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Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(Wildlife Division)

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To

Principal Secretaries,
Forest Department,
All states/UTs Government.

Sub: Guidelines on managing Human Wildlife conflict including damage to crops-regarding

The Ministry from time to time has issued advisories/guidelines to States/Union Territories to deal with Human Wildlife Conflict. The Ministry has also received representations in this regard from various parts of the country.

In continuation of the Advisory issued by the Ministry on 06.02.2021, the following guidelines are issued for the management of wildlife/mitigation of crop damage due to human wildlife conflict:

A. LEGAL MEASURES

1. Utilize provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (the Act):

- a. Section 4 of the Act empowers State Governments to appoint Honorary Wild Life Wardens for the purpose of the Act. The State/UT Governments may appoint Honorary Wild Life Wardens with such powers and duties under the Act which may be necessary for dealing with Human Wildlife Conflict situations.
- b. Section 11 (1)(b) of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 empowers the Chief Wild Life Warden or his authorised officer to permit any person to hunt any wild animal or group of wild animals specified in Schedule II, Schedule III, or Schedule IV in a specified area or cause such animal or group of animals in that specified area to be hunted, if such animal has become dangerous to human life or to property (including standing crops on any land). The subordinate officers of the Forest Department may be authorised to issue permits under this section. Gram panchayats may be empowered to deal with the problematic wild animals as per Section 11(1) (b) of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

2. Utilize Disaster Management Act 2005: The Uttar Pradesh government has notified Human Wildlife Conflict as 'State Declared Disaster' bringing such incidents under the ambit of State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to ensure better coordination

and relief during such mishaps in the state. The State/UT Governments may also consider utilizing the provisions of Disaster Management Act, 2005 to deal with situation arising out of Human Wildlife Conflict such as rescue and relief operations, providing ex-gratia relief , management of law and order situation etc.

B. MANAGEMENT MEASURES:

1. Inter-departmental Coordination Committees:

Prevention and management of human-wildlife conflict and associated crop damage by wild animals concerns several government departments, and, therefore, close coordination is required for timely and adequate action. Coordination committees at the State/ UT and district levels should be constituted as follows:

a. Co-ordination committee at the State/UTs level (SLCC):

i. State Governments/ UT Administrations of the affected States/ UTs should constitute a State Co-ordination Committee (SLCC) headed by the Chief Secretary with membership of Secretary in-charge of finance, Natural Resources, Infrastructure, Home and Forest departments of State/ UT, Director General of Police, PCCF-HoFF and representatives of concerned Central Government departments (Railways, Revenue Intelligence, Customs, etc.). The Chief Wild Life Warden is to act as the member secretary of this committee.

ii. The committee would meet as many times as necessary, but no later than six months of the previous meeting.

iii. Functions of the SLCC:

- Review the required infrastructure, manpower and monitoring systems in the State/ UT, and take necessary measures to strengthen the same;
- Monitor the number of human-wildlife conflict cases and associated crop damage by wild animals and their geographical spread, and provide guidance/ instructions to different departments for action to be taken by each one of them in order to minimize/ prevent human-wildlife conflict and associated crop damage by wild animals in those areas;
- Review the quantum of ex-gratia relief, issue guidance/ instructions for expedited payments, and work towards providing adequate funds for the same;
- Review the cases of revenge killings of wild animals and other wildlife related crime, and issue necessary guidance/ instructions to the concerned departments/ agencies as appropriate; and
- Recommend to State Board for Wild Life and / or the Government, policy and programmatic measures, including for capacity building, required for dealing with crop damage due to human-wildlife conflict.

b. District Co-ordination Committee (DLCC):

i. On the recommendation of Chief Wild Life Warden (CWLW), the State Government/ UT Administration should constitute an inter-departmental coordination committee in all or identified district(s) of the State/ UT that are vulnerable to human-wildlife conflict and associated crop damage by wild animals to be chaired by District

Collector, and comprising of district-level officers of departments/ organisations included in the SLCC. The Wild Life Warden of the District headquarter is to act as Member Secretary.

- ii. The Committee may also include an Honorary Wild Life Warden residing in the district and up to two non-official expert members on the recommendation of the Member Secretary.
- iii. The Committee may invite an official from any other department/ organisation or an expert from a reputed State/ national level institute as special or standing invitee to meetings of the Committee.
- iv. The Committee should meet as often as required but no later than three months of the last meeting.
- v. Functions of the DLCC:
 - The DLCC would ensure coordinated action by different departments of the government to prevent killing/ injuring/ illegal capturing of wild animals by snaring, use of explosives, poisoning, electrocution, etc. in areas outside forests, and if requested so by the Wild Life Warden, in forest areas also.
 - The DLCC would also ensure coordinated action by different Departments for expeditious payment of ex-gratia to persons affected by human-wildlife conflict including crop damage.
 - The DLCC may seek assistance of Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) or other expert organisations in capacity building for intelligence gathering, investigation and prosecution for prevention and dealing with wildlife crime.

