



C.Z.A. NEWS

Central Zoo Authority of India

Member Secretary assumes charge

The big news for the Central Zoo Authority this month is the long awaited taking charge of the new Member Secretary. Mr. P.R. Sinha, I.F.S., Bihar cadre assumed the post on 31 March 1999 after a very long interval since his appointment. Sinha, who was serving as Field Director of Project Tiger, Palamau which has had some severe difficulties in the last several months which had to be put in some order before he could leave.

P.R. Sinha joined the Department of Forest in March 1977 in Bihar. He served as Divisional Forest Officer at Palamau Project Tiger area from 1983 - 86. His next posting was at the Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park, Patna, where he served from 1986 - 1991. He was posted in Patna from 1991 - 95 and his last posting was again at Palamau Tiger Reserve. In 1987 Sinha passed out of the Wildlife Institute of India where he obtained a Diploma in Wildlife Management.

Sinha jumped right into the thick of Central Zoo Authority activity by attending the Zoo Policy Workshop and Kanpur Zoo Golden Jubilee from 4-6 April where he kept the workshop on track. He returned to New Delhi to preside over the new Subcommittee on Zoo Education which met on 7 April. The same day he left for Hyderabad to take a full meeting of the Central Zoo Authority and review the progress of the Conservation Centre which is coming up there,

It was too early for an interview, more than what was related but in future we will try and include regular discussions with the new Member Secretary as well as his predecessor, Mr. S.C. Sharma, Addl. I.G. Wildlife.

Subcommittee to make NZP an autonomous body

For more than three years there has been discussion of making the National Zoological Park autonomous from the Ministry of Environment under whose administrative control it is at the present. For years there has been much dissatisfaction with the current set up which requires mandatory use of other government departments such as the Public Works Department, etc. in carrying out zoo works which may need immediate attention. Now, as of 10 March 1999, a Committee has been set up to finalise the modalities to be followed to make the National Zoo an autonomous institution. Members of this Subcommittee are Sri Samar Singh, Secretary, WWF, India; Sri Divyabhanusinh Chavda, Sr. Vice President, Taj Group of Hotels; Dr. Ashok Singh, I.F.S. (Retd.), Jt. Secretary, Finance, MOEF; with AIG Wildlife and Member Secretary, CZA associating with the committee.

Guidelines for Creation of Rescue Centres *

The issue of the over crowding of zoos with rescued animals and confiscated animals has been a matter of serious concern to the Central Zoo Authority. Due to unscheduled arrival of large number of animals at the zoo, the animals have to be housed in sub-standard and dingy enclosures. This in conjunction with inadequate health care leads to large scale mortality among new arrivals. Consequently, the reputation of the concerned zoo is tarnished and at times the very existence of the zoo is questioned.

The Central Zoo Authority, after detailed deliberations, has decided that zoos should accept only such animals for which appropriate housing facilities are available and which have some display value also.

The remaining rescued/confiscated animals should normally be housed in separate facilities located outside the display area of the zoo. The norms of housing, upkeep and health care of such animals would be same as are prescribed under "Recognition of zoo rules, 1992". The only exception would be that moated barriers need not be provided.

Where such facility can not be constructed within the zoo premises because of limitation of space, the facilities should be constructed on some other land in the vicinity so that the orphanage can continue as a satellite to the zoo. This would not only reduce the operational cost of the orphanage, but would also provide improved upkeep and health care to the animals. The live stock register of the orphanage and the zoo should be kept separately. The State Government should provide additional budget for upkeep of the animals in the orphanage including the capital cost like construction of additional enclosures.

The setting up of orphanages independent from the zoo normally should not be allowed because these orphanages invariably end up in unplanned and sub-standard zoos.

In 1996 CZA issued guidelines for creation of rescue centres to the states. (Issued to Chief Wildlife Wardens of States vide Central Zoo Authority D.O. letter No.7-4/95-CZA dated 16.10.1996 and to Directors/Curators of Large/Medium/Small Zoos vide Central Zoo Authority letter No.24-2/95-CZA dated 24.1.1996)

* Although this "news" is not new, the issue of confiscated and surplus animals has become so compelling and the variety and number of animals has become so great that it may be useful to look at this as well as the discussion of the workshop to discuss the application of National Zoo Policy. This subject is going to become more and more important in future so zoo personnel and enthusiasts need to be fully apprised of all legislation, guidelines and policies regarding this issue.

