

BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL PRINCIPAL BENCH

AT DELHI

OA No 358 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:

SUO MOTO

..... Applicant

Vs

ANDHRA PRADESH POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD AND OTHERS

.... Respondents

COUNTER FILED BY THE RESPONDENTS 2 & 3

DATE - 15.04.2024



**M/s MADHURI DONTI REDDY
ADVOCATE**

STANDING COUNSEL FOR GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

A.P. POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

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Report in Suo-moto O.A. No.358/2024.

It is submitted that, The above OA has been taken up as Suo Moto and listed for admission on 15.04.2024 before Hon'ble Green Tribunal, Principal Bench New Delhi based on The Hindu Newspaper Dt: 22.03.2024 Titled as "Depleting Water Level Forces Leopards to stray out of Forests", through physical hearing (with Hybrid option), to appear before the Hon'ble Tribunal either in person or by a pleader duly instructed with the report.

The said Newspaper report also states that "The death of three leopards in un-divided Ananthapuramu District of Andhra Pradesh within a span of 45 days suggests that water resources in the wild are on the verge of drying, with soaring mercury levels. The fact that all three casualties occurred well away from the forests clearly indicates that the animals strayed into human habitations in search of food and water, say experts".

It is submitted that, one Leopard died in Sri Sathya Sai District (Erstwhile part of Ananthapuram district) on 06.02.2024 and two Leopards died i.e one on 18.03.2024 and second on 19.03.2024 in the present Ananthapuramu district. The detailed report by the 2nd and 3rd Respondents are as follows: -

First death of Leopard in Sri Sathya Sai District (Erstwhile district part of Ananthapuram district) on 06.02.2024: -

It is submitted that, it is a fact that a male leopard was knocked down by an unknown vehicle in the early hours of 6th February, 2024 near RTO Check Post on Sri Nagar- Kanyakumari National High Way (Hyderabad-Bangalore High Way, NH-44) in Penukonda Beat limits of Penukonda Section in Penukonda Range of Sri Sathya Sai District. On information, the forest personnel of Penukonda Range of Sri Sathya Sai District immediately attended to rescue the wounded animal with local veterinary assistant. The Veterinary doctor (Asst Director) from Puttaparthi attended the first aid and on recommendation of the local Veterinary doctors and from Sri Venkateswara Zoo, Tirupati, the wounded animal was shifted to Sri Venkateswara Zoo, Tirupati on same day for better treatment. But, despite all efforts made by the Zoo doctors and doctors from Sri venkateswara Veterinary University, Tirupati, the animal died on 10.02.2024. The Post mortem was conducted on 10.02.2024 and the post mortem report was furnished vide Post mortem no.34, Dt:10.02.2024 by S.V. Veterinary University, Tirupati. A case was registered vide UDOR no.02/2023-24, Dt:06.02.2024 in Penukonda Range.

It is further submitted that though the location of the incident is on National Highway, it is not in human habitations. The animal was crossing the National Highway road having the reserve forest on the either sides. Further, the animal was healthy and it did not die because of lack of water or food in the forest as stated the statement in the news article. The animal died due to road kill by speeding vehicles. As there is no habitation and the highway is passing through the reserve forest, vehicles move at higher speeds, which has been a threat to the wildlife crossing the high way within the limits of the reserve forest. The forest has sufficient water resources in that area, as there are water bodies such as Bhairavani Kunta of Penukonda Hill, BhogaSamudram Cheruvu, Gonipeta Cheruvu in and adjoining reserve forest where water is available for wild animals even today. Apart from the local water bodies, the water is being transported for filling waterholes (saucer pits) existing in the reserve forests to prevent the wildlife moving outside of reserve forests for water. In this regard, a letter was also addressed by the District Forest Officer, Ananthapur to the Project Director, National Highway-44, Ananthapur requesting to put in place the as a precautionary measure to avoid recurrence of such incidents in future.

- 1) The Signage boards depicting caution for lowering the speed of the vehicles at animal crossing area.
- 2) The Signage boards for avoiding bright lights by vehicles as the animals get numbed with the bright lights and thus prone to accidents.

