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COMPASSIONATE FRIEND

Journal of Beauty Without Cruelty-India

An International Educational Charitable Trust for Animal Rights



In this Issue:

De-extinction and Ethics

"Jumping Chicken"

Unani and Siddha

Wildlife Trade

Live Bait



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Monsoon 2025

From my Desk...

Letter-writing to the Rescue

Abattoir plan revoked

On knowing that the draft Development Plan included the construction of a slaughterhouse and adjoining animal hospital near the temple town of Alandi (Maharashtra) there were lots of objections, particularly from the Warkari sect. BWC also wrote to the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Commissioner. We said it was ethically wrong to construct a slaughterhouse next to an animal hospital, the abattoir would pollute the sacred river which flows in the area, and killing of animals would harm the sanctity of the temple town and hurt religious sentiments.

Within 3 weeks the Chief Minister announced that the proposal in Moshi, located on the Dehu-Alandi Road, reserved for a slaughterhouse would be scrapped.

Camels

Every year before Bakri Eid, BWC has been reminding the government that it is illegal to sacrifice camels. This year again, we first wrote to the Chief Ministers of

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A herd of camels near Pokhran, Rajasthan.

Photo courtesy: aljazeera.com

Rajasthan and Gujarat that no camel should be allowed to go out of their states. We then wrote to the Chief Ministers, District Magistrates and Director Generals of Police of all the other states in India, requesting them to stop the entry and sale of camels and if they do illegally enter their states, to immediately send them back. Our request letters were backed with copies of the Madras High Court Judgments of 2016 and 2022, the Telangana High Court Order of 2020, AWBI's annual Advisory regarding Camels, FSSAI's declaration pointing out that Camel Slaughter is not allowed, and declaration that the BSF faces a shortage of Camels.

Bulls

Besides this, whenever BWC has got to know of illegal bullock-cart races planned to be held in Punjab (about twice a week), BWC has approached the Chief Secretary, Animal Husbandry Commissioner, District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police of the area requesting them on e-mail or SMS to take immediate action against the organisers and stop the illegally planned events. Fortunately, they pay heed to our requests, except when our requests were sent on the day of the event after it began, most other events were stopped.



Bullock-cart race in Punjab.

Photo courtesy: tribuneindia.com

We are of course most thankful to the Punjab state government officials for their immediate and appropriate action against the organisers.

Frogs' Legs are called "Jumping Chicken"

Despite the 1987 ban, illegal export consignments of frogs' legs have been occurring and are increasing, particularly from Kerala. BWC informed the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau about it and also requested them to alert Customs and other authorities to also be vigilant, especially during the monsoon months when frogs are trapped.



Smuggled bull frogs seized from a bus in Goa.

Photo courtesy: indiatoday.com

For years the Forest Departments have been unsuccessfully trying to stop the poaching of frogs not only within Goa but when smuggled in from adjoining states. Frogs' legs continue to be served in restaurants disguised as "jumping chicken". BWC has appealed to the Chief Minister of Goa to issue an immediate Notification banning their sale in all food establishments.



Diana Ratnagar
Chairperson

Interesting News

Peacock Feathers

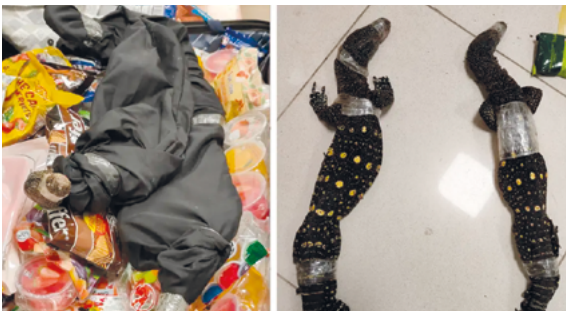


Massive seizure of peacock feathers.
Photo courtesy: instagram.com

Peacocks are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. State Forest Departments have for the past year seized lakhs of peacock feathers being traded or exported from Mumbai and Pune to Siliguri and Kakchining. It is obvious that they were obtained by killing the birds.

