

CZA News

Elephant Issue

Update on transfer of elephants from Zoos (as on 24.07.2010) Central Zoo Authority (Ministry of Environment & Forests)

Remember a few months ago when the announcement came down that all zoos had to surrender their elephants? There was a hue and cry throughout the world about that. Western zoos, many of which spend huge amount of money and research on their elephant exhibits and take pride in making life as a captive elephant as pleasant and natural as possible were distraught, as they were concerned this move by the Government of India would give the western animal welfare organizations cause to demand the same from the western zoos. In western countries, the zoos really have been through enormous soul searching over their elephants and created standards and guidelines to insure they and their colleagues know how to keep elephants.

As of now the Indian zoos who have transferred elephants from their zoo area to ostensibly a better area for the large creatures are:

Bondla Zoo, Goa shifted two elephants to Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary, Goa.

Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Vishakhapatnam transferred two elephants to an elephant camp.

Assam State Zoo, Guwahati has transferred two elephants to the Nameri National Park.

Lucknow Zoological Gardens, shifted 1 elephant to Dudhwa National Park and 1 to Katanya Ghats.

Kanpur Zoological Park, Kanpur moved one elephant to Dudhwa National Park

The zoos whose elephants are in process of transfer are:

Alipore Zoo, Kolkata is to transfer 3 elephants to Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary, North Bengal.

Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad is to transfer 3 elephants to Project Tiger Area of Srisailem and

Sri Venkateswara Zoological Park, Tirupati is to move 4 elephants to elephant camp, Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary, Kuppan Range, Chittoor West Division by proposal of PCCF, Andhra Pradesh

It seems some of the states have requested exemptions from the order. An Order from the Ministry states: In reference to the advisory issued by the Central Zoo Authority dated 7th November 2009 for transfer of elephants from zoos to Forest Camps etc., the authority has received a number of requests from Chief Wildlife Wardens and Zoo Directors for exemption of transfer of elephants on the grounds of health, etc. The Central Zoo Authority has constituted a committee to inspect the proposals and submit a report to the Authority. The members are Member Secretary, CZA or his

representative, Kartick Satyanarayan, Member CZA, Mrs. Suparna Bakshi Ganguly, CUPA and Dr. B.K. Gogoi, Veterinarian, Assam State Zoo, Guwahati.

CZA's New Teeth

Central Zoo Authority is to be restructured to increase its effectiveness. Minister for Environment and Forest, Jairam Ramesh declared that the CZA as in its present form was "hardly an authority". His proposal is to set up five regional offices of the Authority in the country and it is to go to the Cabinet soon.

The mandate of the Central Zoo Authority is to inspect and oversee the zoos and enforce minimum standards which are the Norms for upkeep and health care of Indian zoo animals by force of the Recognition of Zoo Rules. CZA also is to zoos technical and other assistance for improvement. Best of all, CZA is to insure that carelessly planned and conceived zoos do not materialize.

There are now 198 zoos in India today as compared to some 450 which had sprung up like weed during the decades following the popularization of wildlife. Every Forest Minister in every state and UT wanted a zoo in his native place, and every go-getter thinking to make easy money wanted to start a zoo. Previously this was possible but with the passing of the Zoo Act in 1992 and the Norms and Standards in 1992, and particular with the Supreme Court Entry into zoos a few years ago, that has become very difficult. As it should be! If a government or individual wants to set up a new zoo, it can be done only with both Central Zoo Authority and the Supreme court approval. Of the 198 zoos in India now, one is run by Central Government and others by state governments, with a few by NGOs.

Mr. Ramesh claims to be very cautious with regard to new zoos, so CZA has focused on consolidation and relocation proposals instead of new one. Ramesh is concerned over the mortality rate in Indian zoos, although it is with the norm of the international zoo community. He considers it a case for worry and wants to bring it down even further. Mr. Ramesh also said breeding of vultures, one of the endangered species, has been so successful they will soon be seen darkening the Indian skies again. He also wants to revive endangered species and cites the 14 "critically endangered species" selected by CZA for captive breeding. Reference: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/article547804.ece?homepage=true>