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# Reports of illegal hunting mar World Animal Day

By EMANUEL SARFRAZ October 4, 2008



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LAHORE - The World Animal Day unlike elsewhere in the world passed away in the country without much promotional activity regarding animals' welfare on Saturday. Incidents of illegal hunting during Eid holidays pointed out to the fact that there is dire need to create awareness about protecting the animals - an asset that we are fast losing. Many incidents of illegal hunting have been reported from across the country. Even the sanctuaries and reserve places protected by the Wildlife Department are no longer safe place for animals.

There is ban on hunting all animals at this time of the year. Interestingly all the reported cases of illegal hunting have come from special reserve areas and sanctuaries. That may be so as Wildlife staff is only deputed there. The real number of illegal hunting cases must be very high. It is also pertinent to mention here that even when hunting season comes and licences are issued the hunting is not allowed in reserves.

A team led by District Wildlife Officer Khalid Sahi arrested seven hunters from Chundi Surla reserve area in Chakwal. The arrested included the staff officer of DIG Gujranwala Muhammad Ibrahim along with landlords Attaullah, Muhammad Idrees, Muhammad Saleem and Muhammad Farooq. Two guides Syed Tahir Abbas and Syed Zille Hussain were also arrested. Wildlife hunting is mostly done along with guides. Four double barrel guns, one 12 bore repeater and one rifle along with 200 cartridges and two hunting knives were seized from the hunters.

In Bahawalpur area two incidents of illegal hunting and netting were reported on the second and third day of Eid. The Wildlife Department has established a special task force to protect the animals in reserves. Four hunters were arrested from Tobadandwala. The arrested are reportedly powerful landlords of Kabirwala.

These are Umar Hayat, Muhammad Raza, Ijaz Hussain and Ahmed Ali. Two single barrel shot guns and 64 cartridges have been recovered while their Pajero jeep has also been seized. They were hunting rare species of deer.

Two poachers Dilshad Ahmed and Kashif were arrested from Toba Chakkuwala for falcon netting. The traps and other equipments have been seized.

Director Lahore Zoo Yousaf Pal talking to The Nation said there was urgent need for widespread public awareness campaign for protection of animals and saving them from cruelties. "We had a lot of visitors during the Eid holidays. We had prepared special brochures and put up banners advising the people about animal welfare.

There were clear instructions to people not to feed the animals or throw plastic shopping bags in their cages, which can create problems and may even prove fatal for them.

"Largely the people did follow the instructions. We had deputed special staff for the purpose of checking that," the director said.

1 2 >

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