as well as an over arching committee at the national level for scrutiny of the ESZs. Dr Madhusudan mentioned that apart from WII, other institutes and Universities should also be roped in to finalize the proposals for eco-sensitive zones. Member Secretary explained that a process is in place for scrutiny of the proposals involving WII and by inviting responses and suggestions on the draft notification before consideration by the 'Expert Committee' for giving final shape to the notification.

(v) CAMPA funding for voluntary relocation from within PAs:

Ms. Prerna Bindra said that the matter had been taken up in the previous meetings, and as per the decision of the last meeting of the SC, NBWL on 20th March, 2013, requesting that states be further urged to utilize CAMPA funds for voluntary relocation from critical tiger habitats, National Parks and Sanctuaries, and even reserve forests important from wildlife point of view, and from where people have expressed willingness to move out. It was also requested to earmark a certain percentage of State CAMPA funds, as well as from the principle amount of CAMPA for voluntary relocation, and to set up a monitoring mechanism for the use of CAMPA funds. She desired that action needs to be taken on it so that villages that were desperate to move out could be relocated soon.

Dr Madhusudan, while agreeing with the points mentioned by Ms Prerna Bindra, also added that people in many PAs have voluntarily sought relocation, and in such instances, the NCAC must consider incentivising states that use CAMPA funds to support such relocation by providing them proportionately greater allocations.

Shri Kishore Rithe suggested that the States should come out with concrete plans as to how many villages are to be relocated and how much funds were required, and with this data, CAMPA could be approached. Once a plan and corresponding funding was available, relocation process could be carried out smoothly.

The Addl. DGF(FC) informed that there has been a decision to use Rs. 5000 crore from CAMPA funds for relocation of villages from Tiger Reserves and that an affidavit to this extent seeking approval of Hon'ble Supreme Court has been prepared. He added that the affidavit is now pending ratification from the NCAC. He also informed that earmarking of CAMPA funds for relocation could be one of the agenda for the next NCAC meeting.

Ms Prerna Bindra mentioned that while this was very welcome and laudable move, the funds were only for the voluntary relocation from core critical tiger habitats, and not from other PAs, where the fund availability was very poor, and people were desperate to move out, as has been seen in the case of Wayanad WLS, and even reserve forests as in Lansdowne Forest Division in Uttarakhand.

The IGF(WL) informed that the State Governments have already been requested to indicate the details of villages to be relocated and funds required for this purpose.

(vi) Review of status of implementation of the National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-16):

The IGF(WL) informed that action on this has already been initiated and the matter is under active consideration.

(vii) Critical Wildlife Habitats:

The Member Secretary informed that the matter is under consideration of Hon'ble Minister.

(viii) Gola Corridor:

Ms. Prerna Bindra while thanking the MoEF for prompt action for writing to the State Government also requested that a committee be constituted by Central Government.

The Standing Committee agreed to this view and decided that a monitoring committee be constituted by MoEF wherein some members of Standing Committee of NBWL would also be included.

5.3. Agenda items proposed by Dr.A.J.T Johnsingh:

(i) Conservation of Cauvery mahasheer through angling and protection:

Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh mentioned that angling and nature tourism programme generated approximately Rs. 400 lakh which enabled the management to employ about 60 local people, of which many were fishermen, as staff and as fish guards which considerably reduced the incidents of fish poaching. This conservation measure was an excellent example of ecotourism in the country wherein fish got protection and locals were benefitted and has enabled the anglers to continue to catch, photograph and release several big fish weighing between 80 and 90 pounds. He mentioned that Cauvery is the only river where mahseer of such large sizes are found and if suitable protection is not given mahseer will be wiped out by dynamiting which is rampant now. He urged that permission may be granted to resume angling to Jungle Lodges and Resorts Pvt Ltd and Wildlife Association of South India, in close collaboration with the Karnataka Forest Department, so as to improve protection that would ensure the future of mahseer in Cauvery.

Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh mentioned that angling inside a Sanctuary amounts to violation of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Kishor Rithe stated that it would also set a wrong precedence. He gave an example of illegal fishing issue in Pench Tiger Reserve and how it has been a huge problem for the Tiger Reserves to deal with it. He also mentioned about the Hon'ble High Court and Supreme Court order regarding illegal fishing activities in Pench Tiger Reserve. Ms. Prerna Bindra pointed out that there was a Court case in 2009 wherein the MoEF had filed an affidavit stating that angling in a sanctuary was in violation of provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and therefore this can not be allowed.

The committee after discussion could not agree to the proposal by Dr. Johnsingh.

(ii) Establishing a unique tiger landscape in India:

Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh mentioned that the tiger landscape between Eastern Ghats and Western Ghats that stretches from Biligiri Rangan Tiger Reserve in the East, Bandipur/Nagarhole TR in the North (Karnataka), Wayanaad WLS in the West (Kerala), to Mukurthy National Park in the South (Tamil Nadu) had fragile connectivity between Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Mukurthy National Park. This connectivity known as Mudumalai-Mukurthy corridor should be strengthened immediately. He added that there were nilgai and reports of chinkara in the former Coimbatore Forest Division; Nilgiri tahr are found west of Naduvattam Range in Mukurthy National Park; and Elephant is found throughout. So there is no other landscape in the entire tiger landscape with species mentioned above. Between Eastern and Western Ghats the potential habitat for nilgai, chinkara, chowsingha and blackbuck is 600 sq.km. He also added that this largely thorn forest habitat has problem of exotics such as *Opuntia dillenii*, *Lantana* and *Prosopis juliflora* which make the habitat unsuitable for black buck and chital. The habitat lost to *Opuntia* is close to 100 sq.km.

The Member Secretary informed that this matter would be taken up with the State Government for immediate time-bound action.

5.3. Agenda items proposed by Shri Kishor Rithe:

(i) Tiger/Leopard Poaching in India:

Shri Kishor Rithe mentioned that India has lost 31 Tigers and 137 leopards in 2012 due to poaching. In 2013 till May, we have already lost 19 Tigers and 57 Leopards. He added that the usual problems while dealing with poaching threat are that the State governments are usually in denial mode about the fact that poachers are active in their state and secondly, there is a lack of effective strategy and mechanism at the state level to deal with the local and outside poachers separately, besides, there are also shortcomings at the state level like disregard of advisories, weak linkage with expertise available with NTCA, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), limited or no sharing / coordination among the states. However we need to seriously tackle this threat and bring all the states at same level to deal with this issue seriously. He suggested that a subcommittee headed by Dr.Rajesh Gopal Member Secretary

of NTCA, Mr.Praveen Pardeshi Principal Secretary (Forest) Maharashtra, Mr. Keshav Kumar of CBI, Chief Wildlife Warden of Madhya Pradesh and two members of SC of NBWL under the Chairmanship of DG or ADG, could be constituted. The sub-committee should be asked to have a meeting and workshop to produce a guiding document to deal with this issue at the state and national level.

(ii) Rhino poaching:

Shri Kishor Rithe mentioned that there is rampant poaching of Rhinos in Kaziranga National Park (KNP). The Times of India has published a shocking story in its 26th March 2013 issue. The news item has claimed that the KNP has lost 10 Rhinos in three months and law enforcement agencies are struggling to nab poachers due to political interference and undue pressure from senior police officials on the subordinates. Most poachers are militants equipped with AK-47 and it is also learnt that the Rhino horns are finding their way to international markets from Kaziranga through Dimapur in Nagaland. The situation is alarming and state government really need to show the results.

The Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam informed that the Forest Department has formed an Forest Arms Battalion on the lines of the Armed Police. These Forest Battalions are given training in use of sophisticated weapons. However, still the poaching does takes place. It has now been noticed that Rhino horns are exchanged with extremists for arms to the poachers. State Government has handed over several cases to the police for further prosecution.

