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Summer 2023

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND



Journal of Beauty Without Cruelty - India
An International Educational Charitable Trust for Animal Rights

Birds love to eat Millets too! **International Year of Millets 2023**



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Hunting by Tribes

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**Elephants banned in
Tamil Nadu Temples**

**Captive Elephants born and
raised at Theppakadu camp**



Beauty Without Cruelty - India

4 Prince of Wales Drive, Wanowrie, Pune 411 040

☎ +91(20) 2686 1166 ☎ +91 74101 26541

✉ admin@bwcindia.org 🌐 bwcindia.org

SUMMER 2023

From my Desk...

Accidents?

The Indian Railways had revealed that between April 2019 and January 2023 more than 1 lakh cattle had been run over by trains.

BWC was seriously wondering how come so many cattle had met with accidents on railway tracks, when in February 2023 a news item stated 11 cows had been killed (and several others sustained grievous injuries) as farmers had pushed them onto railway tracks in Sambhal district of Uttar Pradesh because they had been destroying crops in their farms.

It is not only trains. January 2023 saw the death of 13 black bucks, and 2 were grievously injured on the Pune-Solapur highway because a wildlife crossing or overpass had not been built – 15 of them fell from a height of 35-feet onto the road.

Brutality

In March 2023 following illegally held dog fights in Gurgaon, the death of a dog, and 2 persons being removed from the WhatsApp group, a physical fight broke out in which a gun was fired injuring 2 persons. BWC wrote to the

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Chairperson, BWC - India

Designed by

Dinesh Dabholkar

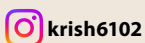
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Cover: Ashy prinia on head of millet

Photo courtesy: Krish Chandran



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Assistant Commissioner of Police (Crime) urging that appropriate action be taken by the Police to immediately stop illegal dog fights. After all, dog fights and betting (usually heavy betting in lakhs of rupees) are both illegal. It is high time the government came down heavily on the sadistic people who are responsible for spreading this so-called “sport” which is the forerunner to committing brutality towards fellow men. (See back page poster.)

Speciesism and Live Bait

In 2022, after 7 decades of extinction, the Government of India reintroduced cheetahs.

Everyone knows that 8 cheetahs were brought to India from Namibia, but few know that 12 more arrived from South Africa and that every year for 10 years another dozen will be added at Kuno National Park (KNP). Meanwhile 1 of the 8 died due to dehydration and kidney failure; and 4 cubs were born. Later 1 of the 12 also died.

The cheetahs’ favourite prey is cheetal, sambar, wild boar, peafowl and nilgai. So these species have been released in the cheetahs’ hunting enclosure which is downright cruel and unethical.



Hunter. Photo courtesy: freepressjournal.in



Prey. Photo courtesy: aajtak.in

When a wild animal kills in nature, the prey has a fair chance of survival by fleeing as fast as it can, but not in this case where there’s no chance of escape when cornered.

Let us not forget that leopards are known to attack adult cheetahs and that there are 9 leopards per 100 sq kms in KNP, so in order to keep them away from the cheetahs they are being lured with live bait (goats), and captured using cushioned snares and leghold traps which they often elude.

Behind the Scenes

The Spring 1998 issue of *Compassionate Friend* carried an article entitled “A performing Circus within a Sanctuary”. A persistent follow-up by BWC eventually resulted in The Government of India ordering the illegal Elephant Show at Mudumalai Sanctuary to be stopped. This is the same elephant camp where the recently Oscar winning film *Elephant Whisperers* was made. *The Hindu* article “Theppakadu camp: the last refuge for elephants destined to captivity” (March 2023) clearly states “since the camp was started 51 calves have been born with 32 having been raised and given to temples”.

Shikar is as Heinous as Murder

Ironically, the hunters are not all tribal – others are known to join in these shikar utsavs says Khurshid Bhathena

In today's India, hunting wild life is synonymous to poaching – and getting away scot-free. The majority use locally made muzzle-loading guns followed by craftily set snares. Some trap. Some kill with bows and arrows.

Tribal hunting communities are mainly from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. They may hunt for consumption, but the astronomical amounts earned selling wild animal carcasses, makes the risk worthwhile:

if caught, they know the punishment is only a small percentage of the money earned. And, they can merrily continue snaring and bettering their poaching abilities. For example, an unimaginably high number of pangolins are hunted for their meat and scales.

