



ten weeks it reached to 75cm.

Body weight: The body weight of the cub at the first week of age was 0.790g and at the age of 10 weeks it reached to 3.4kg.

Body height: The height of the cub at two weeks age was 17cm. It has been found that increase in height was not so

rapid in the initial 9 weeks. It reached to 21.5cm at 9 weeks of age by gradual increase of 1 to 22cm in a week but it tremendously increased to 21.5cm at 10 weeks of age.

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## Zoos : An Instrument for Conservation

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One of the objectives of zoos is conservation education, apart from research and conservation. Zoos have ample opportunity to interact with visitors where conservation issues can be promoted to enlist the public support. Conservation education in zoos is not an easy task to convey to the public, unless everybody right from keeper to curator gets involved in this programme.

The Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam has chalked out a programme for training the executive staff to improve their communication skills and knowledge, and thereby turn visitors towards conservation goals.

The curriculum for conservation education includes explaining objectives of the zoo and species displayed, besides its unique features such as nutrition and health care management, etc. The visitors, irrespective of their age, enjoy learning near enclosures in a more informal way instead of in a closed atmosphere. Open learning of this type gives scope to learners' imagination.

The most effective subject to teach visitors is to explain in detail about zoo objectives in order to arouse their interest towards conservation aspects. Visitors thus may also appreciate efforts being put by the zoo management for the cause of conservation. Otherwise most of the visitors perceive zoo as mere entertainment or recreational centre.

One objective of the zoo is to breed species which are declining in the wild due to human causes. This zoo breeding should be done so that the population is genetically and socially viable. They should retain their natural instincts so that they may be reintroduced into natural habitat as per IUCN Reintroduction Guidelines. It is crucial that the reintroduced animals have the fitness to sustain the population for the long term, therefore health screening and study of the predetermined habitat is

necessary.

Zoos are one of the only the places where there is scope for certain kinds of research on wild animals, such as some behavioural research and biological reproduction, nutrition, etc. It is very difficult to study these aspects in free ranging populations or wilderness area without destructive intrusion.

Additional curriculum subjects include ecosystem, food web, energy flow, nutrient recycling, hydrological cycle, and examples (such as cause of Dodo extinction) in order to make the connection between plants and animals in nature.

By seeing the response of educational programmes conducted our Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam extended our tentacles to outside the park. The outreach activity fetched a good response and improved the zoo in the year 2004-05.

In the end, we will conserve only what we love;  
We will love only what we understand;  
We will understand only what we are taught.

- Baba Dioum - Senegalese poet

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