

SC LOOKS TO SAVE BOTH ANIMALS AND CROPS

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

The court was hearing a plea seeking measures to prevent the killing of wild animals.

An “anxious” Supreme Court accentuated the urgent need to find an alternative to killing marauding wild animals as vermin even while protecting crops from them.

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, heading a three-judge Bench, suggested “explosives that do not kill” but make a lot of noise and “rubber bullets” to scare off the animals.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Anubhav Mohanty seeking measures to prevent killing of wild animals in India. Mr. Mohanty highlighted the indiscriminate killing of blue bulls (nilgai) as vermin.

Elephant's death

Issuing a notice, the court tagged the petition with an earlier one on an elephant who died after consuming pineapples laced with explosives in Kerala.

Chief Justice Bobde said man-animal conflict is leading to both killing of wildlife and crop loss.

“We are treating this matter with anxiety. Wild animals are destroying agriculture. We have to preserve our crops... What do you eat if animals eat it all? At the same time, can we kill a wild tiger or a rogue elephant... What are the Forest Department officials to do about this? What is the extent of information they have?” Chief Justice Bobde asked senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, who appeared for Mr. Mohanty.

Chief Justice Bobde asked Mr. Luthra to study the problem and suggest measures so that the court could pass the necessary orders.

Human encroachments

The court asked Mr. Luthra to also enquire into whether human encroachments into forests are driving wild animals away from their natural habitats, forcing them to foray into human settlements for food.

“Encroachments by human is putting pressure on wild animals,” Mr. Luthra submitted.

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