



**ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW ZOO USING RESCUED AND
CONFISCATED WILD ANIMALS: THE JUNGLE KINGDOM,
A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CONSERVATION PROJECT**



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Abstract

This paper relates to a unique initiative being undertaken in Pakistan by a privately owned company to promote wildlife conservation. The country has a low literacy rate and a poor track record of nature conservation. It is also a large country with several distinct biotopes. These support a wide range of wildlife, which is rapidly diminishing owing to a lack of environmental conservation awareness.

The Jungle Kingdom project started off as the country's first "theme park". A wildlife theme family amusement park was built to create initial interest and to raise funds for building a small modern zoo. It was planned that the zoo will create a new understanding for wildlife, by presenting it in simulated natural habitat enclosures for the first time in the country and by supporting this display with educative signage and educative activities.

It has been three years since the project started and is being felt by the sponsors that the Jungle Kingdom must become more than a "theme park" or a zoo to be able to achieve tangible results. Therefore the conception of the Jungle Kingdom has been enlarged to include within its umbrella, a number of different centers involved in the range of inter-related activities. For such a wide mandate project, the active support of the international wildlife community is a must. Domestic support will come with a higher level of awareness, which itself will come as the multi-dimensional conservation effort is launched and matures.

A brief introduction to Pakistan

Pakistan was created as an independent country on August 14, 1947 as a result of the partition of India. This year we are fifty years old.

Salient facts and statistics of the country relevant to us are

Total area : 803,943 sq. km.
Area under forests : only about 4 percent of total area
Population : Approx 130 million
Literacy rate : Less than 25 percent
Habitat types : A very wide range of habitat types are found in Pakistan from the permanent snow fields and glaciers of the alpine zone in the very north, through to the moist temperate forests of the northern mountains to the mangrove forests of the Indus River delta in the south. In between are other important habitat types including dry coniferous forests, sub tropical deciduous forests, tropical thorn forests and sand dune deserts.
Protected areas: 7 National Parks, 72 sanctuaries, 76 reserves
Mammal species : 188 species
Bird species : 740 species of which nearly half are residents
Reptiles : 174 species
Threatened species : 31 mammal species, 20 birds and 4 reptiles are threatened with extinction. These include some species endemic to Pakistan like the Markhor and the Indus dolphin and some other species which occur in one or the few other neighbouring countries, like the snow leopard, gharial, Indian wild ass and Marco Polo sheep.
Number of zoos: 5
Recently extinct large mammals : includes tiger, lion, cheetah.

Background to the Jungle Kingdom Project

The Need

The conservation of wildlife has never been a priority subject for successive governments in Pakistan. Many anomalies are present in the existing policies. Wildlife and forests are provincial government subjects, even though these are national treasures. Environment is both a federal and a provincial subject but there is no overall common policy. The Environmental Protection Ordinance, issued in 1996 has lapsed before it could not be passed as an Act of Parliament.

Pakistan has enough statutes in the books and is also a signatory to many international conventions and agreements. In spite of all this, both wildlife and its habitats continue to decline rapidly. With a total area in excess of 800,000 sq. km., only 4 percent is under forests. Germany, France, Switzerland and U.S.A. all have around 30 percent land under forests and woodland. Malaysia, an Asian success story which Pakistani governments avow to copy, has a phenomenal 71 percent of its total land area under forests.

There is of course a need to have broad ranging policies and it is even more important to see that these policies are implemented. Many organizations exist at both the federal and provincial government levels and in the private sector, in the shape of NGOs, who are by and large tackling conservation of wildlife at the macro level.

Such efforts can best succeed if these are supported by activities at the micro level, especially those activities which aim at raising awareness and bringing about a basic change in peoples attitudes. There is a need for a new approach to tackle the issue at grass roots level. Wildlife conservation is successful in developed countries not only because their governments actively protect wildlife but also because the average citizen appreciates the need and makes his own individuals contribution.

The Present Status

In Pakistan the average urban citizen regards wild animals with fear, animosity, distaste and at best curiosity. Rural people who have more contact with animals, both domesticated and wild, generally regard wild animals as either pests or object of sport. Not only is hunting common but till today bear dog fights are a part of festivities in rural areas.

In Pakistan there is as yet no organization which has brought the average citizen into direct contact with wildlife in a positive way or which has adopted a wide ranging public education and awareness program on a long term, permanent basis. The 4 or 5 zoos, all municipality owned, are generally still operated as little more than menageries of days long gone by. Animal enclosures are still largely square cages with concrete floors, signage is poor if at all present and there is no education program.