2. Identification of Hotspots

- i. The hotspots where crop damage by wild animals is occurring on a regular basis or death/ injury to wild animals is being caused by use of explosives, snares, traps, poisoning, electrocution or by any other means, may be identified and record of the same should be continuously updated by the concerned Wild Life Warden. A State level inventory of such Hotspots will be maintained, updated and used for planning for reducing human-wildlife conflict. The inventory should preferably be hosted on a secure GIS-based MIS platform under the direct supervision of Chief Wild Life Warden, and nodes of the platform may be available to the Wild Life Wardens.
- ii. For the purpose of identification of hotspots, simple mobile-based applications may be developed/used to for collation of geo-referenced data on crop damage due to human-wildlife conflict.

3. Joint Patrolling of Hotspots:

Whenever solicited by the Wild Life Warden (Divisional Forest Officer) assistance from departments like Police, Revenue, Electricity, Irrigation, PWD, local community representatives etc. shall be provided for joint patrolling and combing operations in and around the hotspot areas or any other area where such operation is deemed necessary.

4. Adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Guidelines

The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India and authorities under it have been issuing SOPs and guidelines to deal with various aspects of human-wildlife conflict which have to be followed.

5. Establishment of Rapid Response Teams (RRT):

- i. States should establish Rapid Response Teams (RRT) for quick action and management of conflict situations, especially in the hotspot areas. The RRTs should include trained staff with technical knowledge, be well equipped with materials as per local needs. The DLCC should facilitate the involvement and contribution of related departments in the district for establishment of RRTs. The Chief Wild Life Warden will make assessment of RRTs at regular intervals, including men and materials to be made available to RRTs, and take necessary steps for their timely procurement with the help of DLCC.
- ii. Depending upon the severity of human-wildlife conflict, States may establish dedicated circle wise Control Rooms with Public helpline/Toll free hotline numbers which could operate on a 24x7 basis.

6. Provision of financial resources for human-wildlife conflict

Each State Government shall endeavor to provide adequate budgetary resources for dealing with human-wildlife conflict, and in particular for Early Warning Systems (EWS), RRT, ex-gratia payment and awareness generation. Measures like establishment of Revolving Fund at the level of Divisional Forest Officer help in timely availability of financial resources for dealing with human-wildlife conflict and expedited payment of ex-gratia for crop damage due to human-wildlife conflict.

7. People's participation in managing human-wildlife conflict

Local people should be involved in dealing with human-wildlife conflict particularly in the hotspot areas, by formation of teams at village or a group of village level three various awareness programme like Nukkad drama etc. comprising of members of Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC), Eco-development Committee (EDC), Watershed Committee (WC), etc. to ensure timely communication, coordination and immediate management of human-wildlife conflict. Basic equipment, communication tools and training should be provided to these teams. The State/ UT may also consider providing 'contingency funds' to JFMCs/ EDCs for dealing with contingent expenses in cases of emergency.

8. Dealing with Law and order situation in human-wildlife conflict cases

It is often seen that in human-wildlife conflict situations, dealing with a large number of people who quickly gather at one place to view wild animals or to prevent them from entering their farms/ habitation, becomes a challenging task that hampers safe passage of wild animals or rescue work. State Governments/ UT Administrations may review the situation devise administrative mechanisms to ensure efficient coordination and cooperation of the law enforcing agencies at such situations to ensure smooth handling of such situations.

9. Adoption of Early Warning Systems (EWS):

The States should endeavor to develop and establish Early Warning Systems (EWS) to manage human-wildlife conflict. This may include:

- i. Permanent Sirens near hot spot villages, use of infrared technology, temperature and movement sensors etc, in alerting the movement of large herbivores like elephants in and around most vulnerable villages;
- ii. Drones and other systems for tracking movement of wildlife herd in and around Hot-Spot areas such as radio/satellite collars.
- iii. Warning alerts to local leaders /officials/villagers through bulk SMS or through FM Radio/community radio/local TV, etc.

10. Developing ecologically sustainable linear infrastructure:

The guidelines issued by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on "Eco-friendly measures to mitigate impacts of linear infrastructure on wildlife" should be followed, and timely creation of underpasses, overpasses, etc. that facilitate the movement of wildlife in a timely manner by the infrastructure agencies should be monitored and ensured at highest level.

11. Adoption of traditional/common management practices:

i. Creation of barriers:

Barriers that prevents easy movement of wildlife from forest area to human habitations may be considered in certain cases after thorough evaluation about their necessity and effectiveness. These could in the form of:

- Trenches (especially for Elephants)
- laying of covered conductor with coated wire in the transmission line in forest PAs areas.
- Solar-powered electric fences
- Rubble walls
- Other types of fences made from steel channels, rail, wire guide ropes, bars etc

ii. Promotion of appropriate agri-horticulture/ agroforestry around wildlife rich areas that repel wild animal:

It is well known that wild animals get attracted to palatable and nutritious crops grown on crop fields around forest areas. This leads to damage of crops and financial loss and hardship to the farmers who are often poor people from the tribal communities. The concerned departments should promote crops in these fringe areas which are unpalatable to wild animals. Farming or agroforestry models may include cash crops like chillies, lemon grass, *khus* grass etc. suitably mixed with appropriate tree/ shrub species. A comprehensive long-term plan for alternate cropping should be prepared and implemented by the State Agriculture/ Horticulture department under different

schemes in such vulnerable areas.

iii. Augmenting fodder and drinking water in forest areas:

Improving wildlife habitat by management of invasive species, augmenting fodder species and provisioning water for wild animals in lean periods is the key to minimizing human-wildlife conflict, and, therefore, this should be undertaken extensively. Desilting of existing water holes should also be taken on priority basis. All wildlife rich areas and wildlife corridors in and around the Hotspots should be treated on priority. The SLCC and DLCC should review the progress and facilitate mobilisation of necessary resources available in different departments/ organisations for this purpose.

iv. Improvement of local livestock

Free ranging livestock becomes more vulnerable to killing by wild animals. The Animal Husbandry department should formulate and implement special plans for improved stall-fed farm animal stock and practices, especially in the Hotspot areas. This will also reduce grazing pressure on native wildlife habitats and improve local economy.

12. Dealing with Wildlife Crime:

- i. Each State/UT should establish a State-level forest and wildlife crime intelligence units/ cells to facilitate collection of information from locals and other informers regarding forest and wildlife crime, including with the help of the existing Police Intelligence network. The Cell should regularly coordinate with WCCB and other neighbouring states.
- ii. The States/UTs should develop a mechanism of rewarding informers for intelligence gathering regarding wildlife crimes. The States/UTs may also issue necessary guidelines/notifications as per the provisions contained in the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to reward persons who render assistance in detection of offences and apprehension and trial of the offenders, and may also consider establishing Secret Fund at the disposal of Wild Life authorities of the State/UT at the appropriate level on the lines of Secret Fund operated by the State Police Department.
- iii. DLCC should oversee that regular patrolling of vulnerable local markets and food joints is being organised and effective action is being taken against the offenders.
- iv. Capacity building of frontline staff for investigation, forensics and successful prosecution of wildlife cases should be organised at regular interval.
- v. States should strictly ensure that no frontline positions in forest department remain vacant for more than a month. If vacancies are there special recruitment drives should be undertaken. The review of this should be done by Chief Secretary of the State/UT.
- vi. Sensitization and awareness drives involving JFMCs/ EDCs/ WCs through print & visual media in local language should be organised regularly. The DLCC and SLCC may oversee that the Public Relation Dept of the Govt. remains actively involved.

13. Dealing with problem animals

Providing safe passage to the wild animals involved in human-wildlife conflict in human habitations should be the topmost priority, and local administration should ensure better crowd management. If everything else fails, capture and translocation using scientific methods may be resorted with the approval of Chief Wild Life Warden.

14. Annual Plan of Operations under Centrally Sponsored Schemes

- i. The State Governments should ensure that the Annual Plan of Operations under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' are sent on time and include provisions for measures improvement of habitats of wild animals such as habitat enrichment by planting fodder species, removal of invasive alien species, creation of waterholes etc.
- ii. States should also ensure that the funds allocated under these schemes are released to the field formations in a timely manner along with corresponding share of states as and where applicable.

15. E-Shram Portal

The work force engaged in various works related to mitigating of Human wildlife Conflict and also other labourers near identified be registered on E-Shram portal in order to provide them with adequate social security benefits.

The registration of labourer can be done <https://register.eshram.gov.in/#/user/self>

C. FINANCIAL MEASURES:

1. Ex-gratia relief:

- i. SLCC should review the rate of *ex-gratia* relief at regular intervals with a view to ensure that it is effective both in providing necessary support to the victim and to prevent revengeful action by vulnerable/ affected population. The rates of adjoining States and that of Central Government under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes, whichever is higher, should guide the review.
- ii. SLCC and DLCC should regularly review that *ex-gratia* is being paid in a timely manner, and for this purpose necessary reports/ documents are being made available by police, revenue and medical authorities to the local Range Officer of Forests expeditiously on priority. State Governments may establish a robust procedure with specific timelines for this purpose. Revolving Fund may be established with local Divisional Forest officer for quick payment of *ex-gratia* and other expenses in dealing with human-wildlife conflict.


2. Crop Insurance:

The State/UT Governments may also utilise the *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana*

which provides add-on coverage. With a view to provide an add-on welfare to the farmers, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has included insurance coverage for crop loss due to attack by wild animals, under the *Pradhan Mantri fasal Bima Yojana*. This insurance program would help farmers as means of compensation for their crops that have been damaged due to wild animal attacks.

The Operational Guidelines of the *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana* may kindly be seen at the following link:

https://pmfby.gov.in/pdf/Revised_Operational_Guidelines.pdf


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Copy to:

1. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, All States/UTs
2. Chief Wild Life Wardens, All States/UTs
3. PSO to ADGF (WL)/PPS to IGF (WL)/PPS to JD (WL)