Smuggling Wild Life in Suitcases to India

Despite a string of recent arrests and ongoing prosecution in Malaysia involving travellers headed for India with wild life hidden in their luggage, in June 2025, 2 taped and wrapped monitor lizards were seized from the luggage of passengers who arrived at Trichy from Kuala Lumpur. Smuggling via air from South-East Asia to India was found to be increasing.



The mouths and limbs of the monitor lizards were taped together before the animals were wrapped in black cloth.
Photo courtesy: freemalaysiatoday.com

Pethas and Pollution

Calcium carbonate can be of mineral or animal origin: limestone, chalk, sea-shells, molluscs, oysters, clams, mussels, snails, coral, pearls and egg-shells. Heating removes carbon dioxide and converts the calcium carbonate to calcium oxide. Also known as quicklime, burnt lime and pure lime, calcium oxide is inedible.

However, calcium oxide treated with plenty of pure water in a controlled environment (slaking of lime) produces calcium hydroxide or edible lime; also called pickling lime or *choona/choonam* - it is commonly used in *paan*. It is also utilised in the production of the famous Indian sweetmeat called *petha*.

Agra's unorganized sector *petha* industry, situated at Noori Gate about 7 kms from the Taj Mahal, generates about 17,800 kgs of solid waste per day in the form of white pumpkin peels, sugar syrup and lime water, resulting in pollution that harms the monument. In 2025, the Agra Municipal Corporation was again ordered by the Supreme Court to prohibit polluting industries around the Taj Mahal and relocate the Noori Gate *petha* units to the New Petha City at Kalindi Vihar, 30 kms away.

Claimed to be vegetarian, the main ingredients in *petha* are white pumpkin or ash gourd, slaked lime or *choona* (no different to what is used in *paan*, and very likely of non-veg origin), milk (not vegan), *kesar/saffron*, sugar and lemon juice or *gulab-jal/rose* water or *angoor/grape* juice as flavouring.

Veg should eat from Veg Eateries

A customer who ordered veg momos but received non-veg momos took a restaurant to court claiming they suffered mental trauma since their religious beliefs were hurt and should therefore be compensated ₹6 lakh. The Consumer Panel that was approached appropriately stated in 2025 "Why choose non-veg eatery if veg matters? If meat offends your beliefs, why choose a restaurant serving both kinds of food?"

Hives on Hire



Honey Bee.

Photo courtesy: Andreas Trepte, from wikimedia commons

Bees are disappearing. More and more colonies are mysteriously vanishing in what is called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). Their disappearance is alarming, certainly not because of lack of honey for humans, but because bees are responsible for pollination in everything that grows from crops to vegetables to fruits.

Lack of bees is therefore affecting farmers. There has been an overall 20% decline in their population with Odisha losing almost 80%. For example, pomegranate farmers of Maharashtra have resorted to renting beehive boxes. It seems the growing demand cannot be met by suppliers who transport hives across the nation. Nagpur's orange growers, litchi growers of Bihar and apple orchards in Himachal Pradesh have been utilizing "pollinator rental" and say their crop yields have risen by 20% to 35%.

Each box/hive contains 10 combs/frames with a total of around 1,25,000 honeybees and queen of course – it costs Rs 2,500 a month to rent. An area of 15,000 sq ft needs up to 20 boxes for pollination. Bee rental companies penalize farmers for losses due to pesticides, particularly neonicotinoids that result in impairing the nervous systems of insects and cause problems such as weakened immunity to loss of navigational abilities, leading to CCD death.

The main risk in renting is that of exposing bees consistently to only one or two kinds of pollen and this impacts their immunity. Another drawback is that their presence in fields displaces the local remaining bees, and in turn jeopardise the area's biodiversity. Focusing only on honeybees, others such as carpenter, blue orchard and bumblebees are moved to the sidelines. Bees are there to strengthen ecosystems, not for commercial exploitation.

FSSAI bans "100%..."

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) banned the use of "100%..." on food labels, packaging and promotional content in May 2025. They rightly reasoned that it was misleading consumers of packaged food articles due to its ambiguity and potential for misinterpretation within the existing regulatory provisions.

BWC would like to cite 2 examples: "100% no meat" and "100% natural ingredients". They are confusing as they do not clearly declare that no animal origin ingredients have been utilised even if the veg symbol has been affixed.

