

South Asia Section

ASIAN ZOO AND WILDLIFE NEWS

Mumbai Zoo News

V.J.B. Udyan (Mumbai zoo) bred the following animals during the last three months:

Four horned antelopes	2.2
Military macaw	0.0.1
Common palm civet	0.0.1

The zoo has surplus of one female hippo, a pair of military macaw and four pairs of African gray parrots to offer on exchange basis. The zoo is looking for 1.1 tigers, 1.1 Gir lions, Lion-tailed macaque, Nilgiri langur and some nocturnal. Interested zoos may contact Mumbai Zoo Authorities for suitable exchange:

Brihanmumbai Mahanagarpalika, VJB Udyan
Dr. Ambedkar Road, Byculla (East) Mumbai 400 027
Ph: 022 372-5799; 372-3578

Mumbai Zoo celebrated Wildlife Week from 1st to 7th October. During the week a programme of essay and painting competition of school children of 6th and 7th standard participated. Around 200 students participated on 4th - 7th October. A unique rangoli exhibition on wild animals was held in the zoo campus.

The Mumbai zoo has also released 8 Sambar deer and 17 spotted deer in the Reserve forest at Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Borivilli at the hands of Shri K. Nalinakshan, the Municiple Commissioner when CCF, WL Shri M. Gogte, DCCF Shri Garola, DCCF Shri Barati, DC Shri C. Rokade, various press and media were present for the occasion. Submitted by Dr. M. V. Wani, Mumbai Zoo

India -- Lions electrocuted in Una taluka

Rajkot -- Sept 26 (Indian Express) A lion and lioness were electrocuted at a village in Una taluka under the Dhari range of Gir sanctuary. Forest officials said the lions got entangled in a crude live wire fence put up by a villager to protect his crop. The carcasses of the animals were recovered by forest officials on Saturday evening from near a field in Intwaya village.

Sources said the field near which the lions died was close to the forest and this pair, which was mating, strayed near the field and were immediately electrocuted. Forest officials estimate the incident may have occurred about a fortnight back but the villager buried the lions nearby without informing anyone.

However, other villagers who came to know about it informed forest officials and a raid was conducted. According to Dhari range Deputy Forest Officer K S Randhawa, the carcasses of the two lions were recovered with the nails and body parts intact. "The post-mortem report suggests that both the lions died of high voltage electric shocks. Though it was not

poaching, the intention to harm the animals was there. We have recovered all the 36 nails of the two lions."

Villagers with fields near the forests have been illegally putting up electric fences as protection from the wild animals. "Putting up electric fences is illegal and it is a major crime under the Wildlife Protection Act if the fencing is done in a forest area," he said.

Randhawa said they were yet to ascertain why the lions strayed to the periphery of the forest. "They were not entirely outside the forest area. In fact, it was a revenue village within the range where these lions were mating, but they had moved out too far. We are still trying to find out why the lions strayed so near the village. It could be because they were mating and had made this area their territory. Another possible reason could be the water problem," he said. Forest officials said villagers with fields in the forest area were resorting to illegal practices like putting up live wire fences and poisoning the water to discourage animals from straying into the fields.

"The villagers simply suspend a live wire from a high voltage cable and join it with iron rods placed around the field which forms a crude and highly dangerous fencing. Death is instant for whoever comes in contact with the fencing. In fact, even unsuspecting humans have died in this manner," says DFO Randhawa. Forest officials say a villager who had put up a similar fencing in Dhari got electrocuted himself and died recently.

The villager who put up the electric fencing which killed the two lions is absconding, but forest officials, who are confident of arresting him in a couple of days, have a strong case against him. Setting up such electric fences in protected area is illegal and a serious crime under the Wildlife Protection Act. Under section 51 of the WPA, the accused can face upto a minimum of two years and a maximum of seven years imprisonment, which is likely in this case.

