

Report on Zoo Keepers Training Programme 2003

Compiled by Kumar Pushkar *

Sri Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens, Mysore was identified by the Central Zoo Authority to organize Training Programme to Zoo Keepers on annual basis during August 2002 to chalk out the tentative programme for 2002-2003.

Mysore Zoo had organized for the first time during 1997-98 from 23/1/98. About 24 keepers from all over the State of Karnataka had been trained in the programme. A similar programme was conducted from 5/11/2000 to 14/11/2000 for 25 Keepers. The objectives of the CZA for organizing this Zoo Keepers Training Programme is to provide a large number of Keepers with the following abilities:

- To understand the essential components of animal husbandry, so as to attain the desired level of standard for upkeep of wild animals in captivity.
- To provide an opportunity to interact with colleagues and senior Zoo Managers/Administrators.
- To provide varied on-hand working experience.

A sum of Rs. 1.00 lakh was made available from the CZA, during October 2002 to Mysore Zoo, for organizing Zoo Keepers Training Programme.

A proposal was sent to the following Zoos to train about 25 members working in various Zoos of the state during 2003. The concerned Deputy Conservator of Forests were requested to nominate eligible Keepers for the said training. The age limit of participants was fixed between 20 to 40 years and educational qualification preferably VIII standard. Free boarding and lodging was offered to the participants. The Zoos were intimated to bear only Traveling Allowance and Dearness Allowance for the participants. Only two zoos responded to depute the Keepers, as the other zoos expressed their inability due to shortage of staff, and for other reasons. In view of the lukewarm response from the Zoos to depute their candidates, it was proposed to organize Zoo Keepers Training for only Mysore Zoo Keepers. It was planned to give exposure to Chennai, Tirupathi and Hyderabad Zoos to three groups of keepers as part of the Keepers Training Programme.

A programme was chalked out for organizing the Keepers Programme for Mysore Zoo Keepers, during April 2003, as detailed below.

Study Tour of Trainees in 3 groups.

Group - I - 23rd April 2003-- Proceed to Chennai; 24th and 25th April - Chennai; 25th night - 26th April return Journey

Group-II - 26th April afternoon - proceed to Hyderabad 27th-28th April - Hyderabad; 29th April return Journey

Group - III -- 29th April 2003 - proceed to Tirupathi 30th April & 1st May - Tirupathi; 2 May - back to Mysore

Presentation and Valedictory.

3rd May - Presentation by 3 groups and Valedictory.

Day-1	Date: 22/04/2003
Morning	Registration of Participants Inauguration Role of Zoo
Noon	Lunch
Afternoon	Evolution of Zoos, Aims & Objectives of Zoos, Role of Central Zoo Authority. By - Sri. K.M. Chandrashekar, DD Tea Break Breeding policies in Zoos, Planned Breeding of endangered species, Maintenance of hygiene in animal Enclosures and enrichment of Enclosures. By Dr. S.S.M.S. Khadri and Dr. Giriraj
Day - 2	Date: 23/04/2003
Morning	Animal Feeding and Healthcare By Dr. S.S.M.S. Khadri, Care of Pregnant mothers, Food, Requirement of pregnant mothers By Dr. Giriraj
Noon	Lunch

The names of Keepers identified and participated in the above training programme are:-

Group 1
Chennai, Jr. Attender; C. Shankara, Jr. Attender; Nanjunda, Attender; Chikkanna, Jr. Attender; R. Govinda, Attender
Madaiah, Forest Guard

Group II
Javarappa, Attender; H. Mahadeva, Jr. Attender;
Sannegowda, Jr. Attender; Siddarama, Attender; Naganna, Jr. Attender; M. Madhu, Jr. Attender

Group - III
Puttaswamy, Jr. Attender; C. Mahadeva, Attender;
Kempalinga, Forest Guard; Javanappa, Jr. Attender; M. Krishna, Jr. Attender; Chikkanna, Jr. Attender

On 22 April, after registration of the participants in which they were given bags and briefing material, an Inaugural Function was held. In the Inaugural, the Chief Conservator of Forests and the Member Secretary, Sri R.M.N. Sahai, stressed the need for the training, and advised them to make use of the opportunity to the fullest extent, with interaction with experts. Mr. Kumar Pushkar, Executive Director of Mysore Zoo, explained how the role of keepers in any zoo is important, and devotion to their duty would help for better management. He also appreciated the Central Zoo Authority for providing financial assistance, besides

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arranging programme for visiting zoos in South India on study tour. Both the officers provided some useful tips for the participants, with regard to their study tour.

