

Report on Southern Indian Zoo Directors meeting at the Temple city: Animal collection policy in zoos

Manju Siliwal* and Latha G. Ravikumar**



The Thiruvananthapuram Zoo, Government of Kerala on behalf of the Central Zoo Authority organized a two-day conference of the South Indian Zoo Directors in the Temple city from 26-27th February, 2005. The theme of the conference was '*Animal collection Policy in Zoos*'. Shri A.P. Kumar, Honorable Minister of Horticulture and Tourism was the Chief Guest for the inaugural meeting. Mr. Yellaki, Director, Thiruvananthapuram zoo welcomed the gathering. Mr. G. Rajashekharan, Secretary, Kerala Tourism Development in his presidential address emphasized the role and influence of zoos and museums in the life of common man or public. He added that zoos should grow in tune with modern techniques and with innovative ideas, and improve day by day. After lighting the lamp, Honorable Minister for Horticulture and Tourism addressed the gathering stating that funds and resources should be utilized to the optimum to promote effective conservation. Dr. B.R. Sharma, Member Secretary, Central Zoo Authority in his inaugural address talked on captive breeding and role of zoos in saving threatened species from extinction. Shri R.S. Suresh, Member Secretary, Zoo Authority of Karnataka was on the dais.

The first day of the conference had three technical sessions, chaired by Sri. Pushpakumar, PCCF (Retd.), Andhra Pradesh, Mr. B. Vijayaraghavan, Chairman, Chennai Snake Park Trust, Chennai and Dr. B.R. Sharma, Member Secretary, CZA respectively.

First Technical Session:

Dr. B.R. Sharma, Member Secretary, Central Zoo Authority in the first technical presentation gave a talk on 'Strategy for Holistic development of Zoos in India - A view of CZA. He gave the history, achievements, role of CZA and its financial aid to all the zoos, constraints. He emphasized on conservation education programmes and requested all the zoos to develop education plan and that can avail support from CZA. He emphasized on initiating research on various topics like zoo design, behaviour, biotechnology and diet. He informed that small grants would be provided to carry out research in various zoos for which research fellows can be appointed as zoo personnel have other duties to perform. He mentioned there is a national zoo animal health coordinated programme in planning which will provide diagnostic facility for proper diagnosis of various diseases of zoo animals. He also talked about the upcoming, CZA funded 'Laboratory for Conservation of Endangered Species' (LaCONES), in collaboration with CCMB, Hyderabad, which will have modern facilities like DNA fingerprinting, artificial insemination, a gene bank and other modern facilities.

Shri Brij Kishor Gupta, Scientist, Central Zoo Authority, in his talk on Research in *ex situ* Wildlife Conservation emphasized the need for initiating scientific studies in zoos. He explained how to proceed with initiating studies in zoos and the role of CZA in supporting scientific studies. He listed out advantages and disadvantages of zoo research. At the end of the talk he asked inputs of participants for

various researches which can be carried out in the Zoo. Participants in the discussion suggested many research areas. Dr. Sharma encouraged zoos to take up research work in their facilities for which CZA will provide funding.

Dr. S. Shivaji, Deputy Director, CCMB, Hyderabad gave a talk on Conservation of Endangered Species through Biotechnological interventions and role of Laboratory for Conservation breeding of Endangered Species (LaCONES). He explained how biotechnology can be used for saving a species from inbreeding depression and also resolving other problems of captive breeding of animals in zoos. LaCONES is at its final stage of completion and expected to start functioning in two months. This lab will help in determining relatedness and degree of inbreeding, monitoring genetic variation, forming gene resource bank, techniques to assist reproduction, develop human resource in wildlife molecular ecology, etc. Zoos can get their samples analysed for a minimal charges while CZA can support zoos that has monetary problems. To end the first technical session Mr. Pushpakumar gave a summary of all presentations.

Second technical session:

Dr. P.C. Tyagi, Director, Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur in the second technical session talked about preparing a management plan, master plan, collection plan for a Zoo. Considering Anna Arignar Zoologica Park as a case study he gave the definition of management plan and master plan. He emphasized on the reasons for a need for a master, management plan in Zoos. He explained ways to prepare a Management, master plan with an example of AAZP. He also talked on Conservation breeding of Captive stock of animals in Zoos.

Shri Pushpkumar, PCCF (Retd), Andhra Pradesh talked about role of collection planning in zoo designing. He said collection planning is an element of master planning. He listed out the objectives and advantages of collection planning. He also pointed out what all factors should be taken care for collection planning.