Dr. Asad Rahmani mentioned that Assam Forest Department should be commended for their excellent protection works. Kaziranga has armed constabulary in place engaged in protection duties. In spite of these measures poaching does take place. Dr M.K. Ranjitsinh commended the State Forest Department for their excellent dedication for protection of wildlife in the State. He said that in the last four decades, control of poaching in Kaziranga has been the best in the country. Poaching incidents, however, still occur because of the lucrative rewards from rhino parks He said that within the last four decades the control of poaching has been the best now.

5.5. Report of the Animal Committee (Endangered Species Committee):

The Member Secretary gave a brief on the issues discussed during the Animal Committee meeting. He said that the issue of de-listing of Japanese Quails, Trochus shells and Edible nest Swiftlets were taken up for discussion. Apart from this, listing of Tokey Gecko, Hog deer and Sloth bear were also considered. He mentioned that Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh was not in agreement with recommendations of Animal Committee for de-listing of Japanese Quails and that he had given his dissent note. Further, since ZSI was to provide some data with respect to Trochus shells, no decision on its delisting could be taken by the Animal Committee. It was however decided by the Animal Committee to de-list Edible nest Swiftlets from Schedule-I for a period of five years and to list Tokey Gecko in Schedule IV and Hog deer in Schedule I of the Act. The Animal Committee had also recommended to retain Sloth Bear in Schedule –I and delete it from Schedule-II.

Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh mentioned that he was not in agreement with delisting of the Japanese Quails as this can endanger the survival of other quails as it would legalize quail meat and it will not be possible to identify the meat from captive raised quail from that of the wild ones once the feathers have been removed and it has been served in eating places.

While Dr Rahmani and Dr Johnsingh were of the view that farm bred Japanese Quails could be de-listed, the wild variety could be retained as we have the case of ordinary chicken and the jungle fowl of the same species. Dr. Divyabhanusinh Chavda, Ms. Bindra, Dr. Madhusudan, and Shri Kishor Rithe were of the opinion that there should be no delisting but the farming in its present form could continue, with no further expansion or new facilities being set up as in the case of domestic chicken.

As regards *Trochus*, the committee agreed with the recommendation of the Animals Committee that decision on delisting will be taken after receipt of its status data from ZSI.

As regards Edible Nest Swiftlets, Ms. Perna Bindra and Dr. Madhusudan desired to know the exact status of the birds before a view to de-list could be taken. This suggestion was agreed to by the Committee. Dr. Asad Rahmani appreciated the efforts of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Forest Department to protect the caves where the Edible Nest Swiftlets are found.

The Committee agreed to support the listing of the other three species, viz., Tokey Gecko, Hog Deer and Sloth Bear, to Schedule I of the WLPA as recommended by the Animal Committee.

5.6. Proposal for addition of area to the Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnataka.

The Member Secretary gave a brief account on this proposal. The committee unanimously agreed to this proposal. Dr Madhusudan said that the momentum for inclusion of new areas into an existing PA was usually generated following deliberations in the State Boards for Wildlife, but thereafter, there were considerable delays in notification as the matter was referred to the Standing Committee of the NBWL. He requested that the Standing Committee of NBWL pass a resolution such that, in cases which involved addition of areas to existing PAs (without accompanying deletions), or where new PAs were being proposed by states, the concurrence of the SC-NBWL may be deemed as granted. The State Government may subsequently inform the Standing Committee. This proposal was welcomed unanimously by the committee. The efforts of the Karnataka Forest Department was also commended.

5.7 Diversion of 1.23 ha of forest land from Pant Wildlife Sanctuary for construction of New Ropeway, Rajgir, Bihar.

The Member Secretary gave a brief account of the proposal. The members desired to know if the existing rope way could be modernized instead of seeking new diversion from the sanctuary land.

The representatives of the Bihar Tourism Development Department sought time for working out the technical feasibility of modernizing the existing ropeway without any diversion involved.

The committee agreed to the request and decided to await the technical feasibility report before taking a view.

