

NATIONAL**Wildlife lose habitat in the wake of flood**

By Zulfikar Memon

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NAWABSHAH, Aug 20: At a time when the attention of the entire human race is caught in flood disaster management, there hounds the question of the survival of wildlife as it too, is reportedly displaced from inside the reverine forests and game reserves throughout the Sindh province, besides fears that a number of endangered species, especially hog deer might have been killed.

The natural instinct of survival forced wild boar, wild cat, jackal, reptiles and birds like partridge to move to safety after the flooding of their habitats in katcha area. However, its death was inevitable, if not from natural calamity then from the human being itself.

There are a number of reports of the killing of animals from Nawabshah, Naushahro Feroze, Dadu, Ghotki, Sukkur and Hyderabad.

At least three hog deer were hunted in village Mithiani near Kot Dhingano Forests in the jurisdiction of Shaheed Benazirabad district and others in Dadu and Moro.

Conservator, Wildlife Sindh, Hussain Bux Bhagat assented to reports of killing of wildlife including hog deer and other animals in different parts of the province.

Quite a big number of animals including hog deer, wild boar, jackal and wild cats were displaced besides many losing life due to heavy flow of flood, he said. Their loss, he said, was major as wildlife was equally affected.

Teams to rescue wildlife have been dispatched and a final assessment report would be made public soon, he said adding that the loss of partridge is being assumed at 20 to 30 per cent.

DOLPHINS: The Indus Dolphin known as Blind Dolphin, an endangered species living in the Indus River was also badly affected due to floods. Their estimated population was around 1,200 in the Indus River.

Hussain Bux Bhagat, Conservator Wildlife Department Sindh said that the dolphin population was also affected due to flood and it would have definitely gone downstream Sukkur and other canals and would die once there was no water.

Some 25 per cent of Blind Dolphin living between Guddu and Sukkur Barrage may have been stranded and there was a chance of other casualties too, he said.

He further said that the department was making efforts for the rescue and safety of dolphins.

Nasir Panhwar, Programme Manager, WWF Sindh said that there were chances of dolphin travelling to canals and getting stranded where it might be hunted or die of starvation.

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