There are a number of NGOs with promising sounding names but who do very little beyond seminars, walks and press releases. The only educational work of any significance is being done by the WWF-Pakistan and the IUCN.

In this scenario of basically negative attitudes to wildlife and very little work going on to change these attitudes. The Jungle Kingdom

has been set up as the first project which now aims at becoming a multi dimensional conservation facility.

The Jungle Kingdom as originally planned

The Jungle Kingdom project has been initiated by a privately owned company, Leisure & Animal Parks (Private) Ltd. This company was duly incorporated on July 16, 1992 under the Companies Ordinance of 1984. The original purpose for the establishment of the Company was to develop and operate a leisure and recreational facility on a wildlife theme for the general public.

The sponsors of the Company decided to execute this project as a private commercial company, rather than as a non profit trust or NGO. This decision was taken primarily because initial investigations concluded that the NGO route will have little or negligible financial support. It was therefore decided to start off the project as a commercial venture and then convert it to a non profit Foundation at an appropriate time. In this respect, Jersey Zoo/ Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust served as an example.

The Jungle Kingdom Theme Park was conceived as comprising of two adjacent facilities. A wildlife theme family amusement park and a small but modern zoological park. For this purpose, the Company acquired 28 acres land on lease within the Ayub Park, in the northern city of Rawalpindi, from the Cantonment Board.

The lease area is a "natural" for a zoological park and associated conservation activities. Within the 28 acres are a lake, streams, hillocks, wooded areas, open areas, undulating terrain and flat areas.

Owing to paucity of funds, it became necessary to execute the project in several phases. In the first phase, a wildlife theme family amusement park was opened to the public in September 1994. This facility allows entry to families only. The primary objective in setting up the family amusement park was to generate revenues which could be used for developing the zoological park.

Present operations of the Jungle Kingdom

The Company set the objectives of the Jungle Kingdom to be a facility which will:

1. Provide a high quality opportunity for RECREATION.
2. Promote interest in wildlife through conservation EDUCATION.
3. Carry out scientific captive breeding of endangered species and thus contribute to physical CONSERVATION.

Within a few months of commercial operations of the amusement park, the introduction of animals was started. A large aviary was built for black shouldered and white peafowl donated by a private collector and small "petting" animals like rabbits and pigeons were housed in an appropriate corner of the amusement park.

Then in August 1996 a pair of tigers were donated by the Pingtung Center, Taiwan. Pig tailed macaques and capuchin monkeys from AAP Foundation in Holland and European brown bears from Pantera Foundation, also of Holland are the next mammal species planned to be put on display. All species will be kept in enclosures with simulated natural habitat.

The Jungle Kingdom project has been certified as a Tourism Industry Project by the Federal Ministry of Tourism. However there is no other governmental support beyond this. The entire project cost has so far been financed by the sponsors equity, a modest sponsorship by Pepsi and by operating profits from the wildlife theme family amusement park, which has been very well received by the public.

The Jungle Kingdom has strived to play a definite role for wildlife conservation from day one. It has already carried out a number of activities to promote interest in wildlife and nature conservation especially in school children, including:

- (a). A tree plantation day.
- (b). An environment funfair on Earth Day.
- (c). Inter school competitions in nature tableaux, wildlife poster drawing and wildlife quiz.
- (d). Nature walks in Ayub Park for school groups.
- (e). Regular interactive talks on wildlife to school groups
- (f). Installation of several high quality educative signs, with full colour graphics and text in 2 languages on the subject of wildlife and nature and its conservation.
- (g). Printing of greeting cards featuring wild birds of Ayub Park.
- (h). Printing and distribution of flyers to school groups on "How you can help save the Earth."
- (i) Establishing the first WWF Panda Gift Shop in the country inside the Jungle Kingdom.

The future for the Jungle Kingdom

Though only a few years old, the Company has realized that the scope of its activities must be well beyond operating a theme park only, although the theme park itself has several positive attributes. These include:

- (a). providing wide publicity and exposure to the other activities
- (b). providing a first hand experience with wildlife for the public
- (c). providing education to the public through display of wildlife in simulated natural habitat enclosures.
- (d). providing education through detailed educative signage and a wide range of related activities.
- (e). providing a permanent home for animals from worldwide Rescue centers

It is now planned to expand the role of the Jungle Kingdom to cover a number of related activities, all of which will aim to further conservation education and conservation itself. For this purpose, the management has defined the following facilities which over time will become part of the whole Jungle Kingdom project:

1. Scientific captive breeding center

This center will undertake captive breeding of wild animals, especially of endangered species and indigenous species, with the ultimate aim of returning captive bred species back into the wild.