Poachers caught red-handed

In May 2025, as much as 52 kgs of wild animal meat (hare, wild boar and deer) along with poaching tools were confiscated by the Maharashtra Forest Department in a surprise raid at Tikona village of Maval Taluka.

Around the same time, 21 poachers were caught red-handed by the Forest Department while setting up multiple traditional traps each 20 feet long and 6 feet in height in Junnar's Rajur region. Some traps were those used to catch quails. The 4 main poachers hailed from Hadsar and Manganewadi villages (incidentally not far from Tikona village mentioned above) as well as from Surale and Tejur villages. They admitted to capturing wild boar, sambar and barking deer regularly for their flesh.

GE vs. GM

In May 2025, for the first time in the world, 2 new varieties of GE (Genetically/Genome Edited) rice were released, for which Intellectual Property Rights registration was to be obtained by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Lab-to-land is expected to take 3 to 5 years.

Both GE and GM (Genetically Modified) are GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms). But the difference between GE and GM plants is that no foreign/alien/outside genes are introduced in GE plants – the genes within the plant itself are edited. Whereas foreign genes (could be of animal origin) are introduced in GM plants.

The Government of India has launched a ₹ 500 crore programme around genome-editing which includes work on field crops, cereals, pulses, oilseeds, horticulture and even livestock.

In fact, researchers at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) recently announced having produced India's first gene-edited sheep. By disrupting the myostatin gene, muscle mass in the animal got enhanced by 30%. Earlier, SKUAST had cloned a Pashmina goat named Noori for finer fibre and higher wool yield. Production had involved three animals: the first produced the egg cell, the second genetic material and the third was the surrogate mother.



India's first gene-edited sheep was produced by a team of researchers at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology.
Photo courtesy: telegraphindia.com

Non-Veg Ingredients in Siddha and Unani Products

The Summer 2018 issue of Compassionate Friend carried an article on Non-Veg Ingredients in Ayurvedic Products and the Winter 2018 issue on Non-Veg Ingredients in Homeopathy Products. We are now covering animal ingredients used in Siddha and Unani Products

At first there was the Central Council for Research in Ayurveda & Siddha. Many years later in 1995 the Department of Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H) was set up. In 2003 it was renamed the Department of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (AYUSH). In November 2014 it became the Ministry of AYUSH.

Siddha

A joint venture between the Government of India and the state government of Tamil Nadu, the National Institute of Siddha (NIS) at Chennai is an autonomous organisation under AYUSH. The Institute conducts a postgraduate course for students, provides medical care, conducts research and promotes the science.

The Siddha system of medicine dates back to around 12000 BC. The word Siddha means established truth. The origin is attributed to Siddha Agastiyar.

It is believed that the *Tridoshas* control the basic physiological functions of the body along with 5 sub-*doshas* for each of the 3. When the normal equilibrium of these *tridoshas*/humours of the body – air, fire

and water – is disturbed, disease occurs. The *Tridoshas* are *vaadham/vata* (lightest, blue), *pittham/pitta* (medium, red) and *kapam/kapha* (heaviest, yellow) and the ideal ratio between them 4:2:1 respectively.

The cause for imbalance could be the environment, climatic conditions, diet, physical activities or stress. Diet and lifestyle play a major role in maintaining good health and curing problems.

The Siddha Materia Medica is based on Humoural Pathology. It asserts that all substances of the animal, the vegetable and the mineral kingdom contain one or more of these three humours in their composition and therefore, diet should play an important role in the maintenance of these humours in preventing diseases and ailments.

Since the treatment is mainly aimed to restore equilibrium of the 3 humours of the body, cleansing procedures are advised: vomiting, purgation, enema, and nasal drops.

Coral, conch, horn of deer, musk and honey are some of the animal ingredients utilised. Inorganic chemical compounds are also used as therapies for treating diseases: Siddha literature lists 220 minerals which include metals, salts, mercury and arsenic compounds, as well as other minerals. And, several medicinal plants or herbs utilised fall under IUCN's rare endangered and threatened categories.

Siddha physicians may also apply pressure on vital points or neuromuscular junctions, to treat some ailments.

