

Zoos in India -- legislation, policy, guidelines and strategy

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Legislative factors

..The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: to address the increasing use of wildlife and its habitat by ways of diversion, trade and hunting, both the Houses of Parliament of India resolved for enactment of a Central Act, namely, the Wildlife (Protection) Act in 1972.

.. The President of India gave his assent to the Bill on 9th September, 1972.

.. It came on the Statute Book as the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (53 of 1972).

.. Zoos require recognition under Section 38 H of the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

.. Definition of 'zoo' - any facility exhibiting the captive animals listed in Schedule I to V under the Wildlife (Protection) Act to the visitors.

.. Zoos in India are regulated under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and

.. Guided by the National Zoo Policy, 1998.

Zoos in India

.. History of public zoos in India is about 200 years old.

.. During the British colonial period, the first zoo was set up in 1800 by then Governor General Lord Wellesley at Barrackpore, a suburb of Kolkata, on the banks of Hoogly River.

.. At present there are 159 recognised zoos + 21 circuses in the country, out of which 58 are major zoos having larger animal collections.

.. No new Zoo can be established in India without prior permission of the Central Zoo Authority and orders from the Apex Court – Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

.. No Zoo in India can operate without recognition from the Central Zoo Authority.

Objective behind Creation of Central Zoo Authority

.. Role of zoos - as repositories of wildlife and centre for sensitizing people for wildlife conservation - recognized by the Indian Board for Wildlife in 1952.

.. The Board recommended setting up of modern zoological parks in major cities. Zoos on modern design concept were set up in major cities of the country viz., Delhi, Hyderabad, Kanpur etc. .. In the mean time several organisations and department of the Government over the years, established large number of deer parks, aviaries, reptile parks and mini zoos. These facilities neither made any attempt to house the animals in a manner congenial to their health nor contributed towards awareness amongst the visitors about the wildlife and its conservation.

.. Concerned at this trend, an Expert Committee was set up in 1973, which made recommendation for management of zoos in the country. However, ill-planned zoos continued to come up in the country. The number of zoos rose from 67 in 1970 to 377 in 1995.

.. In this background that GoI decided to constitute a statutory body to regulate the functioning of zoos in the country.



Central Zoo Authority

The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 was amended in 1991 and the Central Zoo Authority was established in February, 1992, with the objective of preventing mushrooming of ill-planned zoos in the country, and for overseeing the management of zoos and provide them necessary technical and other inputs to come upto the desired level of management.

.. The Central Zoo Authority is a 12 member body headed by a Chairman. The Minister, Environment & Forests, Government of India is presently ex-officio Chairman of the Authority. Member Secretary is the Chief Executive Officer of the Authority.

.. There is a 15 member team in the office of the Authority to assist the Member Secretary in discharge of his duties.

Main Functions of Central Zoo Authority

.. To specify the minimum standards for housing, upkeep and veterinary care of the animals kept in a zoo.

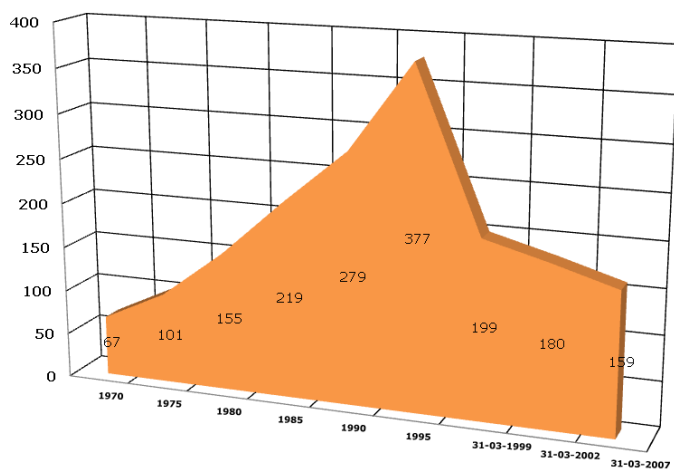
.. To evaluate and assess the functioning of the zoos with respect to the standards or the norms as may be prescribed.

.. To recognize or derecognize zoos.

.. To identify endangered species of wild animals for the purpose of captive breeding and assigning responsibility in this regard to a zoo.