Shikar utsav is an ancient hunting custom. In Odisha it is observed with pangolins being ritualistically hunted for meat. The flesh is



The hunting festival happens annually on 13 April on a religious occasion. Photo courtesy: conservationindia.com

believed to cure various diseases. The scales are removed and some are fashioned into finger rings. However, the majority of scales are smuggled to Nepal or Myanmar, with their final destination being China. (Pangolins are the world's least known but most hunted and trafficked mammal.)

Hunting expeditions are carried out by tribal men usually during the first quarter of the year after the harvest. They kill with bows and arrows. Some chase the animals, while others wait to ambush them. They return to their villages with the carcasses hanging from bamboos held over their shoulders.



These cats fall under Schedules I and II of the WPA 1972 respectively. Photo courtesy: © HEAL

Section 3(1) of The Scheduled Tribes & Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, excludes the traditional right of hunting or trapping or extracting a part of the body of any species of wild animal. But the desire to hunt is found in many tribal and forest-dwelling people. Significantly the Angami tribe of Nagaland gave up their hunting tradition to protect wild life.

Predators...

Shikar Utsav or *Shikar Parab* is known by many names: *Bhagra Parab*, *Chait Parab*, *Chhow Parab*, *Charak Puja* and *Gajan*. The hunting festivals are held between January and June particularly on Buddha Purnima at Purulia, Ayudhya Hill in West Bengal. Inebriated Adivasis go into the forest beating drums and kill any wildlife they see.

Ritualistic hunting is undertaken by tribal communities of West Bengal and elsewhere usually on full moon nights. They use bows & arrows, spears, axes, spades, swords, knives, hammers, sling shots, nets, traps and other sharp weapons and target all wild mammals, birds and reptiles like fishing cats, monitor lizards, snakes, mongoose, wild boars, pangolins, jungle cats, porcupines, jackals, foxes, wolves, wild boars, civets and birds like pitas, owls, barbets, koels, francolins, bitterns and jacanas. Ironically, the hunters are not all tribal – others are known to join in these *shikar utsavs*.

In March 2023 the Calcutta High Court set up “Humane Committees” in five districts of West Bengal where *Shikar Utsav* took place so that it would curb the ritualistic hunting of animals. The Court directed the Committees to implement measures to protect wild animals in the forests from being killed indiscriminately, whether it is during hunting festivals or otherwise.

The order stated “Senseless killing of animals in the wild for pleasure and in purported show of false prowess is in our opinion, as heinous and culpable a crime as the offence of murder under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code. The animals in the forest do not interfere with the lives of human beings as long as they are left alone to live their lives in their natural surroundings. They may retaliate in self-defense and justifiably so, when humans unjustifiably intrude and trespass into their territory and disrupt or destroy their habitat. They have a right to peaceful co-existence with

Homo sapiens in this planet. They don’t have a voice to ventilate their pain and agony which they suffer by reason of the torture they are subjected to.”

...turned Protectors

The Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh used to hunt the Hornbill mainly for its beak/bill which was used with pride in their headgear. Now



Great Hornbill in flight (above). Photo courtesy: Angadachappa via Wikimedia Commons.
Nyishi tribe ceremonial helmet with fake beak carved out of wood (below). Photo courtesy: etsy.com

Hornbill nests are located in forests and boards are nailed on the trees which house them so that within a radius of 100 metres human activity is discouraged. Man-made headgear with fake Hornbill beaks and feathers that have been promoted are very well accepted.



Khurshid Bhatena is a Trustee and Honorary Secretary of BWC-India.

Interesting News

Pesticides found in Breast Milk

A study by Lucknow's Queen Mary Hospital in January 2023 found that in the previous 10 months pesticides in breast milk had led to the death of as many as 111 newborns in the Maharajanj district. Pesticides present in breast milk of non-vegetarian mothers were thrice as much as compared to vegetarian mothers.

Dolphin Massacre



22 killed Dolphins found on boat.
Photo courtesy: [indiatimes.com](https://www.indiatimes.com)

In March 2023, the Gujarat Forest Department along with the Indian Coast Guard team arrested 10 persons at Porbandar with 22 dolphin carcasses. The poachers were from Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Assam and Kerala.

Manja can kill Bats too

Unfortunately birds are not the only creatures who get hurt with *manja*. It was reported in February 2023 that bats living in Kolhapur's Town Hall were severely injured. They come outdoors in the night and return in the morning. When they alight on trees the *manja* entangled there, injures them. These bats migrate daily to the jungle 60 kms away in Radhanagari in the Western

Ghats where they find wild berries, etc. A few flowering plants such as the cucumber tree which blooms at night are in fact completely dependent upon bats.

