

A Report on Regional (Eastern and N. Eastern) Zoo Directors' Conference

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The Regional (Eastern and North-eastern) Zoo Directors' conference was held at Kenilworth, Little Russel Street, Kolkata on 18th and 19th March, 2005. The conference was sponsored by Central Zoo Authority, New Delhi and organized by the Zoological Garden, Alipore, Kolkata in association with CZA. The focal theme of the conference was "Coordinated Captive Management of Endangered Species." A good number of Zoo Directors/ Officers-in-charge of Zoos from Eastern and North-eastern region participated in the conference.

18th March, 2005

The inaugural session started soon after registration of participants. It was well attended by distinguished guests from various organisations interested in zoos and *ex-situ* conservation and conservation of species in general in addition to Zoo Directors (as participants). Sri Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, Chairperson, Managing Committee, Zoological Garden, Alipore welcomed the guests and participants. The inaugural speech was delivered by the Chief Guest, Sri Jogesh Chandra Burman, Minister-in-Charge, Department of Forests, Government of West Bengal. Dr. B.R.Sharma, Member Secretary, CZA, and Mr. K. K.Singh, Chief Wildlife Warden, West Bengal, also addressed the gathering on the occasion.

The first Technical session started with the presentation "Strategy for holistic development of zoos in India - a view of the Central Zoo Authority" by Dr. B.R. Sharma, Member Secretary, CZA. This was followed by another presentation "Initiating conservation, Breeding of endangered species — - Pigmy hog - a case study" by Dr. Gautam Narayan. The participants took part in discussion during these two presentations and also had a preliminary discussion about identifying endangered species for conservation breeding in East and North-east zoos in India. The next presentations "Conservation of endangered species through biotechnological interventions and Role of Laboratory for conservation, breeding of endangered species (LaCONES)" by Dr. Shivaji, Deputy Director, CCMB, Hyderabad, made several points for in-depth discussion. The exercise on identifying endangered species which require biotechnological interventions was also conducted. The second Technical session started with the presentation on "Research in *ex-situ* Wildlife conservation" by Shri Bipul Chakraborty, Scientific Officer, CZA. This was followed by a discussion on prioritizing research areas. The last presentation of the day was made on "Preparing a Collection Plan, a Master Plan and a Management Plan for a Zoo" by Shrawan Kumar Sinha, Director, Nandankanan. This was followed by a discussion on objectives/ orientation/details/Formats etc of these plans.

19th March 2005

The third Technical session started with the presentations on "Discussion on diseases infecting the Wild animals in the region and devising ways and means to ensure the prevention of such diseases" by Dr. N. Sahoo, Orissa

Veterinary College, Bhubaneswar and Dr D. Das, Veterinary college, Guwahati. The role of East and North-east region Disease Diagnostic Centres at Bhubaneswar and Guwahati were also discussed by them. This was followed by a discussion for setting up a team of Veterinarians for rendering appropriate advice and assistance towards combating health hazards and outbreak of endemic diseases in the zoos of eastern and north-eastern region.

In the fourth technical session, a discussion on "Population Control measures for prolifically breeding species" took place with a genuine concern as it is one of the problems being faced by a number of zoos. In another group discussion, led by Dr. B.R. Sharma, various issues related to "Creating Rescue facilities for Wild animals" were discussed and efforts were also made to identify the zoos for creating such facilities.

Two presentations on the zoos were made in the first phase of fifth technical session. The first presentation on the zoo of Tata Steel Zoological Society, Jamshedpur, was made by its Director, Mr. A. K. Jain. The second presentation on Nandankanan Biological Park, Bhubaneswar, was made by Mr Shrawan Kumar Sinha (Director, Nandankanan). After these presentations, Dr. S.K. Chaudhury (Director, Zoological Garden, Alipore, Kolkata) made a presentation on "Animal Collection Plan for east and north-east zoos of India" which was followed by a widely participatory group discussion and an exercise on identifying endangered species for conservation breeding in eastern and northeastern zoos. It was resolved that such conservation breeding programmes need a well-planned systematic and scientific approach with a proper support required for the purpose. It should be viable/sustainable and supportive of rehabilitation in the wild, as and when appropriate and desirable.

The technical session ended with the presentation of various recommendations during the two days Conference. The certificates of participation were distributed among participants and the vote of thanks were rendered during concluding session.



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