Unani

The Unani system of medicine based on the teachings of Hippocrates (Father of Medicine) dates back to 460 BC and basically believes in prevention of diseases. World Unani Day is observed on 11 February.

Unani drugs contain many animal origin substances although plants are also utilised.

A great number of Unani medicines are of insect origin with shellac/lac as one of the major ingredients. Other insects utilised are:

- Bee Venom, Beeswax and Honey
- Blister beetles
- Cochineal Insects
- Colorado Bug
- Cuban and Spanish Spiders
- German and Oriental Cockroaches
- Ladybird Beetle
- Live Wasp
- Scorpion/*Bichoo*
- Silkworm
- Yellow Locust

Other creatures utilised:

- Allantoin excretion: urine of mammals
- Ambergris/*Ambar*: whale vomit
- Crawfish
- *Jund bedastar*: testicles of a cat species
- *Kharateen*: earthworm soaked in saline water and dried
- *Kafe dariya*: cuttlefish backbone
- *Mahi rubian*: fish extract
- Musk/*Kasturi*: musk deer pod/organ
- Pigeon: blood and flesh
- *Sartaan*: ash from burnt crab

In addition to animal ingredients, phlebotomy is practised. Live creatures like leeches, wasps and maggots are used to cure certain diseases using blood-letting for which they are made to suck blood.

Wildlife Management and Live Bait

While the obvious reason against live baiting is because of the cruelty aspect and the fact that this might make the tiger lose its hunting instincts and escalate to human-wild animal conflicts, the not-so-obvious reason is, it is against the principles of wildlife management itself says Amar Heblekar

An Economics Professor I know, is entrusted with a research project, on how ecotourism can be made into a profitable business. Tourism is a highly competitive business and the economics in the tourism business works, on not just being profitable, but on the percentage of growth in profit every succeeding year that can be achieved.

Applying the same principles on ecotourism is disastrous for the environment and the protected area. It just does not justify the ideals of wildlife management. Wildlife management essentially aims in maintaining the ecological balance of a forest protected area with minimal human interference.

When we include ecotourism in a wildlife protected area, the rules and guidelines are worded to align with the principles, but leave a lot of loopholes in between to allow economics to seep in.

When I told the Economics Professor that ecotourism is essentially not a profit-making entity but rather has to fit within the constraints of wildlife conservation education – the core purpose for which ecotourism is allowed in protected areas – she looked at me blankly, as if I was speaking Greek.

For a tourism model to be successful – synonymous for financially profitable – there must be a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) which is very essential. The State of Goa sells its beaches, the States in the Himalayan region sells its mountains and States of Gujarat and Rajasthan sell their culture.

Forest and wildlife protected areas are essentially conservation areas that are protected under the law for ethical as well as for preservation of the environment – protection from global warming, climate change, etc – which are considered intangible benefits.



A calf tied in the forest as live bait.

Intangible benefits are non-monetary advantages that cannot easily be quantified or measured in financial terms. Tourism is essentially a tangible benefit which has a clear financial value and is incremental in nature to be called successful.

So clubbing tourism and ecotourism in the same bracket and expecting the same results is not only improper but is irrational. They just don't fit together. Yet, the Tourism Department of every State puts constant pressure to exploit this destination to be placed on its tourism map and expect at least the same revenue model.

It is precisely because of this reason that managers of protected areas are under constant pressure to get their wildlife on the tourism map of the State. And to sell their ecotourism model, they need a USP. And what better and bigger USP is there in a forest than the tiger!

Sighting the tiger in a forest in the wild is definitely a revenue generator that can compete with even the grandest established tourism destination. But what is not generally accepted by the administration is that tigers essentially are shy in nature and sighting of a tiger in the wild is practically one in a hundred chance, if not more.

Yet, the revenue model of mass tourism requires that the USP must be available for the visitor on every visit just as every visitor to the beach gets to see the sea and every visitor to the mountains get to see the peaks. And, to fulfil this objective, park managers are forced to resort to unethical practices – live baiting.

Let me explain what is wrong in live baiting. While the obvious reason against live baiting is because of the cruelty aspect and the fact that this might make the tiger lose its hunting instincts and escalate to human-wild animal conflicts, the not-so-obvious reason is it is against the principles of wildlife management itself.