Licence needed for Flying Kites

It is ironic that no one has till now pointed out that under The Aircraft Act, 1934 definitions "aircraft" includes kites and a licence authorising its use is required! Should this law be implemented the use of *manja* could be effectively stopped, thus saving countless lives of birds, animals – and humans.

Bird and Animal Hits by Aircraft on the rise

According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) bird hits to commercial aircraft rose from 1,430 in 2021 to 2,174 in 2022, a rise of 52%. Moreover, animals hit also rose from 23 to 36. The Airports Authority of India claim to be continuously taking various measures like maintaining grass height, removing garbage, deploying bird scarers, using sound guns, spikes on elevated lights and removing termite colonies in and around airports. Unfortunately it is just not helping.



This eagle was found lodged inside the wing of a Saudi Arabia Airlines Airbus that had flown from Dammam to Jeddah. Photo courtesy: [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk)

Bears made to Dance again



Rescued sloth bear from West Bengal's Malda district.
Photo courtesy: Malda Forest Department

In 2022 a sloth bear with a rope through his muzzle was rescued by the Malda (West Bengal) Forest Department. It was being transported in a cramped auto-rickshaw. It was reported that the bear's teeth had been smashed with metal rods and the delicate muzzle pierced. A thick, coarse rope was threaded through the fresh wound which was then used to control its every move. This short rope causes them agonising pain, forcing them to rear to their feet in distress every time the Kalandar master pulls at it to induce a "dancing" performance. The wounds remain severe and untreated.

Illegal export of Cattle to Bangladesh again

In 2015 the Border Security Force personnel began calling themselves *Cattle Security Force* in view of the hard work they had put in to stop live cattle from infiltrating into Bangladesh. But, smuggling cattle from across India via West Bengal into Bangladesh has become big business again: An animal costs between ₹ 25,000 and 30,000, add ₹ 15,000 towards transportation and bribes; across the border the animal fetches ₹ 70,000 to 80,000. The last lap is upstream with cattle runners latching onto their tails.

No more Elephants for Tamil Nadu Temples

In a three-pronged strategy to prevent cruelty to elephants, on 28 February 2023 the Madras High Court ordered first to ensure that no temple or private person in the state acquires any more elephants, and asked the officials to inspect all temples as well as privately owned elephants. More importantly, the court asked the government to decide on sifting all these elephants to government run rehabilitation camps.

Ban on Firecrackers violated

Diwali 2022 saw an increase in firecrackers despite manufacturers claiming that due to the ban on use of barium only 20% of the usual varieties could be produced. Unfortunately Sivakasi was fast becoming an illegal manufacturing hub.

Veganism enters Buckingham Palace

In March 2023 Buckingham Palace placed an advertisement for a job that "is truly like no other" to employ a live-in sous chef trained in the vegan arts to prepare meals for the royals and guests. King Charles III avoids eating meat, fish and dairy on certain days of the week due to environmental concerns, and his diet is part-vegan and part-vegetarian.

Vegetarian Only option in IHM and FCI thanks to VegDegree

There was a time when students of hotel management were forced to learn to cook slaughtered animals. But the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (under Ministry of Tourism, GoI) declared the availability of a "vegetarian only" degree since 2017 from the Institutes of Hotel Management and since 2023 from the Food & Craft Institutes.

Nutritional Profile of Millets

Courtesy Millets Recipes: A Healthy Choice by ICAR-Indian Institute of Millets Research

The nutritional importance of sorghum and other millets cannot be underestimated. Regular millet consumption reduces the incidence of cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and lifestyle (diabetes) diseases. To popularize millet consumption, it is important to understand the nutritional health benefits of millets. However the data on the nutritional composition of millets is scanty. Hence an attempt is made to compile a nutritional profile of different millets.

Chemical and nutritional composition of millet grain

The millet grain is rich in fiber and minerals has sufficient quantity of carbohydrates (60.9–72.6%), protein (6.22–11.6%) and fat (1.12–4.7%). Starch is the major constituent

of the grain. The grain contains protein, albumin, globulin, prolamin and gluten. Millets do not contain gluten and its slower hydrolysis makes it attractive to diabetics, celiac and ethnic groups. Particularly in developed countries, there is a growing demand for gluten free foods from people with celiac disease and intolerance to wheat. Though millet is nutritionally superior, its consumption has been decreased gradually due to the non-availability of processed clean grain in markets.