Bhannerghatta Zoo news

Bannerghatta Park will get hippos from Mysore Zoo soon. Preparations for the arrival for hippos are almost ready with construction of a water tank, which has been approved by the Central Zoo Authority. The cages to bring the hippos have already been sent to Mysore.

Also there are plans of resuming the herbivore safari and arrangements are being made for it. Earlier, the herbivore safari had to be cancelled as the deer, sambar and nilgai (blue bull) were being attacked by leopards.

A female tigress died after being mauled at Bhannerghatta National Park on Saturday when she leaped from her enclosure to an adjacent one inside the same cage.

She was done to death by six male tigers in what was described as a territorial dispute among the animals. The postmortem was conducted early on Sunday morning and the carcass buried inside the park.

The incident took place at about 3.30 p.m. when the last batch of the safari ride was underway and one of the van drivers heard the growling of the tigers and witnessed a vicious display of aggression. A couple of the big cats went for the throat of Chetana. The deep gash in her neck resulted in profuse bleeding; she limped to a corner and died before the Forest Department personnel could rescue her.

There are 28 tigers at the Bannerghatta National Park and they live in groups. Each group is separated from the others by means of a steel enclosure.

About a week later the group of eight tigers were caged separately in two new cages at the Bannerghatta National Park. The new cages, constructed beside the existing eight cages, will accommodate two adult tigress and six cubs aged about one year. Initially, the eight tigers hesitated to directly enter their new accommodation. Eventually, they moved into the new enclosure, but not before checking out the environs.

Following the tragedy of the tigresses jump over the wire mesh of the enclosure, the park authorities have increased the height of the enclosure and strengthened it too. Other measures have been taken to prevent tigers from leaping from their lair.

Presently, 26 tigers and nine lions are housed in the safari area. The leopards in the park face a similar problem of overcrowding in the cages. As many as 14 leopards are being housed in just two cages. However, the number is increasing as the locals are handing over captured leopards. Recently, a month-old leopard cub, abandoned near Ramnagar, was handed over to the park authorities who have been taking good care of it. The park authorities said that the situation is worse and alternative arrangements have to be made to accommodate these leopards.

Dhaka Zoo in trouble

A blood parasite is threatening tigers in Bangladesh's national zoo. Another tiger has died at the National Zoo in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka recently after a spate of three earlier deaths in the past four weeks. The deaths are believed to have been caused by a blood parasite, Trypanosoma, and it is feared that another tiger is now dying. Experts say the parasite originated in sub-Saharan Africa, where it was spread by tsetse flies. It has been eradicated in Africa, only to reappear in South Asia, where experts are unsure how it is being transmitted.

This weekend all 15 tigers in the zoo were injected with an anti-parasitic drug. Dr. Arshad Toosey, Director, Lahore Zoo, who had dealt with the problem in his zoo previously was called in to assess the situation.

According to Bangladeshi animal conservationists the zoo staff has a hard time of it due to inadequate training and ponderous bureaucratic procedures. Staff has to refer to the government livestock department before spending even small

amounts of money on medicines or emergency care.

Last month, intelligence officials were asked to investigate the zoo, where more than 250 animals are reported to have died in the past six months. Twelve zoo staff were suspended and the head keeper was replaced, but experts say conditions are still in desperate need of improvement.

A.K. Munirul Haq, veterinary surgeon at the zoo reported that the tigers had been affected by trypanosomiasis, a disease often spread by biting flies. Trypanosomiasis is usually spread by germ-carrying flies and it may infect other animals as well. Consumption of rotten and infected meat might also spread the disease, said a scientific officer of Central Disease Investigation Laboratory. It is the first time the disease has been diagnosed in Bangladesh.

COMING SOON

NEW T-SHIRTS
GARMENT BY LE SHARK, TIRUPUR
ART BY MARIO ERIC RAMANUJAM OF PONDICHERRY
DESIGN AND PRINTING BY Z.O.O., COIMBATORE

