

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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Conservation:

Arignar Anna Zoological Park has a large contribution of endangered animals in its list of exhibits.

Mammals	51 species
Birds	66 species
Reptiles	24 species
Amphibians	5 species
Fishes	25 species
Insects	10 species

Forty-four endangered animals of the Western Ghats and the Indian sub continent are protected and the Zoo is involved in the captive breeding of these endangered species. This is the largest zoo in India with an area of 602ha and has one of the best wildlife rescue and rehabilitation center.

The *ex situ* conservation facility for the animals in the zoo has been created to provide natural habitat for animals as found in the wilderness for long-term conservation of animals.

The visitors waiting to enter the zoo are quite inquisitive and restless, as they would like to see the animals inside the zoo without any delay; therefore models of Elephant and Bison are set up near the entrance in the lush green lawn. The garden area has been improved to enhance the aesthetic feeling of the zoo.

The layout of the zoo has a network of roads, loop roads, walk paths, which cover all the display area. These areas were identified and natural landscapes were created by soil and water conservation works, earth filling, raising lawns and hedges.

The roads, sub roads and pathway in the zoo has been plated with trees on the sides to provide continuous shelter canopy to the visitors in the hot sultry weather of Chennai. The greenery in the zoo comprises of trees, hedges and climbers along with the ecological enclosure enrichment in animal houses, which provide a unique Zoo scape, attracts the visitors, and provide them with a natural environment remarkably different from the urban setting.

Soil and water conservation were executed to arrest excess movement of soil by constructing random rubble mortar check wall along the natural contours and across the water drainage.

The nocturnal animal house of AAZP is probably one of the house where a wide range and variety of manipulations are to be done to provide the biological requirements of the specific animals kept in captivity.

Like all other zoos in the country, AAZP also receives a number of rescued Panthers from the forest areas. An additional animal house along with yard was created as an extension of existing Panther house.

The excess population of fresh water crocodiles of the zoo are kept in an off-display large holding areas. The facility was along the rainwater drainage passage of the Zoo and could get inundated during monsoon and required urgent repair. A drainage system to facilitate fast flow of rainwater was constructed.



At the Aviary



The rehabilitation centre



Creating Zoo as a plastic-free zone

The small mammal house was improved and large yard was provided for free movement and exercise for mammals. The small mammals brought to the zoo, requiring treatment are now kept in this facility.

The zoo gets many birds from the public and animal welfare organizations, which are accidentally trapped or injured in

the ever-expanding Chennai Metropolitan city. These birds are kept in the quarantine area and given specialized treatment by the zoo doctors.

The communication network in the zoo was strengthened and modernized by procurement of walkie-talkies and also repairing the Central Room Communication Antenna. The entire zoo is now covered by the wireless communication system, which will help in the management of the zoo.

The Mandate of the zoo is to create awareness and understanding amongst the visitors about the wildlife conservation. The education and research wing of the zoo has conducted several zoo education programme for dissemination of information about the conservation and protection of wildlife.

His programme caters to the teachers of the school and colleges so as to create an awareness and understanding about the conservation of the endangered species. The teachers are provided Zoo Training Kit and are given inputs on the *ex situ* conservation of animals. The zoo has conducted 5 teachers training programmes in collaboration with N.G.O. for different categories of teachers.

The Zoo School is an unique concept implemented in the AAZP to bring large mass of school and college students to the zoo and give them opportunity to learn about wildlife and its values. This programme is run on request by schools and colleges. The zoo management would associate with schools and colleges to help in their endeavour for imparting nature education. The zoo has enrolled 18 schools and colleges and conducted 18 programmes, which have benefited 1365 students.

The zoo club was started in the year 1998 to give an opportunity to all sections of society, young and old to associate with the zoo on a long-term basis. The zoo club members are sparing their time and energy for the service of nature and wildlife. The membership is open to all dedicated and committed to the cause of wildlife conservation. There are 45 zoo volunteers regularly working for the welfare of the animals of the zoo.

The zoo endeavors to provide all the essential basic facilities to the visitors to make their visit an enriching experience. The zoo has several rest areas with sitting benches and sheltered spaces for the visitors to take rest. There is adequate number of water points with clean potable drinking water for the visitors. Apart from these toilets, facilities are available at several places for the use of visitors. All along the network of roads and pathways, benches have been provided for the visitors to take rest. The entire zoo has been covered by trees with a large crown and foliage to provide shelter from the hot sun. These facilities have been maintained every year. During the current year the thatched sheds, rest areas, lawns and gardens were improved for the use of visitors. The landscaping in the birds area was improved to give an aesthetic and pleasant feeling to the visitors.

The Rehabilitation and Rescue Center was created in the Zoo under assistance from CZA, Ministry of Environment and



Signages in front of the aviary

Forests. This facility is for providing health care to the animals seized from the illegal zoos and circuses, which have been kept in captivity in small space and under deplorable conditions. This center would provide high quality health care and nourishment to the animals. The balance work comprising of drainage, is now fully operational. A veterinary doctor is employed full time for the animal health care and hygiene.

The veterinary wing is most vital and important section of the zoo. Animal health care, disease prevention and risk factor management in a zoo attempts to promote health care of the captive animal population. The health maintenance concept contrasts with the veterinary perspective, which focuses on diagnosing, curing or managing individual disease.

The veterinary hospital established in 1985 in AAZP is self sufficient and well equipped in disease diagnosis. A Veterinary Officer heads the zoo hospital with two veterinary assistant surgeons, one lab assistant and three Veterinary attenders.

The facilities available in the hospital are: In-patient and out patient ward, operation theater, physiological ward, convalescent yard, radiology unit, tranquilizing equipment training, lab facility, data processor for monitoring animal health parameters.