Millets have unique nutrients value which is good for physical and mental health. They have high fibre content, low sugar, vitamins and minerals and if consumed regularly they promote movement of the bowels, help detoxify the system, renders less blood sugar and cholesterol than eating fine flour or rice.

Nutrient composition of millets compared to fine cereals (per 100 g)

Millets/Cereals	Carbo-hydrates (g)	Protein (g)	Fat (g)	Energy (KCal)	Crude fibre (g)	Mineral matter (g)	Ca (mg)	P (mg)	Fe (mg)
Sorghum	72.6	10.4	1.9	349	1.6	1.6	25	222	4.1
Pearl millet	67.5	11.6	5	361	1.2	2.3	42	296	8
Finger millet	72	7.3	1.3	328	3.6	2.7	344	283	3.9
Foxtail millet	60.9	12.3	4.3	331	8	3.3	31	290	2.8
Proso millet	70.4	12.5	1.1	341	2.2	1.9	14	206	0.8
Kodo millet	65.9	8.3	1.4	309	9	2.6	27	188	0.5
Little millet	67	7.7	4.7	341	7.6	1.5	17	220	9.3
Barnyard millet	65.5	6.2	2.2	307	9.8	4.4	20	280	5
Rice (raw, milled)	78.2	6.8	0.5	345	0.2	0.6	10	160	0.7
Wheat (whole)	71.2	11.8	1.5	346	1.2	1.5	41	306	5.3

(Source: Nutritive Value of Indian Foods, NIN, Hyderabad, 2007)

Vitamin profile of millets and major cereals (mg/per 100 g)

Millets/Cereals	Thiamin	Niacin	Riboflavin	Vit A (carotene)	Vit B6	Folic Acid	Vit B5	Vitamin E
Foxtail millet	0.59	3.2	0.11	32	-	15	0.82	31
Proso millet	0.41	4.5	0.28	0	-	-	1.2	-
Finger millet	0.42	1.1	0.19	42	-	18.3	-	22
Little millet	0.3	3.2	0.09	0	-	9	-	-
Barnyard millet	0.33	4.2	0.1	0	-	-	-	-
Kodo millet	0.15	2	0.09	0	-	23.1	-	-
Sorghum	0.38	4.3	0.15	47	0.21	20	1.25	12
Pearl millet	0.38	2.8	0.21	132	-	45.5	1.09	19
Rice	0.41	4.3	0.04	0	-	8	-	-
Wheat	0.41	5.1	0.1	64	0.57	36.6	-	-

Source: Nutritive value of Indian foods, National Institute of Nutrition (2007)

Vegan Recipe *Sorghum Bhakarwadi*

Ingredients

Masala

- 10 grams pepper
- 40 grams sugar
- 50 grams sesame seeds
- 8 grams aniseed
- 25 grams cumin
- 10 grams almonds
- 50 grams coriander
- 15 grams salt
- 30 grams chilli powder
- 10 grams poppy seed powder
- 8 grams chat masala

Dough

- 50 grams black gram dal
- 50 grams sorghum flour
- 50 grams bengal gram flour
- 60 grams wheat flour

- Oil for frying
- Water as required



Preparation

Masala

Mix all the ingredients with water, add oil, and knead till dough consistency.

Dough

Make small balls. Roll them into a round shape and put the masala onto the round shape.

Roll inward and cut into small pieces.

Fry them in oil till golden brown.

Serve as a snack.

Do visit www.bwcindia.org/Web/Recipes/Recipesindex.html for an assortment of Beauty Without Cruelty's tested and tasted, healthy and delicious vegan recipes.

The Elephant in the Room

The elephant is a delicate animal living in large family groups led by a matriarchal female. Its habit includes foraging all day, taking intermittent rest and walking long distances says Amar Heblekar

The Subject

One of the most used metaphorical phrases in the English language is “the elephant in the room” refers to something as conspicuous as an elephant – the largest land mammal being present in the room, but is overlooked or deliberately ignored by everyone in the situation because it is socially uncomfortable to discuss it. Ironically, the phrase is used for as an allegory in discussion for every situation in life, be it alcoholism, corruption, ethics, except in the plight of the Elephant itself.

