

Mysore Zoo Keeper Training

Kumar Pushkar *

Introduction :

The Central Zoo Authority has provided a sum of Rs. 1.00 lakh to organize the Zoo Keepers Training Programme for the Keepers to understand the essential components of animal husbandry, so as to attain the desired level of standard for upkeep of wild animals in captivity, and various other aspects. Since the zoos in Karnataka were not able to depute the keepers for the training programme for official reasons, it was decided to conduct training for only mysore zoo keepers.

On 22nd and 23rd of April 2003, 18 Animal Keepers were enrolled for training and lecture on topics like role of zoo keepers, evolution of zoos, aims and objectives of zoos, planned breeding of endangered species, maintenance of hygiene in animal enclosures and enrichment of enclosures, animal feeding and requirement of pregnant mothers, were arranged by the faculty of zoo, i.e., zoo veterinarians, executive director and deputy director.

The keepers were divided into 3 groups of 6 members each accompanied by a zoo volunteer and an officer from the zoo to visit southern zoos on study tour. One group visited Arignar Anna Zoological Park from 23rd April to 26th April 2003.

The second group visited Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad from 26th to 28th April 2003. The last group visited Sri Venkateshwara Zoological Park, Tirupathi from 29th April 2003 to 1st May 2003.

All the 3 groups made presentation on 3rd May 2003, and it was a very good exposure of the respective zoo concerned.

Overall, the training programme was organized very successfully and had many advantages viz.

1. The participants felt that they were also given importance and all the care for expressing their feelings, interacting freely without any discomforts.
2. For the first time, the Animal Keepers of this Zoo were provided an opportunity to go on study tour to different zoos and they were happy to see their counterparts working and sharing experience.
3. The study materials provided in regional language was very interesting and informative.
4. Lunch and tea was served to the participants
5. It was also understood from their presentations that they were able to collect more information on the welfare of zoo animals and also interacted with the staff and gained confidence.
6. The photographs and report submitted by all the three groups were very informative, and it clearly indicates their interest and involvement in the upkeep of the Zoo.
7. The training programme was very useful as the keepers were exposed to different aspects of zoos, and also exposed to practical aspects of zoo management, besides learning new concepts in zoo management.

The participants wholeheartedly thanked all the three zoos, the Directors and their staff members for providing all the assistance during their study tour.

Also the participants were highly thankful to the Central Zoo Authority for sponsoring this programme, and Sri Kumar Pushkar, Executive Director, and Sri. R.M.N. Sahai, Member Secretary, for providing an opportunity to participate in the training programme.



Keepers tour other zoos in the country.

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From Our Desk
The Zoo Authority of Karnataka, which was formed in 1979, was with the aim of efficient management of Sri Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens, Mysore. The Zoo Authority of Karnataka was registered under Societies Act and hence, all the revenue generated by the Zoo is directly utilized by the Mysore Zoo, apart from getting the supporting grants in Aid from Government. The Zoo Authority of Karnataka was expanded in 2001, to include eight zoos of Karnataka and an officer of the rank of Chief Conservator of Forests was posted as Member Secretary of Zoo Authority of Karnataka, so as to give more impetus and thrust to the process of development of Zoos. The Governing Council was reorganised to include the State level officers and non-officials. Recently the government has posted a new full time Chairman, in place of ex-officio Chairman (Chief Wildlife Warden) and we heartily welcome Sri M.V. Venkataraju as our Chairman and assure him of all support and cooperation and expect that the zoo management shall attain new heights during his tenure. The unfortunate part of this expansion and reorganisation of the Zoo Authority of Karnataka is that there is no representation of the people/officers, directly dealing with the zoo management, in the Governing Council, which is the policy making body of the Zoo Authority of Karnataka. We wish the government consider giving representation to atleast 1-2 Zoos, in the Governing Council, so that the management problems of the Zoos are directly conveyed in the Governing Council Meeting.

Mysore Zoo has been doing lot of activities, for improvement of Zoo, its animal health care and conservation education. It has been in the news all the time and the media and public have started appreciating the developments. We had been very harsh on the indisciplined employees, removed some of them from the service but we also took care of the sincere workers by providing them number of benefits, from time to time. The employees are working with full discipline and devotion, with a motivation to bring zoo to higher levels of achievement. We are proud of them. This newsletter shall be sharing all events at Mysore Zoo, with you all, on quarterly basis. We shall also keep space for the News or Articles from other Zoos, if contributed.

With Best Wishes,
Editorial Board

* Executive Director, Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens, Mysore. Reprinted from the Mysore Zoo Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 2 June 2003