Wildlife Management vs. Ecotourism

Wildlife management is essentially about maintaining the equilibrium in a forest protected area and presence or absence of a tiger within the protected area reflects on the health of the protected area. Wild animal census including tiger census in protected areas are carried out in protected area once in three or four years to essentially count the relative density of the wild animal population.

This relative density data is used for formulating the management interventions needed to bring about equilibrium in the protected area. If the relative density of herbivores is increasing, it is a cause for alarm, needing intervention of protected area managers as it indicates that the carnivore population is on decline; conversely, relative decrease in herbivore population indicates intervention in improvement of vegetation composition – usually implies that density of lantana or eupatorium weed growth has increased and needs park managers intervention.

But because of the pressures of revenue-oriented ecotourism, park managers often are forced to resort to practices that are against the ethics of wildlife management. The tiger is the singular species that the entire ecotourism model of the country runs on.

Kaziranga is one of the few wildlife protected area that is blessed with the rhinoceros that is visible easily because of the type of terrain and nature of the animal; no other protected area comes to mind that has a charismatic animal to fulfil the demands of extravagant and free-spending tourist.

Ecotourism near wildlife protected areas is encouraged in the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, and at the same time, management plans of the protected areas include ecotourism as a tool of management. The authority that writes and approves the protected area management plan vests with a single authority – the Chief Wildlife Warden.

Because of this, the authority can make supply provisions within the management plan to manipulate actions that give tigers more visibility. Eventually, the very tool – viz. wild animal and tiger census – that is implicitly created to gauge the health of the protected area becomes the marketing tool and fails to be used for wildlife management.

In wildlife management, uneven increase in tiger population is cause for alarm; in ecotourism, increase in tiger population is credited to the park manager and adds another feather to his cap.

The very tenet of wildlife management is lost in the bargain and in my opinion, the wildlife management of that protected area is a failure for it has not fulfilled the objectives of wildlife management.



Amar Heblekar is presently posted as General Manager, Goa Forest Development Corporation based at Panaji. He has extensive experience in wildlife management having worked for over 20 years as in charge of Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park, Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary and Bondla Zoo. He has also been posted as Principal, Goa State Forest Research and Training Institute for over ten years. He has also handled legal matters in High Court and Supreme Court cases being posted in the Goa Forest Department as in charge of the Legal Cell. He has written the Master Plan for Bondla Zoo, Management Plans for Bhagwan Mahavir National Park, Dr. Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary and Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary. He is also a BWC-India life member.

Tackling Wildlife Trade

The Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 was amended in 2022 after a lot of issues were raised regarding the implications of the new amendment. There were and continue to be concerns regarding the nature of the new law with regard to protection of both indigenous and foreign (popularly known as exotic) animals. These thoughts have been triggered by the spurt in trade in exotic animals around the country, seizures of various foreign animals in different parts of India and the relaxation of certain legal components of the Wildlife Protection Act with regard to movement of elephants across the country. In view of these developments, wildlife trade expert, Dr Neil D'Cruze, spoke to Shubhobroto Ghosh on legality surrounding trade in wildlife. This interview was conducted whilst Neil D'Cruze was Global Head of Research in World Animal Protection.

What is the dominant paradigm on legality surrounding wildlife trade or trade in animals?

NdC: The commercial wildlife trade has become a big and burgeoning business. With growing globalization, traditional local hunting practices for subsistence have evolved to cater to an ever-expanding international demand for live wild animals and their body parts, as pets, food, fashion, traditional medicine, and entertainment.

Unfortunately, much of the current wildlife legislation has been designed primarily to facilitate the ownership and commercial

exploitation of these animals for economic gain. It often overlooks their sentient nature, failing to recognize them as beings capable of thought, emotion, and experiencing sensations like pleasure and pain.

Is the legal position on wildlife trade currently being applied adequate to save animals and ensure humane treatment of animals?

NdC: Concerningly, the role of the expanding commercial wildlife trade in driving the current biodiversity crisis is increasingly evident. Not only can it contribute to the overexploitation of wildlife, pushing some species already vulnerable due to habitat loss and climate change closer to extinction, but it also poses risks further destabilizing ecosystems.