So is the plight of the Indian Elephant that we discuss every aspect of the state of the elephant in the country, as if the elephant were a thing, as if the elephant were an abstract life that had habits and lived in habitats that we conjured in our minds that were suited to the topic of the day.

The Litigant

There are several petitions in the various Courts in the country including one in the Supreme Court of India that discuss the plight of the captive elephants in the country. The cases vary from opposition to keeping custody of the elephant, transfer of the elephant, or legal provisions in the Wildlife Protection Act. Let us discuss a few of the cases and what they highlight on the plight of captive elephants and how best to find solutions for them.



Elephant housed in a religious institution in Karnataka.
Photo courtesy: Anonymous

Case 1

A Public Interest Litigation bearing Writ Petition No. 17 of 2022 in the High Court of Tripura filed by practicing advocate in public interest with prayers to seek a direction restraining transfer and transportation of captive bred Elephants from Northeast India and in particular from the States of Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh to an Elephant Camp of Shri Radhe Krishna Temple Elephant Welfare Trust in Gujarat and the petitioner further seeks an order directing an inquiry into past transfers and transport of Elephants from North Eastern States. Vide this order, the Court appointed a High-Powered

Committee (HPC) under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Shri Justice Deepak Verma (Former Judge, Supreme Court of India) to carry out a thorough and detailed physical inspection. The Chairman of the HPC is then to forward his recommendation Elephant-wise to the concerned Chief Wild Life Warden either recommending or not recommending the completion of the transfers, as the case may be. In case the Chairperson of the Committee recommends that an Elephant or Elephants should not be transferred, then the concerned Chief Wild Life Warden has to take steps to either confiscate the Elephant or take an undertaking from the concerned owner that the Elephant shall be taken care of without any cruelty. In case where such undertaking is taken, the concerned Chief Wild Life Warden shall be bound to monitor the Elephant concerned at regular intervals and take further steps if necessary accordingly.

Case 2

In Writ Petition No. 10688 of 2022 of the Division bench of Karnataka High Court, over the issue of whether the elephant can be transferred from one person to another, quotes that "The case of the Petitioner that the 1st Respondent should not have allowed transfer of the 4 Elephants from Karnataka is based on an article from a newspaper website. The article when read itself shows that the four female Elephants mentioned therein belonged to a private family. We find from the article itself that the private family had first acquired the Elephant in pursuance of their offer to take care of them as they were then circus Elephants. Since the handlers were unable to look after them they were sought to be returned. The Respondent No.3 appears to have given them refuge. We do not find any transaction of a commercial nature in this. Even otherwise it is not the case

of the Petitioner that the transaction was of a commercial nature. In such cases where the Elephants are or were privately owned, the question of involvement of Forest Authorities in minimal and limited only to the extent of granting a transfer permit in accordance with Rule 125-e of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules. We therefore find nothing wrong with the relocation of the Elephants to the Respondent No.3. We also do not see anything wrong in other instances of transfers private Elephants which are loosely stated in the Petition. In fact the only aspect relevant for relocation of an Elephant which is privately owned is the consent of the person in whose possession the Elephant is, such consent having been given without any element of commercial transaction. Once such consent is given it is incumbent on authorities to grant transfer permits in accordance with law."

Case 3

Another Public Interest Litigation bearing Writ Petition No. 30 of 2022 in the High Court of Bombay at Goa filed by People for Animals, Goa seeking transfer of two different elephants housed in two Spice Farms in Goa used for commercial purpose to the Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center in Karnataka so that they are properly treated and cared for. The two elephants were transferred to the rescue centre ultimately.

Case 4

The Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center itself has filed a Writ Petition No. 743 of 2014 in the Supreme Court of India (with financial support from Beauty Without Cruelty). The Supreme Court issued an order dated 18th August 2015 that "As far as the present issue is concerned, we are inclined to direct that the Chief Wild Life Warden shall see to it that all the captive elephants existing in the State of Kerala are counted and in

the absence of obtainment of requisite certificate under Section 42 of the 1972 WLP Act and the declaration made under Section 40, appropriate action shall be initiated against the owners. " In response to this, the Forest and Wildlife Department of Kerala issued an order dated 26th February 2016 "to accord sanction to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (WL) and Chief Wildlife Warden to register 289 captive elephants in the State which do not have valid ownership certificate as one time amnesty scheme for a period of one month from the date of this order under subsection (4) of section 40 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 on condition that the illegal transfer of elephants must not be condoned."

