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LET US HAVE OUR OWN WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

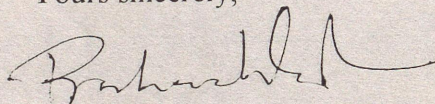
All over India sanctuaries and national parks are facing great pressures today. A number of people live inside these and compete with the wildlife for resources of these areas. Business and industry want these areas for mining, roads and railways, dams and canals, airports and defence installations. Forests are being destroyed for timber, fuel-wood and forage. Due to these "developmental" pressures parts of their area are being denotified. At present there is even a move to privatize sanctuaries for opening up tourism. The fate of wildlife can then be imagined.

Ecological Society has always maintained that all citizens who are really concerned over the future of our biodiversity must combine their efforts to form private sanctuaries. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in UK has set an excellent example in this very respect. They have established 150 small and large sanctuaries which are managed by their members, with students serving as honorary wildlife wardens. We propose that our Society should follow this noteworthy example and set up our own wildlife area.

About 40 km west of Pune on Panshet road lies the valley where Ambi village is situated. The hill slopes flanking the valley are open for sale at a reasonable price. We propose that the Society should go ahead and negotiate a sales agreement with the owners of this land for its purchase. Anything from 50 to 100 acres may be acquired. The money should be contributed by students and well-wishers of the Society. According to legal advice, it is better for the Society to acquire the land rather than individual members. The members and students who contribute for the purchase of this land, should form a task force, first to complete the legal formalities of the agreement and then to chalk out a plan for the management and development of this land as a wildlife sanctuary and a training base and research station for students who join our training programme.

I appeal to you all to join together in this pioneering project and initiate a movement for the welfare of wildlife and conservation of biodiversity. Let us pledge ourselves to this noble endeavour.

Yours sincerely,



Prakash Gole.