

News of Zoos of South Asia

INDIA

Ahmedabad Zoo gears up for Summer Heat

Since May, Ahmedabad is very hot and animals are not comfortable. To reduce the heat in the animal enclosures, we have provided them with desert coolers, khus khus mats and bamboo mat covers to avoid direct sunlight. Our staff are spraying water throughout the day on the khus-khus mats and also on plants, and this is giving cooling effect to the animals. We are also spraying water inside the deer enclosures to keep them cool, while for some we have provided mud for better cooling and wallowing. Elephants and Hippos are provided with green nursery net which cuts the infra-red rays and reduces temperature. In particular, the water body of the hippo is cool they are able to submerge in the water. Without this nursery net the water in the pool becomes warm so hippos don't go into the water in the afternoon. We are also providing special medicines which increase the resistance of animals during summer season to avoid heat stroke.

Due to severe heat in Ahmedabad annually, we are planting many trees in the zoo, and now almost all the enclosures are having good number of trees. These trees are very useful to zoo animals and visitors. Now we (both human denizens and animals) are eagerly waiting for rain. We want only full rain, powerful rain, continuous rain ! . . .because small rain creates more discomfort, heat and moisture. The heat and humidity are also harmful to our birds.

The ETHE (Earth tube heat exchanger) is also producing a good cooling effect to tigers. Professor Girija Sharan of Indian Institute of Management, inventor of this system, also got the World Bank Award of \$1,60,000 for this invention of a non-conventional type of AC system. This is especially developed for the green house in Kutch. He is producing tomato and capsicum round the year, which he first tried practically in our zoo. We will write an article on this subsequently. *Submitted for ZOOS' PRINT by Dr. Rajendra K. Sahu, Superintendent, KN Zoo Gardens, Ahmedabad.*

National Zoo, Delhi measures to beat the heat for their zoo animals An increasing mercury means better care and food are required for the denizens of National Zoological Park (NZP) in the capital. Supplemental glucose, regular doses of vitamins, calcium and seasonal fruits like watermelon, papaya and cucumber mark the menu of the zoo kitchen.

"Glucose and fresh fruits are given to most of zoo animals except deer. Glucose with water is to check dehydration, while seasonal fruits to keep them fit. They will continue to have such diet until July. We cannot risk changing the diet even if the weather improves in between," according to Dr N Panneer Selvam, chief veterinarian of zoo, said. "There are nine new borns in the zoo including three white tiger cubs. Milk and glucose are their staple diet. Among fruits, they are mainly served with papaya, watermelon and cucumber. The tiger cubs get regular dose of glucose apart from light meat," Dr Selvam added.

As a precautionary measure, the quantity of meat for cats has been reduced from two to four kilos. Normally, a big cat gets 10 to 12 kg of meat every day. It has been reduced to 8 kg now. They will be sticking to this diet even during the rainy season. In addition, the enclosures of new borns has been made spacious. Water is being regularly sprinkled in all enclosures including that of birds. "If it is hot and humid, the birds suffer more than other animals," Dr Selvam said.

For tigers and lions, there are coolers. This facility has been extended to other animals too." According to the zoo officials, the electricity bill goes up to Rs 1.25 lakh per month during summer. *Rajeev R Roy, The Pioneer, New Delhi, Friday, June 24, 2005*

Mumbai Zoo adopts Population Control The VJB Zoo, Byculla, Mumbai has decided to impose its very own brand of family planning. This is in response to an order by the Central Zoo Authority, New Delhi, to control the rapid proliferation of black buck, spotted deer, sambar and hippos. This includes castration, vasectomy and, perhaps worst of all, separation of the sexes. Dr M V Wani, Deputy Superintendent of the zoo, said, "These species have multiplied beyond our holding capacity. That is why we have to resort to controlled breeding. The castrated and vasectomised animals will still be capable of reproductive behaviour which is necessary for their welfare and mental wellbeing. While the usual form of castration involves removal of the testicles and robs males of their sex drive, the zoo will use the Bordezo method, which involves shrinking the testicles by degenerating the spermatic chord. Most of the males will be separated from the females because the zoo fears that some of the males that are still considered too young to mate may in fact be old enough. Some of the population statistics are