5.8. Diversion of 1.65 ha of forestland from Karnala Bird Sanctuary for widening of existing 2 lane to 4 lane divided carriageway configuration for Panvel-Indapur (km 0.000 to km 84.000) section of NH-17, Maharashtra (Both within Karnala Bird Sanctuary and within 10 kms from Karnala Bird Sanctuary).

The Member Secretary gave a brief account of the proposal. He added that he has seen the site during his inspection of Navi Mumbai airport site. This proposal was initially not recommended by the Chief Wildlife Warden as there was other alternative routes available. He suggested that this may not be agreed to as alternate routes which is outside the Sanctuary is available.

Shri Kishor Rithe stated that he had inspected the site as a member of the state Board for Wildlife and the widening of the road from 2 lane to 4 lane within the sanctuary cannot be considered as alternate route is also available. The CWLW of Maharashtra may circulate the site inspection report of the state committee to the members of Standing Committee of NBWL

After discussion, the committee unanimously decided to reject the proposal and request the NHAI to follow alternate route outside Sanctuary.

Before the closure of the meeting the members desired that the following issues may be discussed during the next meeting of Standing Committee of NBWL:

- (i) Illegal construction and fluctuation in water level caused by refinery within Sur Sarovar Sanctuary
- (ii) Ban on trade in Peacock Tail Feathers
- (iii) Policy on Shark fins trade.

5.9. Diversion of 12.28 ha of forest land from Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary for laying of subsea pipeline system by Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation consisting of one well fluid pipeline, one effluent disposal pipeline and one optical fibre cable buried below Neelarevu River Bed, Andhra Pradesh.

The proposal was placed for consideration of the Standing committee of NBWL. However, in view of the communication received from the Chief Wildlife Warden, Andhra Pradesh, that the Andhra Pradesh State Board for Wildlife meeting that was scheduled to

meet on 1st June 2013 and consider this proposal was postponed. Therefore, the Chief Wildlife Warden had requested to place the proposal in the next meeting of the Standing Committee of NBWL. This was agreed to by the Standing Committee.

The meeting thereafter, ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.

ANNEXURE-1

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE 29TH MEETING OF STANDING COMMITTEE
OF NBWL HELD ON 6th June 2013.**

1.	Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment & Forests	Chairperson
2.	Dr. V. Rajagopalan Secretary, E & F	Invitee
3.	Shri K. Jude Sekar, Director General of Forests & Special Secretary	Member
4.	Dr S.S. Garbyal Addl. Director General of Forests (WL) and Director, Wildlife Preservation	Member-Secretary
5.	Shri A.K. Srivastava Addl. Director General of Forests (FC)	Invitee
6.	Shri P.R. Sinha Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun	Member
7.	Dr. M.K. Ranjitsinh	Member
8.	Dr Divyabhanusinh Chavda	Member
9.	Dr A.J.T.Johnsinh	Member
10.	Dr Asad Rahmani, Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai.	Member
11.	Ms. Perna Bindra	Member
12.	Dr M.D. Madhusudan Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore	Member
13.	Shri Kishore Rithe, Satpuda Foundation, Amravati.	Member
14.	Dr. Rajesh Gopal, Member Secretary (NTCA)	Invitee
15.	Dr S.K. Khanduri, Inspector General of Forests (WL)	Invitee

16	Shri Vineet Chaudhary, Addl .Chief Secretary (Forests), Himachal Pradesh	Invitee
17.	Shri Ram Prakash, PCCF(WL), Chattisgarh	Invitee
18.	Shri V.Gopinathan, Chief Wildlife Warden, Kerala	Invitee
19	Shri Suresh Chand, PCCF(WL) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Assam	Invitee
20.	Shri Ashwani Gulati, PCCF (WL) Cum Chief Wildlife Warden, Himachal Pradesh	Invitee
21.	Shri Vinay Kumar Sinha, PCCF (WL) Addl. charge, Maharashtra	Invitee
22.	Dr S.N. Trivedi, PCCF (WL) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Jharkhand	Invitee
23	Dr P.K. Shukla, PCCF (WL) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Madhya Pradesh.	Invitee
24	Mr. Vivek Saxena Deputy Inspector General of Forests (WL)	Invitee
25	Shri Shiv Pal Singh, Joint Director (WL)	Invitee

