

Animal Keepers' Training Programme at Mysore Zoo 2005

Manoj Kumar *

Mysore Zoo organised Animal Keepers' Training Programme from 24th - 29th June 2005 with the financial assistance from CZA to the tune of Rs.1 lakh. This is the fourth time such training programme is organized and earlier programmes were conducted during 1997-98, 2000-2001 and 2003-04.

The focus of the training for the Zoo keepers this time was on " Zoo Emergency and Crisis Management". Adventure group, from Bangalore trained by the American Heart Association, handled the programme for the keepers for 4 days. This training is very essential in case of exigencies like animal escapes, accidents, their presence of mind and application, reducing risk and danger and safety especially for the keepers working in Zoo.

Twenty five participants attended the Animal Keepers Training Programme from different Zoos as follows: Shimoga Zoo 2; Davanagere Zoo 2; Bellary Zoo 2; Bannerghatta Biological Park 5; and Mysore Zoo 14.

On the first day of the workshop before inauguration, all participants were given an education kit at the time of registration. In the Inaugural address Sri. Srikantaiah, Conservator of Forests, Mysore circle stressed that the training now proposed is specially programmed and designed for combating emergency situations which is a meaningful one. The programme organized by Mysore zoo is having much importance and the keepers should be taught about ecological values of animals in the environment. He also called upon the keepers to discharge their duties with great responsibility and dedication.

Two days in-housing training was organized on 24th and 25th June 2005, relating to general aspects of Zoo Management. Topics on role of keepers on Zoo management, evolution of Zoos, aims and objectives of Zoos, role of Central Zoo Authority, Wildlife Protection Act, breeding policies in zoos, feeding of endangered species, animal feeding and health care, care of pregnant animals, daily reports, reporting of sick animals and enrichment of enclosures were handled.

Sri. Vipul Kumar, the Superintendent of Police, Mysore District who participated as Chief Guest called the keepers that they should realize their Professional ethics and discharge their legitimate duties to give justice to their profession. Sri R.S. Suresh, Member Secretary, Zoo Authority of Karnataka, Chairperson of ZAK, Smt. Susheela Keshvamarthy, and Executive Director of Mysore Zoo Sri Manoj Kumar were present on this occasion.

M/s. Adventure Group, Bangalore gave training on emergency procedure and rescue techniques from 26th to 29th June. As part of the handling of equipments and care and maintenance of the equipments, the keepers were taught some of the basic knots on the first day. (1. Thumb Knot or safety knot; 2. Clove hitch; 3. Figure of eight; 4. Figure of eight follow through; 5. Reef Knot). On the second day Adventure group gave a demonstration by climbing up and down over a rock face, carrying a casualty.

On day three the participants simulated scenario of people falling into a moat. Four scenarios were simulated in different locations inside the Zoo. Emphasis and importance was given for ascending using ascender as this would be essential for the participants to climb and retrieve casualty from heights. First aid training was also given.

As part of Animal Keepers Training the concluding programme was a visit to Bannerghatta Biological Park, Bangalore and Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Chennai. The first batch comprising of 14 persons visited Bannerghatta Biological Park, on 30th June 2005, and returned on 2.7.2005. The trainees interacted with animal keepers, with regard to diet system, and also witnessed routine works. They visited Tiger and Lion Safari, Bear Safari and also visited the site of upcoming butterfly park and rescue centre.

The second batch comprising of 12 members led by the Range Forest Officer visited Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Madras Crocodile Bank, Snake park trust from 5.7.2005 to 8.7.2005. They interacted with the trainees and exposed to the feeding handling and routine works.

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National Zoological Park, New Delhi

The world Environment Day was celebrated on 5-6 June at NZP. In this programme 35 students and resource persons from Earth Care Foundation along with Shri R.A. Khan (Edn.Asst.) NZP participated in it. A guided tour was conducted for these participants. Mr. Gokhale of Earth Care Foundation took keen interest in describing the importance of plants for our life. He also taught the students how to identify the plants. Plants for Life education materials from Zoo Outreach Organisation were given away to participants. The group went around the park where different kinds of plants have been grown. The NZP has over 400 species of plants in its area. The participants were very much beneficial from this guided tour.

White Tigers

Two White tigresses namely Ganga and Kaveri delivered 3 cubs each recently. One cub died. Other babies and the mother are doing well. The total population of White tigers has increased to 11.

Death of Hippopotamus

The NZP lost an adult Hippopotamus female on 26th June due to haemorrhage and gastroenteritis. The total Hippopotamus population now is 2 males & 2 females.

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