

## Increasing Incidence of Himalayan Brown Bear Attack on Livestock in Kargil

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### SUMMARY

Himalayan brown bear (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*) is the most widely distributed species among eight species of bear confined to three major mountain ranges of the Hindu Kush, the Karakoram and the Western Himalayas. This species is frequently sighting close to human settlement and the incidence of attacking on livestock have been increasing from last seven to eight years in different regions of Kargil attacked the small ruminants and poultry. The growth in the number of such attacks on livestock has created a panic among the local people. Increasing in the number of such incidence may be due to shrinkage of ecosystem and breeding ground, irresponsible human activities such as overgrazing, poor garbage management, lack of concrete shed for livestock and availability of waste food near the military camps which are forcing them to travel towards the human habitat and nearby villages in search of food and attack the livestock.

### INTRODUCTION

The Himalayan brown bear (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*) locally known as Dren-Mo, Balu is the most widely distributed species among eight species of bear (Servheen 1990 and Nawaz 2007). This endangered Species is confined to three major mountain ranges of the Hindu Kush, the Karakoram and the Western Himalayas. It has been observed that this species is frequently sighting close to human settlement and the incidence of attacking on livestock have been increasing from last seven to eight years particularly in the regions of Drass, Sapi, Suru, Karkichoo, Wakha-Mulbek and Tangole. Recently such incidence were also reported from Chanigund, Gomakargil and Titichumik of kargil district in which they attacked the small ruminants and poultry. The growth in the number of such attacks on livestock has created a panic among the local people. Therefore such incidence is of great concern due to human life threat and heavy economic loss of the poor farmers. Increasing in the number of such incidence may be due to shrinkage of ecosystem and breeding ground, irresponsible human activities such as overgrazing, poor garbage management, lack of concrete shed for livestock and availability of waste food near the military camps which are forcing them to travel towards the human habitat and nearby villages in search of food and attack the livestock. Such wild attack are the evidence to the fact that the negative impact of 1999 Kargil war with heavy shelling for more than two months that destroyed their natural habitat. It's found that brown bear hibernate from November to March, but due to climate change there has been shorter winter and longer summer which may be responsible for disturbing their hibernation cycle due to which they come to the lower reach even in December and early march and frequently during June to August in summer.

### Reason for such incidence

Increasing in the number of such incidence may be due to shrinkage of ecosystem and breeding ground, irresponsible human activities such as overgrazing, poor garbage management, lack of concrete shed for livestock and availability of waste food near the military camps which are forcing them to travel towards the human habitat and nearby villages in search of food and attack the livestock. Such wild attack are the evidence to the fact that the negative impact of 1999 Kargil war with heavy shelling for more than two months that destroyed their natural habitat. It's found that brown bear hibernate from November to March, but due to climate change there has been shorter winter and longer summer which may be responsible for disturbing their hibernation cycle due to which they come to the lower reach even in December and early march and frequently during June to August in summer season.

### Prevention and what to Do in such incidence

- Local community should be involved along with the wild department to conserve such endangered species.
- Awareness camps should be conducted in schools and in villages to educate them about the methods to avoid such incidences.
- Avoid disturbing their natural habitat.
- Proper disposal of domestic wastes.

- Overgrazing in mountain areas should be avoided.
- Avoid destruction and shrinkage of their breeding habitat.
- Construct concrete sheds with strong metal door.
- Don't throw the waste food and carcass in nearby village.
- Use bear pepper spray if available.
- Burning of crackers may be useful.
- Keep the light on in and around the shed during night.
- Use of Foxlight may be helpful to avoid such incidence.
- Inform the nearby police station if such incidence happened.
- Immediately report the nearby wild life department.
- Inform your nearby sheep and animal husbandry dept. for Post-mortem and emergency treatment of the livestock.



Fig.1. Poultry raids at Goma kargil



Fig. 2. Sheep attacked at Chanigund



Fig. 3. Fox light



Fig. 4. Predator seen at Goma kargil

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