APPENDIX

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS OF STANDING COMMITTEE OF NBWL ON THE FINAL MINUTES OF 28th MEETING OF STANDING COMMITTEE OF NBWL HELD ON 20th MARCH 2013

Agenda No.	Approved final minutes	Suggestions made
Comments by Ms. Prerna Bindra		
4.1(2): Diversion of 79.474 ha of forest land in Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary and Wild Ass Sanctuary for construction of Gaduli to Hajipur-Odma-Khavda-Kunariya-Dholavira-Maovana-Gadakbet-Santalpur road	Ms. Prerna Bindra mentioned that the members were opposed to the proposal totally, since it was having a serious impact on the wildlife of the fragile Kutch region	Ms. Prerna Bindra mentioned that the members had unanimously opposed to the proposal totally, since it was having a serious impact on the wildlife of the fragile Kutch region particularly the nesting site of flamingoes.
Item 4.1 (12): Proposal for rehabilitation and upgradation of NH-69 to 'lane configuration' in Obaidullahganj to Betul Section passing through Ratapani Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh	Dr A.J.T Johnsingh opined that any road passing through wildlife sanctuaries and national parks should only be 2-lane and a policy in this regard needs to be adopted by the Central Government. Dr Kishor Rithe also endorsed the views of Dr Johnsingh on this matter.	Dr A.J.T Johnsingh opined that any road passing through wildlife sanctuaries and national parks should only be 2-lane and a policy in this regard needs to be adopted by the Central Government. Dr Kishor Rithe also endorsed the views of Dr Johnsingh on this matter. Prerna Bindra pointed out that as a policy already existing roads within PAs should not be expanded and widened
4.2 (31): Proposal for construction of Kanchanpur Railway Station and laying of two additional lines at the station in Katni-Singroli Section at Km.1218.170 passing through Sanjay Dubri Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh	Ms. Prerna Bindra as well as Kishor Rithe were of the opinion that construction of a Railway Station within the Tiger Reserve would have serious impact on the tiger movement.	Ms. Prerna Bindra was of the opinion that construction of a Railway Station within a tiger reserve was not acceptable as it would devastate tiger habitat as well as Kishor Rithe were of the opinion that construction of a Railway Station within the Tiger Reserve would have serious impact on the tiger movement.

Comments by Shri Kishor Rithe:

1) **The Proposal for survey and investigation for Gargai project in Tansa Sanctuary for Gargai River Project, Maharashtra which requires 750 ha forest from Tansa Sanctuary, was rejected by all the non official members and not suggested any site inspection.**

However the final minutes has recorded that the "The committee, after discussions, decided to have a site inspection by Dr Asad Rahmani and take a view based on the site inspection report."

2)In the discussion on agenda item no. 3.2 Agenda item proposed by members, the following discussion has been recorded in the minutes-

"(vi) **Encroachments:** Shri Kishor Rithe mentioned that there are large number of encroachments in protected areas in the country. People tend to grab the forest land under the garb of the FRA. People tend to register a claim before Gramsabha on the forest land first, before even encroaching a forest land. Later they start girdling trees, setting fire, ploughing the forest land and oppose forest department to leave the encroached land by showing that "their claim is pending" (no encroachment should be treated as an encroachment till pendency of claim). "

However the most important part which I had explained and conveyed in my corrections to provisional minutes has been left out. Please record the same as follows-

“the Chief Wildlife Wardens of the states are unable to exercise sec-20, 27(3) and 29 of Wildlife Protection Act 1972 – imposing bar on accrual of fresh rights, cause damage to PA boundary, destruction of wildlife habitat in PAs respectively due to mention of “Untill the claim is finally settled, no encroachment should be removed” in the rules of Forest Rights Act 2006.”