Case 5

This order was challenged in the Supreme Court through an Interlocutory Application No. 25 and 27 of 2016 and an order dated 4th May 2016 issued by the Supreme Court "direct that the State Government shall not issue any ownership certificate to any of the persons in possession of elephants. That apart, the persons who are in possession of elephants shall not transfer the elephants outside the State nor shall they part with the elephants by way of transfer in any manner. If any ownership certificate has been issued in the meantime, the same shall be withdrawn subject to the final verdict of this Court."

The Law

The States of Kerala and Tamil Nadu already have their respective Captive Elephant Rules in place which have been issued in exercise of the powers conferred by subsection (2) of section 64 of the Wildlife Protection Act.



Elephants at a Care Facility. *Photo courtesy: Anonymous*

The Wildlife Protection Act in turn has been amended and notified on 19th December 2022. Before this amendment, the Act prohibited any person from acquiring, receiving, keeping in one's control, custody or possession, sell, offer for sale or otherwise transfer or transport any animal specified in Schedule I and Part II of Schedule II except with the previous permission of the Chief Wildlife Warden. Effectively, it meant that the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State could authorize the transfer of elephants provide it is not for commercial purpose. This in practice applied within the State. Where the transfer was for elephants outside the State, it required the prior permission of the Chief Wildlife Warden of that State.

The amendment has withdrawn this power from the Chief Wildlife Warden and vested this subject to such terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the Central Government as per provisions of section 43 (2) "Provided that the transfer or transport of a captive elephant for a religious or any other purpose by a person having a valid certificate of ownership shall be subject to such terms and conditions as may be prescribed by the Central Government".

The Elephant in the Room

The issue that begs consideration is the elephant. In Case 1 above, the Court directs Chief Wild Life Warden has to take steps to either confiscate the Elephant or take an undertaking from the concerned owner that the Elephant shall be taken care of without any cruelty. In Case 2, since the handlers were unable to look after them they were sought to be returned. In the rest of the cases, it is a question as to who gets custody of the elephant and of the interpretation of the provisions of the law.

In either of the cases 1 and 2, the irony is disturbing. The infrastructure, expertise as well as capability to handle the enormous but delicate elephant cannot be generated overnight. If these requirements were already in place, the elephants, if illegal, would have been anyway confiscated and housed.

In folk lore, the most severe punishment for a citizen given by the King of that era, was making him take care of a white elephant. The white elephant was considered holy and if due to negligence anything happened to the elephant, the care taker would invite the wrath of God himself.

The elephant is a delicate animal living in large family groups led by a matriarchal female. Its habit includes foraging all day long, taking intermittent rest, walking long distances, with a simple and small digestive system that excretes most of what is eaten barely getting much nutrition, needing enormous quantities of water and generally a wasteful feeder creating a mess where it eats, which in the wild actually is beneficial as it feeds a number of lesser herbivores which otherwise would not have had access to all the leaf matter left behind.

The captive elephant, on the other hand, is confined to small places, chained to a peg, isolated from its family, fed at scheduled

times, served limited quantities of water, and if lucky, taken on short walks or if unlucky, subjected to cruelty. The qualities of these limited resources effectively have become standards by which the ability of the owner is judged. If the quality of any of these parameters is considered unsatisfactory, the elephant is transferred to a similar facility judged as satisfactory by human analysis.

Elephant management is discussed in piece meal basis; in the way human issues are discussed – roti, kapda aur makan. While discussing Captive elephants, the base is taken of need of captive elephants in the past – a water pond, a scrubbing area, fodder and a place to chain. We are forgetting what type of animal the elephant is, in the first place.

When we are offering solutions to captive elephants, we deliberately ignore the metaphorical elephant and relegate the live elephant to an article. An article that if one party cannot take care of is handed over to another. The custody is discussed as if every party knows how to take care of the elephant; it just has to land in their respective laps.

In no forum is it discussed why the elephant has landed in such a stage, how are we going to avoid future elephants landing in similar situations, and what is the best way out of such predicaments? The real topic – large place to forage, living in family group, the symbiotic wild animal support group – the elephant in the room is blissfully ignored as that is a very uncomfortable topic to discuss.

Why are all elephant problems discussed in the same level as human solutions? It is high time we found solutions for elephant's problems in the level of elephant solutions.

It is high time we don't ignore the elephant in the room!