Furthermore, our understanding of the emotional lives of wild animals is maturing. This extends beyond mammals to include birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, crustaceans, and in the case of cognition even insects. While their ways of processing information and expressing reactions may differ from ours, the mounting scientific evidence of wild animal sentience forces us to confront the significant suffering involved in capturing, breeding, and killing wild animals for profit.



Birds, like this Golden Oriole, are illegally traded as pets in large numbers. Photo courtesy: Shubhobroto Ghosh

What are the principal weaknesses in the current legal framework protecting animals and governing trade in animals?

NdC: Even in cases where wildlife legislation exists to either conserve wild populations or protect them from cruelty, it often employs a 'negative list' approach. This means that exploiting wild animals for personal pleasure or commercial gain is permitted unless there is unmistakable evidence showing that such use is contributing to population declines or causing significant suffering. At this point they are added to the list of species that cannot be traded.

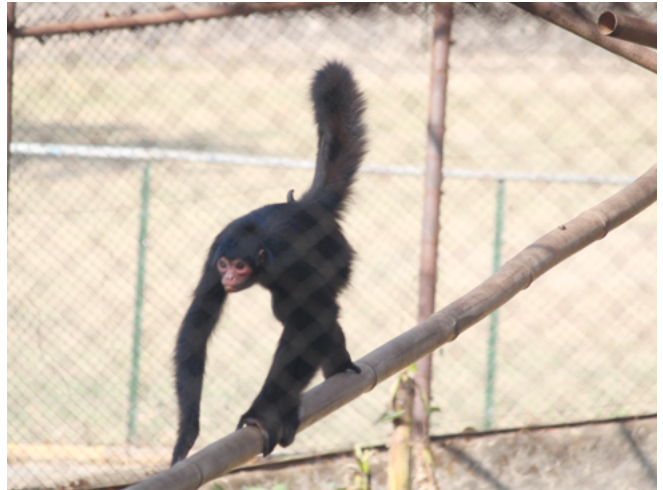
However, this approach poses significant challenges. Gathering such evidence is costly, time-consuming, and complex. Conservationists typically bear the burden of proving the need for legislation, rather than the wildlife trade industry having to justify its practices. Essentially, this means that, for those who value wild animals beyond their economic worth, wildlife trade laws seem upside down and are fundamentally flawed.

What distinguishes legality from morality in animal protection, that is, what is the difference between jurisdiction and jurisprudence on animal protection?

NdC: Regrettably, the current state of the global commercial wildlife trade highlights a significant gap between what is legally permitted, what is deemed 'sustainable,' and what is considered 'humane'...

What do you understand as being the greatest need of the hour in changing the legal status of some animals that can be legally exploited?

NdC: At the very least, we must acknowledge the growing scientific evidence demonstrating that wild animals are sentient



Spider Monkeys are exploited in wildlife trade for being kept as pets. Photo courtesy: Payel Biswas

beings capable of thought and feeling. In addition, the conventional 'if it pays, it stays' approach to wildlife conservation, fervently adhered to in recent decades, is proving ineffective.

Consequently, we must also thoroughly apply our knowledge of their biology and behaviour to minimize suffering during capture, transport, slaughter, and sale.

This includes all manner of species being exploited for our various consumer desires: ball pythons and zebrafish traded as pets, frogs and crickets traded for food, bears and sharks used in traditional medicine, and elephants and dolphins exploited for entertainment, along with crocodiles and mink 'farmed' for fashion.

However, it is worth considering a more ambitious approach. If our ultimate goal is animal well-being, then the most effective strategy would be to refrain from commercially exploiting wild animals altogether.

Instead of continuing to expand our exploitation of wildlife, we should focus on redirecting consumer demand for live wild animals and their body parts toward



Animals like this Albino Wallaby are increasingly finding their way into exotic pet trade in India.
Photo courtesy: Rupankar Bhattacharya

alternatives that do not involve capture and killing. For instance, research has highlighted the potential for herbal alternatives in traditional Asian medicines and promoting wildlife-friendly tourism.

Does the law protect reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates adequately apart from protecting birds and mammals?

