

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

Original Application No. 1020/2019

**News item Published in “Hindustan Times” Authored by Rakesh
Goswami
Titled
Sambhar’s ecology among worst: Report**

Date of hearing: 20.11.2019

**CORAM: HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE ADARSH KUMAR GOEL, CHAIRPERSON
HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE S.P WANGDI, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE K. RAMAKRISHNAN, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON’BLE DR. NAGIN NANDA, EXPERT MEMBER
HON’BLE MR. SAIBAL DASGUPTA, EXPERT MEMBER**

ORDER

1. The matter has been taken up on the basis of newspaper report dated 20.11.2019 in Hindustan Times under the heading ‘Sambhar’s ecology among worst, Alarm Carcasses of about 18,000 migratory birds have been found near the Rajasthan lake, triggering concerns amount environmentalists’ authored by Rakesh Goswami.
2. As the title itself suggests, carcasses of 18000 migrated birds were found at Sambhar lake 80 kms South West of Jaipur on 10.11.2019. Apprehension is that death of such large number of birds have taken place on account of violation of environmental norms in maintaining the eco system of the wetland in question including water quality, plant invasion in water bodies etc.
3. The report has mentioned:

“According to a copy of the draft report seen by HT, the A category (A+ and A-) includes wetlands such as Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur, Little Rann of Kutchh in Gujarat, and the Sunderbans in West Bengal, which have the ecosystem management in place. In all, 19 wetlands fall in this category.

Wetlands in the B level (B+ and B-) include Pong Dam in Himachal Pradesh, Vembanad Kol in Kerala, Chilika in Odisha and Doyang in Meghalaya, where the existing ecosystem management needs to be strengthened, the draft report said. Twenty six wetlands fall in this category.

The C category (C+ and C-) have 21 wetlands such as Upper Ganga Canal in Uttar Pradesh, Point Calimere in Tamil Nadu, Kokkare Bellur Bird Sanctuary in Karnataka and Bhoj Wetland in Madhya Pradesh, the report said, adding that in these wetlands, vast improvement is needed.

But, the highest number of wetlands, 34, fall in the lowest categories, D and E, which, according to the evaluation, needs “radical” improvement in management of the ecosystems for aquatic life to survive. Of these, eight wetlands are in the lowest E category.

“Sambhar Lake has got the lowest rating and this is a reason of concern for us” said a Rajasthan Government official who requested anonymity.

Sambhar salt lake, located 80 km southwest of the city of Jaipur, is recognized as a wetland of international importance and a key wintering area for tens of thousands birds. The discovery of thousands of birds carcasses in the area since November 10 has raised concern among ornithologists and environmentalists. Until Monday, 17,984 birds had been found dead in the surrounding since November 10.

The cause of the deaths, according to the Bikaner-based College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, is suspected to be avian botulism, a neuromuscular illness of birds.

Rajasthan’s environment secretary Sreha Guha said corrective measure have been put in place, based on inputs from experts at the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD) in Bhopal and Indian

***Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) in Bareilly.
“we sent them samples earlier,” she said.”***

4. In view of the above, substantial question of environment with regard to compliance of norms prescribed under the Wetland Rules framed under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 arises.
5. Let a factual and action taken report be given jointly by National Wetland Authority, Government of India, State Wetland Authority, Rajasthan, Rajasthan State PCB and District Magistrate, Jaipur. The State Wetland Authority will be nodal agency for coordination and compliance. The report be furnished before the next date by e-mail at judicial-ngt@gov.in.
6. Copies of this order be sent to National Wetland Authority, Government of India, State Wetland Authority, Rajasthan, State PCB and District Magistrate, Jaipur by e-mail.

List for further consideration on 22.01.2020.

Adarsh Kumar Goel, CP

S.P Wangdi, JM

K. Ramakrishnan, JM

Dr. Nagin Nanda, EM

Saibal Dasgupta, EM

November 20, 2019
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