

Capacity Building Workshop for Zoo-Keepers on Husbandry and Management of Reptiles in Zoos of Western & Central India

Sundarvan organised a 3-day workshop from 25th to 27th June on Capacity Building for Zookeepers on Husbandry and Management of Reptiles wherein 28 zookeepers from 15 different zoos of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra have participated. This workshop was fully funded and Supported by Central Zoo Authority (CZA) and Gujarat Council on Science and Technology (GUJCOST).

The first day of the workshop commenced with the talk on introduction of Sundarvan Nature Discovery Centre describing its set up, aim, objectives and history. This was followed by inauguration of the event by Dr. R.K. Sahu, Director of Kamla Nehru Zoological Garden, Kankaria, Ahmedabad, the Chief Guest of the workshop. A session on guidelines of Central Zoo Authority of India (CZA) and role of Zoo Keepers was conducted by Dr. Naim Akhtar, Manager Sundarvan which had deliberation on types of zoos, their categories, rules and others guidelines and duties of a zoo keeper.



Brief orientation talk on Reptiles



Zoo Management tips given by Park Manager

Thereafter group activities were conducted to discuss and share their experience about snakes enclosures, manpower engaged, husbandry protocols and animal behaviour. Additionally, groups put forward the various challenges that they face in management of animals on routine basis and shared the solutions which they often adopt.

The afternoon session began with a talk on snake awareness and field exercises on handling and restraining techniques for snakes and other reptiles. There was demonstration of various equipments generally used to rescue snakes. Myths associated with snakes were discussed and the knowledge of Zoo Keepers was enlightened in bringing the real facts. The second half of the afternoon session was an interactive session on encouraging the participants to share the information on a particular species that they have worked with as an exercise of Keeper's Talk to demonstrate their ability to work as Educator in zoo for the common visitors. The objective of this session was to train



Cleaning of enclosures by participants.

the participants on how to address the visitors of zoo with interesting facts & information which may help in conservation and protection of that particular species. It helped them to sharpen their communication skills on imparting education and awareness.

Group activities on reptiles such as Turtles, Tortoises, Crocodiles and Lizards were carried out on 2nd day and participants shared their knowledge and experience on husbandry and management of these species. Dr. Raju Vyas shared his life long experience of Vadodara zoo where he had worked on reptiles as Animal Keeper initially and later as Zoo Inspector. He made it as an interactive talk on Husbandry and Management of reptiles in zoo. He shared his valuable experience with the participants. The second half of the day was a field exposure trip to the Kamla Nehru Zoological Garden, Kankaria, Ahmedabad. There was a session organized by Dr. R.K. Sahu in his office where he talked about role of Zoo Keepers and handling and transportation of reptiles. He emphasized the importance of the Zoo Keepers in present scenario where many of the reptiles are threatened. A visit to

new and old reptile house was organized to show existing housing of reptiles and their upkeep. Difference in old and new reptiles house was realized & experienced by the participants as it was shown perfectly. Knowledge on upkeep, housing and management was passed to the participants through live demonstration and interactive discussion. Dr. Sharva Shah, Veterinary officer of Zoo explained about the practices done under veterinary care for reptiles and what are the common symptoms of diseases of reptiles.

The last day was to impart hands on training & experiences of managing reptile cages and enclosures at Sundarvan and concluded with a certificate distribution. Since the motto of this workshop was 'Learning and Sharing,' it was given an opportunity for the participants to interact with each other and share their experiences. In fact, it had happened and participant really had a good experience of learning and sharing on reptiles husbandry and management.



Group Photo of the participants

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