2. Rescue Center

A Rescue Center for wild animals with no homes. For example wild animals caught during anti smuggling operations or animals confiscated from bear shows, bear/dog fights and other such unlawful activities. Also animals donated by other international rescue centers.

3. Training Center

A training center to provide training in wildlife management to:

- (a). animal keepers and other staff of zoos throughout the country
- (b). staff of the provincial wildlife departments
- (c). staff of NGOs involved in wildlife conservation work
- (d). school and college teachers teaching environment subjects

4. Research Center

The Research Center will carry out research and make recommendations in the following fields:

- (a). captive wildlife management
- (b). wildlife diseases
- (c). habitat protection
- (d). wildlife census of Pakistan

5. Conservation Education Centre

This center will run especially formulated programs, based on latest audio visual techniques for school and college groups, other individuals and organizations involved in conservation activities and also interactive lectures and presentations, including video film shows for the general public visiting the theme park.

The WWF-Pakistan has committed to co-operate for the establishment of this Center, by contributing equipment worth about U.S.\$5000.00. The total cost for the CEC is estimated at U.S.\$ 55,000.00

6. Public Library

A public library specializing in books and other publications on nature, wildlife, environment and conservation. The library will cater to all ages from school going children to adults.

7. Pets Advisory Centre and Clinic

A facility to give advice and guidance to people keeping pets, on the proper management of domestic pets. This facility will also have a clinic for small pets where medical care will be provided.

8. Natural History Museum

A small Natural History Museum which will complement the Natural History Museum being set up at Islamabad by the Government. This facility will have high educative value.

9. Ecotourism Center

All the above facilities will be the setting to promote also eco tourism, both domestic and international.

Proposed modus operandi

The above may seem to be a very ambitious program. However the management of Jungle Kingdom feels it can undertake and make this operation successful, on the following premises especially:

1. No time scale for the different activities has been fixed. The program is open ended to this extent and will be executed as and when funds permit.
2. It must not be assumed necessarily that all the above named facilities will be on a grandiose scale. Each Center can be set up on a small scale and then allowed to grow over the long run.
3. As the activities expand beyond the initial theme park, it is expected that greater participation by the citizens, concerned governmental agencies, NGOs and of course the foreign zoological community will result. Such support may be in terms of finances, donation of animals, free of charge expert technical advice, volunteer work and so on.

The multifarious activities of Jungle Kingdom as mentioned above, will have numerous benefits. These include:

- creating an understanding for wildlife in the general public
- creating an awareness in the younger generation, the decision makers of tomorrow.
- providing the citizens with opportunities for healthy recreation and leisure, while they also learn something.
- promotion of scientific research in wildlife management
- promotion of international co-operation in the subject.
- providing employment opportunities to a range of workers and professionals
- promotion of domestic and international tourism
- direct wildlife conservation through captive breeding
- creation of cadre of trained staff for zoos and other organizations involved in conservation in the whole country
- dissemination of knowledge

Conclusion

Conservation of nature, including wildlife is important throughout the world. However some areas of the world are more important for many reasons. Pakistan is one such area, for the following reasons:

- (a). The country has a great wealth of wildlife in the number of species of animals found.
- (b). The country has significant endemic species
- (c). Pakistan, together with one or a few countries is also home to some highly endangered animals like the snow leopard of the Marco Polo sheep, found nowhere else in the world.
- (d). The overall present attitude to wildlife is negative for a country with a very high population.
- (e). Wildlife conservation has little government attention.
- (f). The country is a major migratory corridor for several bird species.

It is to be noted that the activities of the various centers proposed to be established under the Jungle Kingdom umbrella are all interrelated. In some cases the same premises and building structures will serve the purpose of more than one center. For example the zoo in essence will also be a rescue center. By adopting animals donated by international rescue centers like the Pingtung Center, Taiwan and the Panthera Foundation and the APP Stichting Foundation Holland, the Jungle Kingdom will become an overseas extension of these international rescue centers.

Similarly the Conservation Education Center, for which the WWF-Pakistan has committed donation of equipment worth USD 5000, will also house the library.

As the animals collection in the Jungle Kingdom grows, there will be a need to have qualified veterinary persons on the staff and adequate facilities for their work. This same staff and the equipment acquired for them can be used to run the proposed Pets Advisory Center, which will generate further revenues for the other non revenue earning centers.

The conservation activities of the Jungle Kingdom will thus principally focus on raising awareness among the general public (education). With regard to wildlife management, the Jungle Kingdom will focus mainly on the ethological aspects of management. It is hoped that the work carried out in the Jungle Kingdom will be of scientific value to other zoos and to field workers internationally, who must necessarily also employ ethological knowledge in their work.