.. To coordinate the acquisition, exchange and loaning of animals for breeding purpose.

Number of Zoos Over the Years



	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	31-03-1999	31-03-2002	31-03-2007
No. of Zoos	67	101	155	219	279	377	199	180	159

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- .. To ensure maintenance of stud books of endangered species of wild animals bred in captivity.
- .. To identify priorities and themes with regard to display of captive animals in zoos.
- .. To coordinate training of zoo personnel in India and outside India.
- .. To coordinate research in captive breeding and education programmes for the purpose of zoos.
- .. To provide technical and other assistance to zoos for their proper management and development on scientific lines.
- .. To perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act with regard to zoos.

Applicability of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980

- .. Zoos are part of Forestry Activity
- .. The Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India on the basis of the recommendations of the Forest Advisory Committee had decided that the activities required to be done in zoo as per the approved management plan will not attract the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 provided that such activities are necessary for the management of animals & imparting education and have the prior approval of the CZA (Order dt. 13.11.2007).

Classification and accreditation of Zoos

For the purposes of deciding standards and norms for recognition of zoos and monitoring and evaluating their performance the zoos have been classified into four categories namely Large, Medium, Small and Mini on the basis of number of animals, numbers of species, number of endangered species & number of animals of endangered species exhibited.

Recognition of Zoo Rules, 1992

- .. In order to evaluate and provide accreditation to the zoos in the country, the Recognition of Zoo Rules, 1992 were framed under the Wildlife (Protection) Act.
- .. There are 51 standards and norms which have been prescribed for compliance by the zoos.
- .. The rules prescribe type of housing facility to be provided for the animals, healthcare, hygiene, feeding and overall upkeep of the animals, the minimum number of trained personnel to be posted in the zoo and visitor facilities.
- .. Keeping in view of the growing advancement in the field of captive animal management, these

Detail of recognised zoos in India by CZA

Category	Application received	Recognition cancelled or refused	Recognized
Large	19	0	19
Medium	12	1	11
Small	28	2	26
Mini Zoos	366	283	83
Rescue Center	57	36	21
Circuses	26	9	17
Total	508	331	177

Rules were amended from time to time, last being in 2006.

.. A total of 508 applications for recognition as zoos have been received by the Central Zoo Authority till date.

.. After the amendment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act in 2003, rescue centres and circuses have also been brought under the definition of zoo.

.. A total 57 rescue centres and 26 circuses have applied for seeking recognition.

Zoos under various Agencies

Ownership	Total
Central Government	4
State Government	8
J & K State Government	3
State Forest Department	92
Public Sector	12
Institute	3
Trust	14
Municipal Corporation	15
Private	8
Grand Total	159

National Zoo Policy, 1998

.. To give proper direction and thrust to the management of zoos in the country, the National Zoo Policy was framed and adopted by Government of India in the year 1998.

.. The main objective of the Zoos under the National Zoo Policy:

- Zoos should complement national efforts for conservation of wild fauna through carrying out the breeding of endangered species
- To inspire among zoo visitors empathy for wild animals by displaying animals in their naturalistic enclosures
- To provide opportunities for scientific studies and creation of database on biology of endangered species. Complement and strengthen the national efforts in conservation of rich biodiversity of the country, particularly the wild fauna.

The objectives can be achieved through the following protocol.

- .. Coordinated conservation breeding of critically endangered species in *ex-situ* conditions.
- .. Conservation education.
- .. Research for conservation and if resources permit to act as rescue center financial assistance for improvement of Zoos.
- .. Management and maintenance of zoo is the sole responsibility of the zoo operator/ management.
- .. The Central Zoo Authority provides some financial assistance to recognized public sector zoos for improvement/ creation of animal housings, veterinary facilities, research and trainings on 100% basis, whereas improvement of infrastructure is shared on 50:50 basis.

Indian zoos are going from menageries to open naturalistic enclosures.