Hippo : Population: 6; Ideal population: 4 None of the males will be vasectomised or castrated, but will be separated from the females
Blackbuck : Population: 71; Ideal population: 25 Castrations: 28; Vasectomies: 0; Separation : 43
Spotted deer : Population: 22; Ideal population: 20 Castrations: 6; Vasectomies: 4; Male/female separation: 12
Sambar Population: 13; Ideal population: 20; Castrations: 5; Vasectomies: 2 Male/female separation: 0. *Satish Purohit, Mid Day, Mumbai, June 9, 2005*

Other Delhi zoo article

Eco-friendly ambulance to ferry animals in Delhi Zoo The National Zoological Park on Wednesday, acquired a new ambulance exclusively for animals inside the zoo premises. The battery-operated, zero-pollution vehicle has been especially designed to meet the requirements of the zoo. Dr Panner Selvam, zoo vet said "The vehicle cost Rs 3.5 lakh. It is a pollution-free and noise-free which may be helpful for our routine work like carrying smaller animals from the enclosure to the hospital. It can also be used for carrying medicines to the site." The vehicle has a maximum speed of 30 km/hour. It will be operational from Thursday onwards, informed Dr. Selvam. *Staff Reporter, Times of India, Thursday, June 09, 2005.*

Rescue Centres and Circuses - CZA recognition required On 3 May 2005, the Central Zoo Authority sent a communication F. No. 27-2/2003-CZA(M) The Chief Wildlife Wardens of all States/UTs regarding the fact that the circuses and rescue centres were brought under the definition of zoo after amendments in the Wild Life (Protection) Act in 2003. The Central Zoo Authority sought the clarification from the Ministry of Law & Justice, Government of India, with respect to applicability of Recognition of Zoo Rules to circuses for the purpose of granting recognition to them. The Law Ministry has now informed that the circuses which have wild animals specified in the Schedule I to IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act in captivity shall require recognition of the Central Zoo Authority under Section 38 H of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Circuses which do not have above animals with them will not require recognition. Similarly the provisions of Section 38 I of the Act shall apply to only such circuses/Rescue Centres which are

keeping wild animals specified in the Schedule I & to IV of Wild Life (Protection) Act in captivity. Chief Wildlife Wardens were therefore requested to kindly take necessary action in regard to circuses and rescue centres. The letter was issued by B.R. Sharma, Member Secretary.

PAKISTAN

Lahore Wildlife Park: Lion and tiger safaris ready by 30th

Work on lion and tiger safaris at the Lahore Wildlife Park will be completed by the end of this month. From July, wildlife enthusiasts can visit these safaris in their own vehicles, according to Raja Javed, Director. Animals for the safaris will be brought from the Lahore and Bahawalpur zoos. Next year, construction of an African block, Indus Plains area and camping huts would be completed as well as safaris for elephants, rhinos, bears and deer would be opened. Giraffes, zebras, monkeys, and peacocks will roam free in the park. The bird aviary will be ready by the 30th. A 450-acre lake has been built at the park with four islands: three for the public and one for water birds. The water birds island is covered with thick trees to create a natural habitat for the birds, which will be released in the water in the next few weeks, said Javed. The Lahore Wildlife Park is 30 kilometres outside Lahore along the Raiwind Road.

Javed said that the safaris would cover 80 acres and the bird aviary would be on 80,000 square feet. The aviary will have a netfence at the top to contain the birds, he said.

The Park was established in 1982 and was handed over to the Wildlife Department in 1988 by the Forest Department. Currently, the park has black deer, chinkara, monkeys, lions and peacocks. The objective of the park is to house indigenous wildlife, captive breeding of important wild animals and birds and to provide recreational facilities to local and foreign tourists. Javed said that the park had exotic plants such as tut, sukh-chen, arjan, jaman, siml, kachnar, shisham amaltas, bottlebrush, bougunwalia and roses. *Shoaib Ahmed, Daily Times, June 06, 2005*

BHUTAN

Bhutan's animal centres

The Crocodile Breeding Centre, which also serves as a Rescue Centre is situated in southern west of Bhutan under Chhukha District and is a Mini Zoo. It is 1km away from Jaigaon and Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. It is in the jurisdiction of the Bhutan Forest Range Office, Phuentsholing under Gedu Forest Division, Department of Forest. The activities are looked after by Forest Range Officer, and one care taker under the control of Forest Range Officer.

