

Wildlife racket busted in Karnataka, 3 bears seized - Number of 'dancing bears' rescued by Wildlife S.O.S and State Forest Departments goes upto 400!

In a joint operation conducted by the Karnataka Forest Department on a tip off by Wildlife S.O.S & One Voice Association, three persons were arrested and a 4-month old bear cub was seized as a result of an anti-poaching operation conducted at Koppal District in Karnataka. In addition two adult Sloth bears were also rescued by the Forest Department.

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In a joint operation conducted by the Karnataka Forest Department on a tip off by Delhi based NGO - Wildlife S.O.S & One Voice Association, three persons were arrested and a 4-month old bear cub was seized as a result of an anti-poaching operation conducted at Koppal District in Karnataka. In addition two adult Sloth bears were also rescued by the Forest Department.

With this seizure, the total number of Dancing Bears rescued and rehabilitated in India by State Forest Departments & Wildlife S.O.S reaches 400 , all in a span of less than five years.

Wildlife S.O.S started working on this issue in 1995 with support from the Govt. Of India & various state Governments. The objective of the project was to eradicate the brutal practice of Dancing Bears in India, an age old entertainment practice which is banned, illegal & punishable by Indian law. As per the directive of the local magistrate courts at Gangavati Talok, the rescued sloth bears (all male) aged 12 years, 9 years and 4 months are being transferred to the Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Center run by the Karnataka Forest Department in collaboration with the Wildlife S.O.S.

The Bannerghatta Bear Rescue Center is collaboration between the Karnataka Forest Department & Wildlife S.O.S established with the purpose of providing a natural home for the rescued bears under rehabilitation. This rescue center is primarily funded by International Animal Rescue, international partners of Wildlife S.O.S

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Persons arrested with the adult bears and the bear cub are Bahrimamm S/O Maliksaab, Jadawale Mahboobsaab S/O Shamimsaab and Lola Sher Lalsaab, S/O Hussainsaab, respectively who have been sent to Jail. The raids were conducted at a remote village settlement located in Koppal district of Karnataka. The entire operation was conducted under the guidance of DFO - Koppal, Mr.Srinivasulu, IFS and coordinated by the District Collector - Mr.Naveen Raj Singh, IAS with support from S.P Police - Mr.Siddramiah, IPS.

According to DFO Koppal - Mr.Srinivasulu, "The raid teams totalling 25 persons from the Forest Department, Police personnel and Wildlife S.O.S Anti poaching unit team members carried out the raid operation in the early hours of the morning. We are working with Wildlife S.O.S to encourage the Kalandars to surrender their Bears peacefully and shall encourage them to give up this illegal work and adopt & legal alternative means of livelihood. Many persons have surrendered voluntarily,

we are hopeful that we can soon make Karnataka a state free from this illegal practice of Dancing Bears".

The intelligence for this seizure was gathered by "Forestwatch", the Wildlife Crime Intelligence Network and Anti-Poaching Wing of Wildlife S.O.S which is run in association with One Voice Association France. Working through a network of informers and decoys, this wing helps in detection and prevention of Wildlife Crime across India by maintaining vigil on illegal wildlife trade routes.

According to Kartick Satyanarayan, Co-founder - Wildlife S.O.S "This operation is a result of extensive intelligence gathered over the past few months since the seizure carried out in other states earlier this year".

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Wildlife S.O.S is an Indian Non-Governmental organisation working in the field of Wildlife rescue and Rehabilitation since 1995. Our main project is the rescue and rehabilitation of 'dancing bears', which are Indian Sloth Bears exploited by a gypsy tribe, called Kalandars for street entertainment purposes. In collaboration with the State Forest Departments, Wildlife S.O.S runs the World's largest Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre for Sloth Bears in Agra alongwith 3 other centres in Bhopal, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Working in tandem with the government law enforcement agencies, including state forest departments, Wildlife S.O.S has rescued around 400 Sloth bears from leading miserable lives with Kalandars and with the recent extension to the Agra Bear Rescue Facility, we hope to eradicate the profession of 'bear dancing' by rescuing the remaining around 500 bears off the Indian streets and rehabilitating the bear dancers as well, so that they and their generations to come don't revert to 'dancing or poaching bears' ever again. Join hands with us in giving both man and animal a life of Dignity and Freedom!!! The Bear Rescue & Kalandar Rehabilitation Programs of Wildlife S.O.S are primarily funded by International Animal Rescue. Other international partners are Free the Bears Fund Inc - Australia, Humane Society International - Australia and One Voice Association, France.

For more, visit our website, www.wildlifesos.org

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You can also visit www.wildlifesos.org for more information.