Amar Heblekar is Assistant Conservator of Forests, Legal Cell, Goa Forest Department. He is a BWC-India life member.

Readers Write

Who is Trespassing?

In the Spring 2023 issue of *Compassionate Friend*, there was an article "Animals Hit and Run by Speeding Trains" written by Nirmal Nischit which had a letter written by the Chief Engineer/Planning, Western Railways to BWC where he says "...Further, it is also mentioned that trespassing is punishable offence according to section 147 of Indian Railways Act 1989."

The first question that pops up in the mind is: Are animals expected to know they are trespassing human property? Then comes the question: Who is trespassing? When we make roads and railway lines inside forested areas, isn't it we humans who are trespassing on area that belongs to animals?

Strangely, most humans live entire lifetimes not even recognizing how much and how frequently we rob animals their right to Mother Nature's bounty. Where I live in Kotagiri, the Nilgiris, we have many monkeys. They often come to our houses in search of food and are considered a menace by many who use shotguns, stones, sticks and electric fences to scare them off their properties, but really, their share of food is sitting on our supermarket shelves! Why is it important for shopkeepers to have shelves loaded with food? Why is it important for farmers to harvest entire crops without leaving a share for animals and birds?

The sad part is that some part of this harvest, more often than not, ends up rotting in some government godown or on a supermarket shelf, to be at the end of their shelf life carelessly thrown into a garbage bin.

In Kotagiri we also get to see bison or as they are also known the Nilgiri Gaur. They come in herds of about 10-15 foraging for grass amid tea estates. Before the British colonizers brought tea and eucalyptus to the Nilgiris, the Nilgiris were a lush marshland full of springs. Now the springs are dwindling under the pressure of urbanization and the grassy marshlands the Gaur could feed on have been replaced with mountains and mountains of tea. Yes, the estates of lush green are beautiful to look at specially on a misty morning with a little bit of sun on the horizon, but really, what has all that tea done to the grassy marshes the Gaur feed on?

Do we really need so much of food, so much of tea as to cost the animal world their share of food, such that they have to struggle to survive?

We glibly call them trespassers and try to shoo them off "our" property, but the earth was never "our" property. She belongs equally to all the species who inhabit Her and Her bounty was meant to be shared equally.

Dear humanity, it's time to look at a mirror and to ask the question, "Who is trespassing?"



Ritambhari M. is a BWC-India life member and writes to create awareness on ethical, social and environmental issues.

Form IV (See Rule 8)

Statement about ownership of the newspaper entitled *Compassionate Friend* as required to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February.

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I, Diana Ratnagar, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: 1st March 2023

Sd/- Diana Ratnagar
Signature of Publisher

Camels Rescued in Tamil Nadu

In response to a Public Interest Litigation filed by People For Cattle in India (PFCI) with financial backing from Beauty Without Cruelty (BWC), the Madras High Court had in 2016 forbidden the slaughtering/sacrificing of camels; then in 2022 the HC ordered no trafficking of camels in the state. In view of these orders, 5 camels were seized by the Tamil Nadu Police in April 2023. Two camels have injuries, two have ticks and one is young.

They were immediately transported by a team of volunteers from People for Animals (PFA) and PFCI from Soolagiri, Krishnagiri District to the PFA shelter at Thiruvallur District, Chennai. Shree Vardhman Sthanakvasi Jain Sangh Walkeshwar from Mumbai paid in part via BWC to shift them to safety.



Rescued camels loaded on truck ready to leave.
Photo credit: Manoj



One of the rescued camels happily eating fodder provided at the PFA Shelter. *Photo credit: Dr Shiranee Pereira*

BWC wrote to the Chief Ministers of Rajasthan and Gujarat and sent them pictures of the seized camels. We told them that only if the camels were healthy, which was not always so since they were made to walk for months to reach their destinations, could they be easily returned to their state of origin. If not, they needed to be kept in a shelter for the rest of their lives which was both financially and physically difficult for animal welfare organizations. Sending them back was also difficult and expensive. In view of this, it was imperative for the government to ensure that not a single camel went out of the state.

Brutality



**Violence among men
starts with making
creatures fight each other**



**Boycott cruel
Animal and Bird Fights**



Beauty Without Cruelty - India

4 Prince of Wales Drive, Wanowrie, Pune 411 040

☎ +91(20) 2686 1166 📞 +91 74101 26541

✉ admin@bwcindia.org 🌐 bwcindia.org