Establishment : according to the caretaker and other elder people in Bhutan, the mini zoo was established since 1976 with total area of 0.58 acre and with simple enclosures out of wire mesh and wooden posts. The mini zoo was renovated in the year 2000 funded by the Royal Government of Bhutan. The mini zoo displays the following types of animals:

Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) — in the initial stages, there were four Gharial which are said to have originated from River Manas, Bhutan. Since there were no signs of reproduction, many people in the country and in different countries advised importation of male Gharial for reproduction. Accordingly, the Royal Government of Bhutan had requested the Government of Nepal to give one male gharial as a token of friendship between two countries. In the mean time, one of the four has developed its male characteristics (snout). We have brought two males from Nepal but no sign of reproductive behaviour has been observed till date. Now, we have 3 males and 3 females

Mugger (*Crocodylus palustris*) — Mugger is allegedly from the same source. In the initial stages we had 2 females and 1 male and now we have 3 males and 12 females, including younger ones. We have stopped allowing them to reproduce as we have limited space in the centre.

Other animals — We have three barking deer and three rabbits in the centre which were rescued from danger.

Peafowl Breeding Centre. This centre is in separate location under same Range and In-charge. It was established in the year 2000 with an area of 0.69 acres. The birds were shifted from other areas within Bhutan to our centre. At present, we have 8 female and 2 females in the centre.

The Divisional Forest Officer, Gedu submits the plans and proposals based on our submissions to the Ministry of Finance. Based on the budget sanctioned from the government, we are carrying out an extension, renovation works and other development works. The facilities are totally under the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Trainings and other seminars are funded by Nature Conservation Division, Department of Forest, Thimphu. (RGOB). Address is Forest Range Officer, Phuentsholing Range. Thimpu, Bhutan, Phone No.009755252322 Fax No.0097553094 (near our office) E-mail - karmapling@yahoo.com

Information on visitors.

It is roughly calculated that 500,000 persons visit per year. We don't have any system for ticket and there is restriction to the visitors. It is free to visit and see behind the enclosure only. About 90% of the visitors are from West Bengal, India and 10% are Bhutanese. It is likely to be dropped by certain percent of visitors if we introduce some system of payment. **Submitted by Karma Jordan, Forest Range Officer, Bhutan.**

BANGLADESH

Mugger gets second chance

Bangladesh's last remaining marsh crocodile will soon find himself with company again after India donated 40 of the aquatic reptiles to its neighbour to save the species from extinction there.

The marsh crocodile, once a common and feared inhabitant of the country's rivers, lakes and marshes, has been hunted to extinction in the wild to feed the demand for crocodile skin for use in handbags and shoes.

Only one marsh crocodile, or mugger, remains in the entire country, kept in a pond at the shrine of Hazrat Khan Jahan Ali, a Muslim saint, in the south of the country. His last companion, a female crocodile, died three years ago. Bangladesh's top conservation announced that the species was to be saved with a shipment of 40 muggers from the Chennai bank, a breeding programme in southern India. The crocodiles are due to be flown into Dhaka, the Bangladeshi capital, tomorrow and will be kept there and at a safari park for officials to catch up on their crocodile research. Shamsur Rahman said: "After that our aim will be to reintroduce them into the wild." Muggers were common in India until the mid-1800s when hunting for their skins brought them close to extinction there. In 1867 the last mugger crocodile disappeared from Burma. By the 1970s, awareness of their plight brought them official protection. Captive breeding in India brought the wild population up to 5,000. But destruction of their habitats has left thousands of captive-bred crocodiles with nowhere to be released. India's gift to Bangladesh is one move to solve the problem for both nations. **Times on Line, 22 June 05.**