The two-day training programme commenced on the same day. In the first session, the Executive Director of Mysore Zoo, Mr. Kumar Pushkar engaged the participants and gave the talk on role of Zoo Keepers. The session was of more interaction and the Keepers response was good.

In the second session, Deputy Director Sri. K.M. Chandrashekar delivered a talk "evolution of zoos, aims and objectives, role of Central Zoo Authority" to the participants. It was interesting session as many of the participants were not aware of the details of zoos in the country and abroad and also the actual role of Central Zoo Authority.

In the last session, Dr. S.S.M.S Khadri spoke on breeding policies in zoos and planned breeding of endangered species, followed by Dr. Giriraj, Veterinary Officer gave a talk on maintenance of hygiene in animal enclosures, and enrichment of enclosures. In both, the Keepers interacted very well and even beyond expectation.

On 23rd April 2003, Day - II, the first session, Dr. Khadri delivered a lecture on animal feeding and health care. After tea break again Dr. Giriraj, accounted for the care of pregnant mothers and food requirement of pregnant mothers.

In the afternoon, the three batches left for Chennai, Hyderabad and Tirupathi respectively for their study tour.

On 3rd May 2003 presentations by groups on their study tour were held, followed by Valedictory Function and certificate presentation by the Chief Conservator of Forests and Member Secretary, Zoo Authority of Karnataka to conclude the programme. Overall, it was felt that the Keepers Training Programme was organized very successfully, thus providing opportunity for the participants, viz.,

-- The participants felt that they were also given importance and all the care for expressing their feelings, interacting freely without any discomforts.

-- 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 very happy to see their counterparts working and sharing experience.

-- The study materials provided in regional language was very interesting and informative

-- It was also understood from their presentations that they were able to collect more information on the welfare of the zoo animals and also interacted with the staff and gained the confidence.

-- Some of the photographs taken by them is also sent herewith, as part of the study tour.

Mysore Zoo wholeheartedly thanks all the three Zoos, i.e., Vandalur, Hyderabad and Tirupati Zoos, the Directors and their staff members for providing all the assistance during their study tour. Mysore Zoo also extends thanks to the Central Zoo Authority for sponsoring this Keepers Training Programme and requests for continuation of such programmes in future also.

Report on study tour to "Arignar Anna Zoological Park", Chennai

Compiled by P.N. Harshavardhan *

As part of the Animal Keepers Training programme, sponsored by the Central Zoo Authority. The first team left for Arignar Anna Zoological Park (A.A.Z.P), Vandalur on 23rd April night and returned on 26th April. The Zoo Keepers Training Programme was held on 24th and 25th April.

The team that visited A.A.Z.P was Sri. Chennaiah, Sri. C. Shankara, Sri. Nanjunda, Sri. Chikkanna, Sri. R. Govinda, Sri. Madaiah, Sri. Somashekar

The team was lead by Sri. Harshavardhan P.N., Range Forest Officer, Mysore Zoo. The Training Programme was very useful as the keepers were exposed to different aspects at Vandalur Zoo and the keepers exposed to practical aspects of Zoo management. Some of the newer concepts in zoo management was noticed such as prey-predator concept, natural environment inside animal enclosures, environmental enrichment, creation of plastic-free zone etc.

Mission:

A.A.Z.P was started during the year 1985 and houses a large collection of birds and animals. The mission of A.A.Z.P is to

encourage people to develop a caring attitude towards flora and fauna; to serve as a dynamic nature conservation center, by promoting breeding programmes for rare and endangered species of the Western and Eastern Ghats, and to offer excellent service, recreation, eco awareness and education.

Objectives:

The Zoo, managed by the Tamilnadu Forest Department plays a great role in *conservation, education and eco-awareness*, wildlife research, animal behaviour and ecology, reintroduction and studying animal diseases, eco-tourism and recreation. A.A.Z.P is a treasure house offering knowledge in the field of biological sciences, ecology, animal husbandry, biodiversity, ecology, cultural enrichment, genetics, nature conservation, captive breeding, wildlife management. Besides A.A.Z.P. is a refuge for animals whose populations have declined in the region.

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