

# Forest Dept Should Resolve Man-Wild Conflict

Dehradun: Chief Minister Harish Rawat has stressed on the need for the Forest department to work towards resolving the human-wildlife conflict and facilitating peaceful coexistence of the wildlife along with the people of Uttarakhand. He was speaking at the inauguration of the Wildlife Week here on Thursday.

Addressing the gathering, the CM said that occasions like wildlife week should not remain customary commemorations. He said, “What is need now is to think out of the box. We need to act efficiently to reduce the human-wildlife conflict. The Forest department needs to take measures to facilitate peaceful coexistence of the people and wildlife in the state. We need to moderate or adjust our views to accommodate the interests of the people too at times. As I had suggested earlier, if finger millet and jhangora seeds are thrown in the forests they will soon provide food for wild boars and monkeys which might mitigate the damage wreaked on farms by wild boars and monkey raiding for food. Fruit trees also need to be planted increasingly so that monkeys do not have to raid human settlements in search of food.”

Rawat also stressed that pine is a major threat to the biodiversity of the State. He also said that the Forest Department has about 70 per cent of the State’s geographical area under its control but does not generate revenues for the State proportionate to the area under its purview. There is also need to look specially into the reptile wealth of Corbett tiger reserve and popularising the Nanda Devi biosphere reserve and Kedarnath wildlife sanctuary, he added. The CM also launched the website of Rajaji tiger reserve and released the tiger conservation plan of Corbett tiger reserve and management plan for Nandhaur wildlife sanctuary on the occasion.

State Forest minister Dinesh Aggarwal stressed on the need for protecting forests for preserving wildlife. He said that in order for the public to benefit, the increased population of tigers and elephants needs to be secured. He appreciated the fact that 80 of the 400 gharials known to be alive in the world are living in the Corbett tiger reserve.

The State’s principal chief conservator of forests Dr Srikant Chandola also expressed his views on the occasion. The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) director general Dr Ashwani Kumar, chief wildlife warden Digvijay Singh Khati, chief conservator of forests (Wildlife) Dhananjai Mohan and other departmental officials were also among those present on the occasion.