

Orders issued to 'hunt down' man-eater tiger

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In news- Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden recently issued orders to “hunt down” a man-eater tiger tiger identified as **MDT 23**, that had killed at least four people and more than 20 cattle in Gudalur forest range **in the Nilgiris district.**

Procedure to remove a man-eater-

- In January 2013, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change as well as the National Tiger Conservation Authority came out with the “**Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)**” to deal with emergencies arising due to straying of tigers in human-dominated landscapes.
- **Tigers as well as leopards** are categorised under **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, with highest statutory protection against hunting under **Section 9 (1)** of the said Act.
- Such species **can be killed if they become dangerous to human life or are so disabled / diseased beyond recovery.**
- The declaration of an aberrant tiger / leopard as a man eater requires considerable examination based on field evidence.
- It can be established only after **confirming the habituation of the aberrant animal for deliberate stalking of human beings, while avoiding its natural prey.**
- The document says that **under no circumstances should an animal resorting to cattle depredation be declared as a “man eater”,** despite the fact it may venture close to human settlements.

- Under **Section 11 (1) (a) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Chief Wildlife Warden of a State alone has the authority to permit hunting** of such animals.
- However, she or he has to **state in writing the reasons** for permitting elimination before hunting.
- The elimination of a tiger / leopard as a man eater should be the last option, after exhausting the option of capturing the animal live as detailed in the Standard Operating Procedure.
- The **capture can be done by chemical immobilisation or use of traps and should be sent to a nearest recognised zoo and NOT released in the wild.**