Second death of Leopard in the present Ananthapuramu District on 18.03.2024: -

It is submitted that the carcass of a female leopard aged about 3 years was found at Kalyandurg beat of Kalyandurg section of Kalyandurg Range outside the reserved forest areas on 18.03.2024. With regards to the the Post mortem report received vide FRO, Kalyandurg Range that the death occurred due to Asphyxia resulting from congestion of lungs. The nails, teeth and skin were found intact. It is submitted that the locality of carcass is Duppara gutta (revenue administered hillock) is 1.30 kms from the Idukallu Reserve Forest (RF) of Kalyandurg Range of Ananthapuramu district. Further, it is submitted that there are water sources available inside the reserve forest and along the reserve forest boundary like Bojaragutta and many wild animals including Black bucks, Leopards, Sloth bears, Peacocks etc, regularly visit and drink water from these sources. Further, the

Forest Department is also continuously supplying water through tankers for filling the saucer pits existing in the reserve forest. Necessary investigation has been initiated vide Undetected Offence Report No.01/2023-24 dt. 18.03.2024 of Kalyandurgam Range under the provision of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and further action will be taken based on the progress on the investigation.

Third death of Leopard in the present Ananthapuramu District on 19.03.2024: -

It is submitted that a carcass of a male leopard aged about 5 years was found in Marutla South beat of Ananthapuramu section of Ananthapuramu Range in Ananthapuramu district outside the reserved forest areas on 19.03.2024. In this regard, the Post mortem report no. 05/2024 dated 19.03.2024 issued by Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, Kuderu received vide FRO, Ananthapuramu Range showing that the death was occurred due to "Hypovolemic shock due to electrocution". The location of carcass is 520 meters away from the Marutla reserved forest of Ananthapuramu Range, Ananthapuramu district. There are sufficient water sources in the location including a tank near to the reserve forest boundary and farm ponds. The said incident took place with electric shock while the leopard was trying to climb the transformer, get into touch with the electrical wires. Electricity department has been addressed by the District Forest Officer, Ananthapur to insulate such vulnerable points in the vicinity of the forest so that such incidents can be avoided in future. All steps are taken to all such vulnerable points and a list will be shared with the electricity department for precautionary measures.

It is respectfully submitted that the Forest department is regularly taking up awareness programs among the farmers and villagers adjoining the forest areas and resulting a good cooperation with the department regarding wild life conservation.

Further, it is submitted that there is a good population of wild animals including Leopards, Sloth bears, Black bucks etc. in revenue administered hillocks near the forest areas. The Forest department is taking all efforts for the conservation of the wildlife.

It is respectfully submitted that the leopard population is increasing gradually in Andhra Pradesh as per the "Status of Leopards in India 2022" report released by National Tiger Conservation Authority. Though the Ananthapuramu

District has historically scarcity of rainfall and is a drought prone district, the population of Leopards is on the rise due to better protection and habitat improvement measures, taken up by Forest Department. The wildlife species available in the Ananthapuramu district include Leopard, Sloth bear, Wild boar, Black buck, spotted deer, Peacocks, Jackals, Indian Wolves. The Department is continuously supplying water by filling saucer pits, providing salt licks etc in the critical fringe areas. A dedicated team of wildlife watchers along with a rescue van is using 24/7 in addition to the regular staff in the district for rapid response and rescue of the wild animals coming into the human habitations. All precautionary measures are being continuously taken to avoid any harm to wild animals.

It is respectfully submitted that all management interventions in the case of straying, if any, are being taken up for the protection of wildlife. It is also to submit that the management interventions will continue in future for the protection of the wildlife.

This report is submitted for kind consideration. The respondents 2 & 3 will abide by all such directions as per law this Hon'ble Tribunal made deemfit and appropriate.

Date: 13/4/2024
Place: Guntur


Pri. Chief Conservator of Forests (WL) &
Chief Wildlife Warden, A.P (FAC).

**Pri. Chief Conservator of Forests (WL)
& Chief Wildlife Warden, A.P.**