Third technical session:

In this session Dr. M.G. Jayathangaraj, Associate Professor, Madras Veterinary College, Chennai presented on Strengthening of Madras Veterinary College as Nodal Centre of Wildlife Health and Disease Diagnosis. He talked about the different diseases or health problem with zoo animals and their cure.

Education was taken as a major discussion in the conference. N. Kshitija, ACF, National Parks, Hyderabad talked about Preparing an education plan for a Zoo: a case study of Mahavir Harina Vanasthali. She started by defining conservation education, reasons for need for such program. She listed out directly and indirectly ways/means,

* Research Associate, Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society

** Zoo Outreach Organisation, Peelamedu, Coimbatore

methods to conduct conservation education program and different target groups to be focused on. She also emphasized on role of zoos in conservation education. Followed by this B.K. Gupta gave a short presentation on Education: An essential Conservation Task.

Day 2:

The two technical sessions of the second day was chaired by Mr. Tyagi, Director, AAZP and Shri Suresh, Member Secretary, Zoo Authority of Karnataka.

Fourth Technical Session

Dr. Ajith Kumar of Centre for Wildlife Studies, Bangalore gave his first talk on Management of Captive Population in Zoos. Emphasizing on the role of zoos he pointed out the goal of population management and the importance of selecting species for it. He stressed that successful population management can be achieved with the help of modern tools like SPARKS, VORTEX, PM2000 and explained LTM as example. Lastly he listed out all the factors such as animal husbandry, social and mating system, and social manipulations of groups, ideal size of enclosure, stress in captivity for population management.

Shri Suresh, Member secretary, Zoo Authority of Karnataka gave his talk on Population control in prolifically breeding species. Dr. C.S. Jayakumar, Vet, Thiruvananthapuram zoo also discussed the same topic by showing different techniques adopted to sterilize animals in zoos.

Fifth Technical Session

Mr. Markandaiah talked about the upcoming Butterfly Park. A center for Research, Education and Rural livelihood using

butterfly resources at Bannerghatta Biological Park, Bangalore. He described the model of upcoming Butterfly Park at Banerghatta, Bangalore and highlighted the importance and advantage of this facility.

The last presentation was by Mr. Manoj Kumar, Director, Mysore Zoo, talked about the sources of generating funds by his zoo with an example of vermiculture. At the end the following coordinators were identified for selected species: Python- Vijayaraghavan, Chennai Snake Park; Nilgir Langur - Ajith Kumar; Gaur, Indian Fox - Mysore Zoo; Wild Dog - Tirupathi Zoo; Nilgiri Thar - Thiruvananthapuram Zoo; Asiatic wolf, Malabar Giant Squirrel, Grizzled Giant Squirrel - Vandalur Zoo and White back Vulture Scientific input from Vibhu Prakash, BNHS will be taken and then co-coordinator will be decided.

Group Discussion

At the end of all presentations a group discussion was planned to discuss on education, control of surplus animal, master plan and research. The group came up with group suggestions and recommendations that will be circulated by the organisers to all participants of the conference.

Valedictory function:

Mr. G. Rajashekharan, Secretary, Kerala Tourism Development was invited as chief guest for the valedictory function. Shri. Pushpakumar and Dr. Vijayaraghavan gave their remarks about the conference and Mr. Yellaki thanked all the participants for their cooperation for the successful conduct of the workshop.

A Short Report of the Dulahazara Safari Park

Zahed Md. Malekur Rahman*

Dulahazara Safari Park is ideally situated on the tourist road to the famous beach and World Heritage Site, Cox's Bazar District, Bangladesh. The Park has an area of 900 hectares (2250 acres). There is a 160 acres enclosure for tiger with accommodation and another 160 acres for lions in the same system. We have several marsh crocodile or salt water crocodile trying for breeding in lake. The bear enclosure each is 2.5 acres. There is an enclosure of elephant of 7 kilometers.

Two large aviaries holding 50 species and another aviary for wetland birds such as pelican, flamingo, stork, cormorant provide excellent views of our avian wildlife. We have threatened felid species like clouded leopard, leopard cat, and fishing cat. The park holds several primates such as the highly threatened capped langur, hoolock gibbon and Assamese macaque as well as more common species such as rhesus macaque and common langur, spotted deer, sambar deer, hog deer, barking deer, Asian elephant are some native ungulates while we also exhibit the exotic hippo in a big enclosure. The Park has constructed and developed a museum, nature interpretation center (under establishment) and briefing center with scope of watching documentary films. We have constructed a road of about 25 kms for visitors who are coming to Dulahazara Safari Park.

We have established a hospital with operation theatre, laboratory and many modern equipments. The Park is under the Forest and Environment Ministry so has an excellent chance of developing along right lines.

* Veterinary Office, Dulahazara Safari Park, Bangladesh.