Modernization of zoos

On persuasions of the Central Zoo Authority 14 zoos have moved/or in process of moving to new sites / extended the area for providing modern housing facilities for the animals:

1. Sayajibaug Zoo, Vadodara to Ajwa
2. Surat Zoo to Dr. S. K Nature Park, Surat
3. Rajkot Municipal Zoo, Rajkot to the outskirts of Rajkot
4. Mini Zoo, Haddo to Chidiyatapu, A&N Islands
5. Kohima Zoo to Rangapahar Zoological Park, Kohima
6. Jaipur Zoo to Nahargarh Biological Park, Nahargarh near Jaipur
7. Udaipur Zoo to Sajjangarh Biological Park near Udaipur

8. Jodhpur Zoo to Machia Biological Park nr Jodhpur
9. Kota Zoo to Abheda Biological Park near Kota
10. V.O.C. Park Mini Zoo, Coimbatore to Mettupalayam Road near Coimbatore
11. State Museum Zoo Thrissur to its outskirts
12. Lady Hydari Park, Shillong to Umtrew near Shillong
13. Mahatma Gandhi Zoo, Solapur (extension of area)
14. Kamla Nehru Zoo, Indore (extension of area)

CENTRAL ZOO AUTHORITY VISION - 2010
OUR ZOOS WILL HAVE HEALTHY ANIMALS
IN ECOSYSTEM BASED NATURALISTIC ENCLOSURES,
SUPPORTIVE TO IN SITU CONSERVATION WITH
COMPETENT AND CONTENTED STAFF,
GOOD EDUCATIONAL AND INTERPRETATIVE
FACILITIES, THE SUPPORT OF PEOPLE
AND BE SELF - SUFFICIENT.

Letter from CBSG RSG, SAZARC participant - Mansoor Qazi

I would like to thank you for providing me the opportunity to attend the CBSG/RSG meeting and the 8th Annual SAZARC Conference in Ahmedabad. Also the visit to Geer Foundation was an excellent experience for me. Presentations of Pritpal Soorae, Mike Jordan, Dr. Pandey & other officials from the Forest Department of Gujarat regarding release of lion at Bardia were very much informative. It enabled me to understand technicalities & problems in release of different animals.



Karachi Zoo

The information which you gathered during the workshop regarding re-introduction/ release in South Asian region, can be used as a data base. I would inform you regarding the information relating Pakistan after verification from the concerned departments

The Dinosaur Park adjacent to the Geer Foundation is a fascinating sight where fossils and replicas were beautifully displayed. The signages and information about different species of dinosaurs and their fossil forms were commendable.

The arrangement of SAZARC Conference at Ahmedabad hosted by Dr. Sahu was excellent. Dr. Sahu provided us all needed and wanted facilities. The resort was located at a very peaceful place which was an aid for us to concentrate on the relevant topics of the conference.

During the whole conference I enjoyed vegetarian food very much and reduced my cholesterol level. The dinners arranged by Dr. Sahu were really very delicious and the environmental and cultural activities were also very pleasing. The schedule of conference cum shopping were very hectic but we enjoyed the whole activity very much.

Before attending the conference at Ahmedabad, India regarding zoo legislation I was not fully aware of its importance and now feel that the zoo legislation and its implementation is very essential for the upkeep of any zoo. I was very much impressed after having gone through the zoo legislation documents of Central Zoo Authority in India as well as those from other countries and WAZA. I will try my best to adopt similar legislation upto the level of Karachi City.

Visit of Gir Forest was remarkable one. Its no doubt, a very memorable experience of my life. It was very amazing sight for me to look at the lions, deer, peacocks & other animals freely roaming about over there in their natural habitat. I have never seen such a place in my life. In other words it is really a treasure of wildlife & the people who are managing this treasure are very professional & praiseworthy especially Mr. Bharat Pathak & Jayant S. Solanki are very well conversant with their field works & they deserve all appreciation for their wonderful work.

And the visit of Sakkarbagh Zoo headed by Mr. Vishvadipsinh J. Rana suggested that it is among one of the good zoos of India. Particularly their carnivore collection is very healthy & developments of new safari enclosures along the zoo are very beautifully made. They have built a true replica of Gir Forest where some of the free roaming herbivore were seen with great amazement. This too was an attractive sight for me.

With best regards, Sincerely yours, Muhammad Mansoor Qazi, Director, Karachi Zoo and Safari Park, Karachi, Pakistan. E-mail: muddassir74@yahoo.com