NdC: There have already been some discernible movements globally that indicate a fundamental shift in consciousness, moving away from viewing wildlife merely as a “resource” to exploit, and towards recognising animals as sentient beings with inherent value. This shift is reflected in legislative efforts in various regions and countries, including India, Germany, Tanzania, and Chile, which have passed laws affirming this perspective.

Moreover, some countries like Ecuador and New Zealand, are expanding this perspective on a broader scale, acknowledging the rights of nature, and granting legal rights to ecosystems and other natural entities.

However, despite these positive strides, the current legal landscape often falls short in adequately protecting wildlife. In particular, recognition of sentience and inherent value is too often undermined by conflicting wildlife exploitation laws. For instance, Peru

acknowledges animal sentience and intrinsic value while concurrently maintaining a legal framework that facilitates sport hunting and consumptive wildlife use.

In India, there is a concern currently about laws being relaxed for legal transactions in elephants. What are your thoughts on this, given your background research in relaxation of wildlife laws?

NdC: Elephants serve as a poignant example of why we must reconsider our approach to the commercial trade of wildlife.

Typically separated from their mothers at an early age, around two to four years old, elephants endure harsh training methods involving punishment and aversion-based techniques, such as hooks, sticks, or nails applied to sensitive points on their bodies. Long-term captivity is also a recognised significant stressor for elephants.

As we confront the challenges of the global commercial wildlife trade, it becomes increasingly clear that legal frameworks must evolve to prioritize the well-being of sentient beings and the preservation of biodiversity. Consequently, any relaxation of these regulations to facilitate commercial trade, especially for species like elephants that are known to exhibit signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after extreme confinement, represents a major step backwards.

By acknowledging the scientific evidence of animal sentience and promoting humane alternatives, we can strive towards a future where wildlife is valued not merely for economic gain, but for its intrinsic worth and contribution to our planet's ecological balance.



Shubhobroto Ghosh is Wildlife Campaign Manager at World Animal Protection in India and a life member of BWC-India.

Fact, not Fancy Protection, not Preservation

Making sure that those that are left survive without harmful human intervention should be the aim. Why not protect existing wildlife and restore their natural habitat instead? asks Nirmal Nischit

Wildlife is labeled as Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Endangered, Critically Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened and Of Least Concern.

Such statuses have evolved mainly because of unethical human actions, directly (hunting) or indirectly (deforestation) inflicted upon wildlife species and their habitats over centuries.

Relocating wildlife to areas where they are no longer found, introducing prey animals to be hunted by carnivores, displaying wild animals, birds, reptiles and marine life are as unethical and cruel.

“De-extinction”?

The Guiding Principles on Creating Proxies of Extinct by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) states “the term ‘de-extinction’ is misleading in its implication that extinct species, species for which no viable members remain, can be resurrected in their genetic, behavioural and physiological entirety... ‘De-extinction’ is therefore here used in a limited sense to apply to any attempt to create some proxy of an extinct species or subspecies.”

Three dire wolves, an extinct species, claimed to be brought back to life after over ten thousand years by an American biotechnology company are actually gray wolves with 20 modified genes. Using DNA (Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid), CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) gene editing and Cloning, other species could likewise be morphed.

Why torture living animals? Of the forty-five dire wolf embryos that were transferred into the wombs of domestic dogs, two survived. The process was repeated for the third dire wolf, which was again born via caesarean section.

Not only the surrogates used for their birth, but the animals themselves suffer. We must not forget the suffering that cloned animals like Dolly the sheep experienced with multiple serious health issues, rapid aging and premature death.

Frozen Zoo

Closer home, Darjeeling’s Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park in collaboration with Hyderabad’s Centre of Cellular and Molecular Biology has established a “frozen zoo” at Darjeeling.

It preserves DNA samples of wildlife in liquid nitrogen to ensure that genetic blueprints of some species remain intact and available should the species dwindle in the wild.

Resurrection

What’s the point in trying to bring back animal species long extinct? Is it to prove how brilliant scientists are? Why did they not choose to revive extinct plants? Is it to use the freaks as an entertainment attraction and recover as much as possible of the millions spent?

How does it benefit the environment or existing wildlife? If and when released in the wild, will they survive? Will people tend to feel that since resurrection is now possible and extinction can be reversed, why bother to protect any species?

