



Environmental Action Group



Shri P.C. Kapoor

Chief Wildlife Warden, J&K Government,
Srinagar.
Fax: 0194-2312847

19 July 2010

Dear Shri Kapoor,

It has been brought to our notice that the Department of Wildlife Protection has constructed a large steel enclosure inside the Dachigam National Park to keep Asiatic Black Bears in captivity. The said enclosure, designed to house at least ten bears, has reportedly been constructed without the approval of the Central Zoo Authority, and without an assessment of its ecological consequences.

Dachigam NP is home to the last remaining population of the Kashmir Stag or Hangul whose population by the department's own estimates is only around 200 at present. While on one side the government of J&K has been showing a lot of concern for conserving its state animal, Hangul, and has recently initiated an ambitious centrally sponsored project for its conservation, on the other side, it is going ahead with such endeavors which in no way shall help to improve the fate of this endangered species. On the contrary, construction of such a big steel structure can only be a source of disturbance. It is also ironical that the Wildlife Department of J&K on one hand is persuading the Sheep Husbandry Department to shift their sheep breeding farm out of Dachigam, and on the other hand is itself raising unnecessary structures within the National Park.

We are given to understand that the department proposes to keep bears for display purposes and not for captive breeding (which anyway is not required, as Jammu & Kashmir is said to support a healthy population of Asiatic Black Bears). It is not clear why the department thinks such a display is necessary, given that bears are not difficult to spot in the national park for those willing to make the effort.

Keeping in view the above mentioned facts, it is requested that the J&K government may be persuaded to give up its plan of keeping captive bears inside Dachigam and to dismantle the steel structure.

Thank you, Sincerely

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