

Third Annual Joint Meeting of CBSG, South Asia and RSG South and East Asia, November 28-30



CBSG South Asia is the South Asian Regional Network of the IUCN SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group. Sally Walker convened the first CBSG Network in 1991 and now there are such networks all over the world. CBSG calls the operator behind their networks "Convenors".

RSG South and East Asia is also the IUCN SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group's representative in the region but their operators are called Chairs, or Co-Chairs. Sanjay Molur and Sally Walker are Co-Chairs of RSG South and East Asia. Zoo Outreach Organisation is host to both.

Chester Zoo / North of England Zoological Society provides infrastructural help to ZOO for running both of these groups.

As it is difficult to keep up with two regions and hold a meeting where people can get together and discuss issues pertinent and sometimes unique to their region, we decided to link the CBSG/RSG meeting to the regional zoo association meeting, in this case SAZARC, the South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation. Conservation breeding and all the types of release, confiscation, etc. which comes under RSG mandate are certainly relevant to zoos and it is particularly important for the zoo community to understand the RSG guidelines and activities of CBSG. In

the inaugural year of SAZARC, there was a CBSG meeting just before the zoo meeting with Dr. U. S. Seal, Chair, CBSG facilitating. ZOO decided to combine the two for the first time in 2003 when the association met in Sri Lanka.

Attended by Fred Launay, Chair, and Mickey Soorae, Chief Executive of RSG, the meeting was considered successful and very worthwhile. The exercise was repeated in 2004 at Lahore, Pakistan SAZARC with Dr. Bob Lacey, Chair, CBSG and Mickey Soorae, and also considered to be very useful. This year none of the international chairs could attend the meeting in India but it was also very successful. The themes were very compelling and the participants had been invited for their interest and expertise in them. The themes were Troubled Translocations, Rehabilitation Guidelines, and Substandard Zoos.

Next year, God willing, a CBSG/RSG meeting will be held before the South East Asia Zoo Association meeting in Saigon, Vietnam. A lot of groundwork has to take place before this is finalised. We hope to build a better conservation community in both the sub-regions of Asia with these meetings. The working group reports of 2005 meeting are below. Submitted by *Sally Walker and Sanjay Molur*

Troubled Translocations (with emphasis on non-human primates) Working Group

Working Group Members : *Janaki Lenin, Facilitator; Aniruddha Vasudeo Belsare, Recorder; Priyadarshini Govind, Computer Recorder; Md. Abdur Razzaque, Sanjay Thakur, Sanjeev Kumari Paul, Ananda Kumar, Manoj Mahapatra, Mir M. Mansoor, Payal Molur, P.O. Nameer, K.A. Nanjappa, Syed Ali Ahasan*

Introduction to theme (Janaki Lenin)

Translocation is the standard response of the authorities in mitigating any wildlife conflict situation. Contrary to popular opinion evidence is now mounting against translocation as a strategy as it seems to cause a lot more problems than it solves. Besides shunting the conflict to a new area, translocation is believed to upset the social hierarchy in resident animals and obviously places a greater stress on the available resources. The various animals known to have been so targeted are leopards, tigers, crocodiles, snakes, monkeys, and antelopes. The RSG believes that translocation as a strategy should be used only for conservation benefit where the population of a species has declined drastically. There is a need for the various biologists and wildlife management experts working with these taxa to come to a consensus on translocation and formulate appropriate alternatives. And this meeting is the ideal forum to take this forward.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Government of India formulated a national action plan to deal with the nuisance monkey problem. Copies of the proposed Government policy were handed out to working

group members for review. An alternate policy was also provided which has been in process for some time and involved some individuals at the meeting. The Working Group output was utilised as additional information and expertise for the alternative policy. The Working Group took exception to the title of the document which clubbed monkeys with domestic animals such as cattle, pigs and dogs. Considering that all nonhuman primates are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 they should be dealt with accordingly. While the MoEF's plan initially acknowledged that translocation did not work in resolving the issue, it later proposed translocation as one of the main means of mitigating the conflict.

The Working Group unanimously resolved that translocation of nuisance non-human primates was not only cruel to the animals concerned but did not solve the problem. The reasons cited are as follows:

1. The translocated animals will resume their own habits in the new area thereby spreading the conflict over a greater area.
2. The impact of translocated animals on the resident populations of non-human primates has not been studied adequately.
3. Translocation is carried out unscientifically without necessary monitoring of the translocated animals. The site of release is arbitrarily chosen without any assessment of habitat preference, food availability, etc.

4. In some cities and towns, several troops live adjacent to each other. Removing one troop will merely create space for the adjoining troop to move in.

The Working Group, however, agreed with the MoEF's plan that the following measures are needed:

1. Stop feeding monkeys
2. Penalize feeding
3. Erecting sign boards
4. Awareness camps
5. Education in schools and colleges, temple authorities, local bodies
6. Monkey behavior studies*

* The Working Group felt that the 2 pilot studies as proposed by the MoEF plan are inadequate. Research should be long term and not only identify causes of conflict, but also monitor the action carried out to mitigate conflict and continue to monitor the area after such action is taken. The Working Group decided that sterilization of non-human primates should be performed only on animals to be maintained in permanent captivity. There is no provision for

free-living non-human primates to be sterilized. There is no place for non-human primates to live in close quarters with humans. Even in temples where religious sentiments are strongest, the existing practice followed by the Forest Department is to trap all monkeys on the basis of complaints received from the public. These monkeys may be euthanized or maintained in permanent captivity in rescue centers.

The Working Group did not have the expertise to comment on the solid waste management protocol set down in great detail. But the Group however, felt that garbage disposal is an integral long term strategy in controlling the presence of non-human primates in commensal situations. The Working Group (reviewed the alternate policy and) constructively moved the discussion on how to resolve the conflict between man and non-human primates further by listing the types of conflict and tabulating the kind of action (short-term and long-term) needed for each of the conflict scenarios (Table 1).

Table 1: Types of conflict and the kind of action (short-term and long-term) needed

Origin	Type of Conflict	Immediate action (short – term)	Preventative Action (long-term)
Pet/ escaped solitary monkey	Biting monkeys/ House raiding/ Crop raiding/ Damaging property/ Monkeys scaring people/ Snatching food/ Zoonosis	Kill Trap & (1) euthanize or (2) permanent captivity	
Roadside troops	Biting monkeys Crop raiding Damaging property Monkeys scaring people Snatching food	Sign boards asking the public to desist from feeding	Education/ Ban feeding/ Public awareness/ Planting fruit bearing trees/ Monkey proof garbage disposal
Crop raiding troops	Crop raiding	Trap Scaring away- Aversive conditioning using sounds, Scarecrows, etc.	Public awareness Change crop pattern
Previously translocated troops	Biting monkeys House raiding Crop raiding Damaging property Monkeys scaring people Snatching food Zoonosis	Kill Trap & (1) Euthanize (2) permanent captivity, or (3) biomedical research	
Temple / Residential troops	Biting monkeys House raiding Crop raiding Damaging property Monkeys scaring people Snatching food Zoonosis	Trap & (1) permanent captivity or (2) Biomedical research Proper garbage disposal Sign boards asking the public to desist from feeding Regulated feeding	Education of temple authorities Public awareness NHP proof garbage disposal