How can preserving genetic material be ethically justified? Even if humans have the capacity to resurrect the estimated 500 crore species that stand extinct, is it morally and ethically right to be a Creator of “functionally ineffectual eco-zombies” as termed by an American university professor?

Such technology can eventually back-fire on humans. Today it is wildlife, tomorrow it will be other lives and mixed breeds that are re-constructed. Human genomes are already being experimented upon.

Vegan Recipe

Chia Seeds

Chia seeds are similar to *sabza*/basil seeds. They both stabilise blood sugar levels and help maintain weight, but their nutrition values are different.

Just 2 tablespoons of chia seeds that are soaked overnight, contain 41% of one's daily fibre requirement, 20% protein, 32% magnesium, 100% more Omega-3 than fish, 64% more potassium than a banana, 3 times more iron than spinach, 5 times more calcium than milk, and double the antioxidants

of blueberries. These nutrients help cardiovascular health by reducing inflammation, regulating blood pressure, improving cholesterol levels and protecting against oxidative stress.

Chia seeds contain antioxidants, fibre, calcium and almost complete proteins (having 9 essential amino acids), whereas *sabza* seeds are rich in iron and improve blood, are high in fibre, antioxidants and minerals and prevent dehydration. These seeds also need to be soaked in water prior to being consumed, usually in cold drinks. (Incidentally, if 1 teaspoon *sabza* seeds soaked in a cup of water overnight is drunk first thing in the morning, it effectively lines the stomach and heals stomach ulcers over a long period of time.)



Chia-Coconut-Almond Pudding

(serves 4)

Ingredients

2 tablespoons chia seeds, soaked
2 cups coconut milk
½ cup almond milk
4 tablespoons sugar syrup
2 teaspoons coconut, freshly grated
2 tablespoons grated almonds
and coconut for garnishing

Preparation

Whisk together chia seeds, coconut milk, almond milk and sugar syrup.

Add freshly grated coconut. Mix well.

Place the mixture in the fridge for 15 minutes. Stir well and put it back into the fridge for another 15 minutes.

Spoon it out into 4 individual-sized bowls, garnish with grated almonds and coconut.

Serve cold.

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

Some Indian National Symbols of Interest



Bird
Peacock



Flag
Tricolour/Tiranga



Emblem
**Lion Capital
of Ashoka**



Animal
Royal Bengal Tiger



Aquatic Animal
Ganges River Dolphin



Heritage Animal
Asiatic Elephant



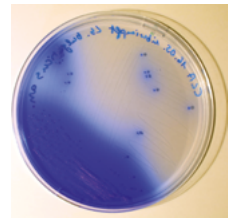
Reptile
King Cobra



Insect
Orange Oakleaf Butterfly



Flower
Lotus



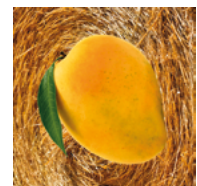
Microbe
Lactobacillus Delbrueckii



Vegetable
Pumpkin



Grain
Pearl Millet/Bajra



Fruit
Mango



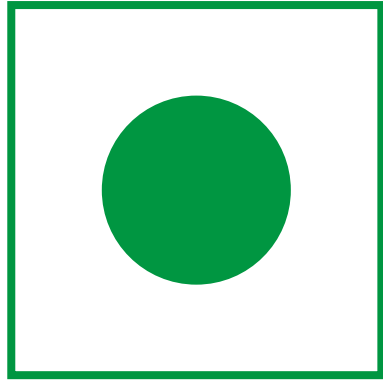
Tree
Indian Banyan



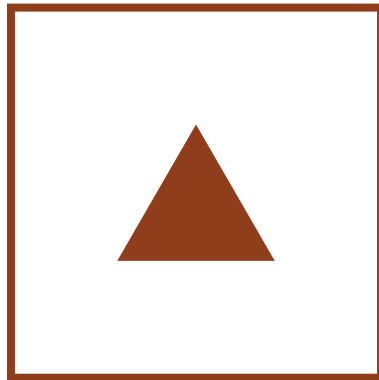
River
Ganges/Ganga



Mountain
Nanda Devi



Live and Let Live



Kill and Live



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