

Transportation of wild animals - practical approach & precaution

The zoological parks often transport wild and wild captive animals (wild domestic animals) to introduce new genes in their existing population of a species or for exchange of one species with another one. The transportation of the wild and wild domestic animals remains a great challenge for zoo staff and zoo veterinarians.

A number of literatures are available on wild animal transportation but somehow barely any of them deal with the practical approach and precautions during transportation.

Before transporting the animals following protocols should be followed:

1. The animal to be procured in exchange from other zoo or institution should be examined by the recipient zoo veterinarian before finalizing the deal.
2. The date of transport should be well decided at least one month in advance. Before finalizing the dates the recipient zoo or wildlife institute or sanctuary should also be consulted. This will help them to make arrangements and the transporting zoo will also get time to prepare itself to transport the animals.
3. The date of transport should not only be communicated to the concerned zoo but it should also be shared with the all concerned staff and officials in order to give them sufficient time to make preparations.
4. It is always better to communicate the transport dates to veterinary and/or forest institutions falling in the route for any emergency exigencies.
5. The cage in which the animal has to be transported should be repaired and should be free from sharp angle and nails. The cage should be sterilized a day before the travel date. It should be kept in mind that while coming back from the recipient zoo the animal may not be of the same species which was transported, therefore sufficient empty cages should also be taken according to the finalized exchange deal.
6. The ramp from which the cage has to be uploaded should be inspected and repaired accordingly.
7. The animal/ animals to be transported should be marked and segregated and be kept at closed place in order to make it convenient while taking inside the transport cage. After segregation the animal should be dewormed.
8. Before transporting animals, permission from concerned officers /agencies should be taken at least one month before in order to avoid last minute hiccups.
9. The transporter should be informed and truck to be used should be inspected for cage size. Too large trucks will unnecessary increase the transport cost and will send jerks to

the transporting cage and will injure the animal. However too small truck shall not be able to accommodate the large size cages and animal keepers in same trolley.

10. The vehicle to be used by the veterinarian should be serviced before long distance transports.

11. If cage is too heavy as in case of mega herbivores then a well skilled crane operator should be informed for uploading the animals.

12. It is better to take a forest guard, a keeper, a helper and a sweeper other then specified by wildlife institutions.

13. The route should be decided before transportation as bumpy roads are not advisable for animal transportation.

14. Following things should be kept ready for transportation:

- i. All papers with at least three Xerox copies of each.
- ii. A note pad and pen for writing expenses and other things.
- iii. A hand bag to keep money and other essential things.
- iv. Tarpaulin, green net, large polythene and rope to cover the trolley of the truck according to the situation.
- v. Rope to fix the cage in trolley to avoid jerks.
- vi. Bucket, mug and rubber pipe of 230m. Sufficient drinking water bottles (to put water in watering pot from outside the cage, bottle is also useful to drench the medicine in herbivores during emergencies), four containers of five liters filled with drinking water.
- vii. Locks and keys for cage.
- viii. Two drinking and feeding pots for animals.
- ix. Torch.
- x. Tools such as knife, pliers, hammer, screwdriver, wrenches of different size, long forceps, iron rod curved from one side to take out stale meat. Apart from this few pieces of small wires should be kept to repair the cage in emergency.
- xi. Paddy husk for bedding of herbivores especially in winters, the paddy husk can be used by the attending staff for their bedding by putting a bed sheet over that.
- xii. Adequate quantity of feed and water for the transporting animal should be taken care off.
- xiii. Though winter transportation should be avoided but if anyhow unavoidable then proper arrangement for combating the cold shocks should be made. It will be better to keep two blowers and a 20 meter extension wire cable.

15. Veterinary drugs and equipments required during transportation:

- i. Inj. Xylazine, inj. Ketamine, inj. Yohambine, inj. Diazepam,
- ii. Inj. Dexamethasone, inj. Chlorpheneramine maleate, inj. Antibiotic, inj. Vitamin B

- complex, inj. Analgesic, inj. Antiemetic.
- iii. Buclizine syrup and negative energy balancing syrup.
- iv. Povidone-iodine, antiseptic ointment, cotton, gauge, antiseptic spray.
- v. Forceps, artery forceps, long forceps, BP knife, syringes of different capacity.
- vi. Darts and projectile instruments.

All the arrangements should be kept ready one day before the commencement of journey. The animal usually struggles when taken inside the transport cage, hence the cage should be immediately covered by a green net and no one should be allowed to come close. Generally after some time animal calms down but if animal is regularly struggling then mild sedative may be used. While loading the animal cage the face of the animal should always be in moving direction of the carrying lorry. It should be kept in mind that the cage should not tilt while loading. Therefore it is always advisable to upload the cage through a proper ramp.

The preferred period of transport should invariably be conducive season. Too hot and too cold season should always be avoided. However, during summer journey should begin at evening while during winter day time journey should be preferred. The animal should be observed at every two hours interval by the accompanying veterinarian and vehicle should be rested time to time. However first observation should be done as early as one hour after commencement of transportation. Usually animals seldom take food while transporting them but if offered at resting period when vehicle is not moving then they start to take food and water easily. The buclizine and negative energy balancing syrups in water are practically helpful in stimulating hunger and combating negative energy balance.

While transportation the next veterinary and/or forest institutions falling in the subsequent route should be kept informed for any emergency exigencies. The officers of the transporting zoo and recipient zoo should also be kept aware of the current position of the transporting team. To make communicating so many persons at a time is very tedious. Therefore it is advisable to make a temporary group of the all concerned officers so that all of them may be communicated at once. The speed of the transporting vehicle is very important and should not exceed 60 km/hour to avoid emergency breaking. The tarpaulin covering should be opened at one or two places while resting period in order to provide fresh air to the animal.

Nowadays a number of zoological parks are using train as mode of transport. Animal transportation by train is more convenient as chances of jerks and emergency breaking are less. It also saves time by many folds. While using railway as mode of transport every preparation should be kept ready as per schedule given by rail authority

and there should not be any compromise in punctuality. Animal transport by railways requires more man power as loading and unloading is usually not assisted by rail authorities. Apart from this all the feeding material and drugs should be stored in sufficient quantity as usually these things are never available on railway platforms.

After reaching the destination the animal should be examined in the cage by the officers of the both transporting and recipient zoo and it should be released as soon as possible in its new enclosure. Before commencing the return journey the accompanying staff should be given at least one full day rest and the same protocol should be followed.

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Announcement

**“Nature Conservation in a Time of Change”
Conference of Society for Conservation Biology - Asia Section
In Collaboration with
Amity Institute of Forestry & Wildlife, Amity University, Noida**

Dates: March 19 & 20, 2018
Venue: Amity University, Noida, UP

Topics: wildlife ecology, conservation, awareness and policy

- Student posters and speed-talks
- Skills and exposure workshops

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