

International Conference on "India's Conservation Breeding Initiative" 21st to 24th February, 2008, New Delhi, India

Organizer: Central Zoo Authority
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Venue & Accommodation:
The Conference will be held at National Agriculture Science Centre, Dev Prakash Shastri Marg, New Delhi – 110 012, India. Accommodation for the resource persons and participants has been arranged at International Guest House in the same campus.

Conference overview
Zoos in India are regulated as per the Recognition of Zoo Rules, 1992 under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and guided by the National Zoo Policy, 1998. The Central Zoo Authority was established by the Government of India in the year 1992 to oversee the functioning of Zoos in the country and to provide them technical and other inputs to come up to the desired level of management. There are 163 recognized Zoos in India, of which, 59 are major Zoos.

The main objective of zoos under the National Zoo Policy is to strengthen the national efforts in conservation of rich biodiversity of the country, particularly the wild fauna, which can be achieved supporting the conservation of endangered wild animal species by giving species which have no chance of survival in wild, a last chance through coordinated breeding under *ex-situ* conditions and raise stocks for rehabilitating them in wild as and when it is appropriate and desirable. The National

Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016) also lays emphasis on the role of zoos for *ex-situ* breeding of endangered species of wild fauna and their rehabilitation in the wild as per the IUCN guidelines for reintroduction. The Central Zoo Authority has been identified under the plan as one of the organizations for developing capabilities in this field. Today when wildlife habitats are under severe pressure and large number of species of wild animals have become endangered, the zoos have not only to sustain their own population but also augment the depleting population of endangered species in the wild.

It has been decided in the Central Zoo Authority that the Indian zoos must have at least 100 physically, genetically and behaviourally healthy individuals of each critically endangered wild animal species with less than few hundreds/ thousands (or say less than 2500) individuals left in the wild. Species with localized distribution get preference in the scheme of things. Proper captive stock to continue display, to act as insurance for the exigency and for reintroduction/ release in wild, in case needed form very base of conservation breeding programme in India. The *ex-situ* conservation breeding of endangered species in India is a joint venture of *in-situ* and *ex-situ* wildlife managers. It is a need based activity. The *in-situ* wildlife managers identified the species which need immediate intervention in form of *ex-situ* conservation breeding and also the habitats for which the activity is proposed.

Taking corrective measures to address the cause of earlier decline/ extinction of the wild population of the targeted species is one of the important components of the programme. The existing zoos are the other major component of the programme as there is huge infrastructure and trained/ experienced manpower available over there to deal with the issue. Two to four zoos in the habitat range of the targeted species take part in the breeding programme whereas the breeding facilities in the form of off-display conservation breeding centres are created only in one (coordinating zoos) to two zoos of the region.

Other zoos in addition to the coordinating and participating Zoo continue to display the species in naturalistic enclosures. Possibility of identifying around 25 founders is assessed from existing captive population in Indian zoos. Efforts are made to acquire suitable founders from rescue centres, foreign zoos and even from wild to initiate the programme or to induce new blood in the existing captive population. The target is as already mentioned, to have at least 100 physically, genetically and behaviourally healthy and identifiable individuals with animal history records

of each species with less than 2500 individuals left in the wild. The Central Zoo Authority is providing funds for creation of off-display conservation breeding facilities and engagement of technical manpower for preparation of conservation breeding management plan for each identified species in coordinating zoos. The Wildlife Institute of India has been entrusted the work of preparation and updating the national studbooks/ herd books of all the targeted species including marking and preparing animal history sheets of all the participant individuals. A National Referral Centre has been established at Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly to provide super speciality services and diagnostic facilities to the zoos for physical health check-up and health care of the animals.

A Laboratory for Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES) for biotechnological interventions has been established at Hyderabad for doing genetic fingerprinting of the founders and others. World Association of Zoos & Aquariums/ Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG)/ SSC/ IUCN have also been required to be engaged and support the activity. All the major zoos in India are joining ISIS/ ZIMS.

Fifty eight different critically endangered wild animal species have been identified for adoption for coordinated conservation breeding programme in India (see list in p.8).

Programmes:

Wednesday: 20th February, 2008

The resource persons and the directors/ representative from Indian zoos will arrive at New Delhi and stay at International Guest House, National Agriculture Science Centre, Dev Prakash Shastri Marg, New Delhi – 12.

Thursday: 21st February, 2008

Opening of the conference with the resource persons and Indian participants. The morning session will be devoted to conservation breeding programme in Indian zoos whereas the afternoon session has been kept for enrichment animal enclosures in the zoos.

The foreign participants will start arriving during the day and will be staying at International Guest House.

Friday: 22nd February, 2008

All the resource persons as well as the Indian participants will continue at the Conference site. The first half will be devoted to the record keeping and ZIMS whereas in the second half, the representative from Indian Veterinary Research Institute and LaCONES will be talking to the participants followed by discussion.

Saturday: 23rd February, 2008

The full house conference (Indian as well as foreign participants) will start with inaugural Session followed by the technical session on conservation breeding of Indian wild animal species. In the second half, the technical session will be followed by the working group formation and discussion sessions of the different working groups.

Sunday: 24th February, 2008

In the first half, the technical session will be followed by working group discussions whereas in the afternoon presentations by the different working groups will precede the broad discussion session and recommendations.

Post Conference Tour

All interested foreign participants will be visiting coordinating/ participating zoos of the wild animal species of their interest followed by the visit to the natural habitat of the species concerned in different parts of India.

Social Programmes

Friday: 22nd February, 2008

All the foreign participants will be visiting Agra Sloth Bear Rescue Centre and Taj Mahal during the day and meet their Indian counterparts at the icebreaker and dinner in the evening.

Saturday: 23rd February, 2008

On 23rd February, the Chairman, Central Zoo Authority will host dinner to all the participants.

Cost

All the travel cost including in India have to be borne by the participants (from abroad) whereas lodging, boarding and local hospitality will be provided by the Central Zoo Authority.

Contact us

All individuals and institutions invested in or are interested in *ex-situ* conservation breeding of wild animal species of Indian sub-continent are welcome to the conference. The interested participants are required to give information in the following form:

1. Title
2. Name
3. Surname
4. E:mail
5. Country
6. Telephone/ Fax
7. Type of accommodation required
8. Interested in (Sps or aspect of conservation breeding of wild animals)

All Administrative and Conference correspondence will be handled by the Central Zoo Authority, whereas, logistic matters may be taken up with the Director, National Zoological Park, New Delhi.