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THIS STORY IS FROM DECEMBER 13, 2016

Man-animal conflict: The wild forced to enter human settlement

TNN / Dec 13, 2016, 03:23 IST

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After it was decided to consider wild boar as vermin, a section of the people are clamouring for declaring peacock, monkey, bison, langur as vermin, too. Fortunately, the government has not issued any order, as the state wildlife advisory board has suggested a proper study.

Farmers and aggrieved persons are talking about the damage to their fields and crops, but nobody has referred to the displacement of the wild animals due to adverse impact of development on their habitat.



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UP NEXT

Man-animal conflict: The wild forced to enter human settlement



By the same token, we can turn to homo sapiens – man.

We can start with terrorists, as they destroy peace, spread terror and kill and maim people. Then we can add the species of thieves, murderers, rapists and other criminals to the list. They are also a nuisance to the society and create fear and trauma to citizens.

In fact, all criminals should be declared vermins and decimated in the first place.

In the days gone by, people celebrated feasts in the village with a lot of dancing, singing and fire, without loudspeakers and fireworks. This was done during the harvest time when the crops were ripe and tempting to animals.

This singing, dancing, clapping and fireworks were enough to deter the animals from invading the fields. The focus of these celebrations and feasts has now shifted to the towns, aided with loudspeakers, and Chinese-made firecrackers - far from the village to have any effect on the animals.

In the earlier days, there used to be a buffer zone between the forest and the fields. Trees, fruit bearing and flowering ones, were grown in the buffer zone.

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Monkeys who sat atop these trees ate one fruit and dropped nine to the ground. Which was in turn devoured by wild boar, deer and others. This was more than sufficient to keep them away from the fields. Though no doubt there was some intrusion into the field but by far it was to a lesser extent.

UP NEXT

Complaint filed against the village council to ban entry of wild animals into human settlements

Earlier, farmers used to build machans when the crops were ripe and take turns guarding the fields. Animals were driven away by loud noises, banging pots and pans, shouting and other means.

Farmers, today want to sit in the comfort of their homes and watch television instead, leaving their fields unguarded.

When the fields are destroyed, all they claim is compensation from the government. The government in fact has offered many options, one of them being solar fencing, offering huge subsidies to help the farmer protect his crop. But hardly anyone takes advantage of this.

By shooting these animals, we will soon be exterminating them as there are no laws in place to control the culling of these animals. It will be shoot-at-sight and gradually exterminate the whole species. In the same vein, the cow which is held sacred also damages the fields. Are you going to shoot the cow? No, because it is considered holy. What about the monkey. Isn't the monkey also considered holy?

How can we let the other offenders off the hook?

Those who have destroyed forests, animal habitats and the fragile environment for sheer greed. They should also be lined up to face the law. Once we are rid of this "nuisance", Goa will be free of vermin.

The writer is a wildlife enthusiast and has worked voluntarily with forest department in Goa for some time as honorary wildlife warden

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