

25th Year Celebrations - ZOO Publications

ZOOS' PRINT & ZOO ZEN enter 25th year in 2010

This issue of ZOOS' PRINT Magazine starts its 25th year of regular monthly publication. The magazine was an afterthought actually. Department of Environment officials, who were concerned about Indian zoos suggested I register a new Society with national scope to give a morale boost and some technical help to Indian zoos. They also said I should apply for a grant, which I did but neglected to include a monthly publication in our request. Just weeks before our projected launch I thought of the work of Friends of Mysore Zoo, which inspired the DOE's request, and realised that the impact of FOZ was primarily due to the monthly magazine, the Mysore Zoo "Gnu's" Letter, which we sent to "all" the 44 listed zoos of India and surrounding countries, members, naturalists, conservationists and foresters.

So, although the DOEn, Government of India, funded our first year and half of activity by providing total support, there was no money for a magazine. That never stopped Z.O.O. The first issue came out just days after our registration was finalised and has been coming out every month **without a miss** for nearly a quarter century.

ZOO's PRINT was not meant to be an academic publication ... it was meant to be a feature magazine with practical and "do-able" technical articles in it. I was adamantly against peer review, as most of the articles we were getting (and which we wanted) were by people who would have been peered right out of publication. ZOOS' PRINT was meant for practice and growth of "freshers" in zoos and wildlife. We didn't mind if the grammar was awful; we didn't mind if people wrote in the first person, or even if they made some technical mistakes. We just wanted to provide information enabling improvement of aspects of zoo management and to promote communication and cooperation between zoos. In those days, people DID write articles and reports, and send lists of single animals, and made reports of experiences and treatment of animals. When there were few articles, we always had material from outside sources to fill the pages. We also had another publication which started out strictly as a compilation of instructional and technical materials that were difficult or impossible for people to obtain here in India. That one, ZOO ZEN, started in August 1985, so it is well into its 25th year and we distributed a massive amount of material for zoo personnel with this modest xeroxed publication.

A couple of years after founding, ZOO got involved with the IUCN SSC Captive Breeding Specialist Group, chaired by now late, great firebrand, Dr. U.S. Seal and under his guidance and that of another great zoo man, Dr. Tom Foose, also deceased now, we started conducting workshops and training, and reported them in ZOOS' PRINT and ZOO ZEN. At that time Sanjay Molur joined our office and began hounding me to make ZOO and its publications more academic. I fought valiantly but he began editing articles, sending them back to authors, etc. and, as it was clearly a good initiative, I agreed to split the magazine into two parts, magazine and journal. ZOOS' PRINT Journal had a good run and became so popular with zoo and wildlife academics, that it morphed into a genuine journal in its own right, Journal of Threatened Taxa (JoTT) with an international profile and following and a very high class standard.

Today we are still publishing ZOOS' PRINT. We don't get many original contributions which I regret, except for education reports, but I use ZOOS' PRINT to promote the projects, personalities, organisations and institutions that I think need to grow in South Asia's grass roots, e.g. Regional zoo associations, IUCN Specialist Groups which need more members from South Asia to represent the highly speciose and sadly neglected faunal groups such as invertebrates, rodents, bats, etc. International Zoo organisations such as WAZA and IZE; arcane websites which provide free material on amazingly useful topics, and the current crises of the times ... the extinction crises, climate change, diseases, amphibian crisis, etc.

Some of our readers have grown up with ZOOS' PRINT. We'd like our readers to contribute some original articles this year, at least, perhaps even just telling what ZOO has meant in your life and career.

Sally Walker, Founder and Editor Emeritus and Sanjay Molur, Editor

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