

# Report of Visit of Mysore Zoo Keepers and Volunteers to the "Nehru Zoological Park", Hyderabad

Compiled by S. Shivanna \*

First of all I would like to thank the Member-Secretary, Sri R.M.N Sahai, and Executive Director of our Zoo and all the staff for providing us an opportunity to visit the Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad on study tour from 27th to 28th of April 2003. I also extend my thanks to our team members, who have interacted and collected as much as information possible during their study tour, and above all they have won the appreciation from the Curator of Hyderabad Zoo, during the course of interaction.

Our team comprised of myself, as the leader of the team and zoo volunteer Smt. Tanuja and 6 of our staff members, viz., Sri. M. Govinda, Sri. Naganna, Sri. Siddarama Sri. Sanne Gowda, Sri. H. Mahadeva, Sri. Javarappa.

We were overwhelmed by the immense hospitality and assistance provided by Sri. Srinivas, Curator, Assistant Conservator of Forests Sri Rama Rao, Range Forest Officer Sri Nazeer Ahamed and the respective animal keepers of the enclosures. The Curator, besides arranging also had lunch in our company, provided conveyance to visit the zoo, and provided information about the zoo.

## Brief History of the Zoo:

Sri. Srinivas, Curator of Hyderabad Zoo has extended warm welcome to us and briefed the importance of the Zoo. Zoo profession is a noble profession and one must be lucky to work in a Zoo, according to him. He explained zoos role in contributing to *ex situ* conservation, previously zoos were keeping animals more for display but now the concept has changed due to increased awareness of the public through Animal Planet, Discovery and National Geographic channels. Visitors are interested in collecting information on the welfare of the animals and maintenance of their lives in the Zoo. So we cannot underestimate the visitors and present day zoo management should be always ready to reply the questions of the visitors to gain their confidence and co-operation. Further, he explained the role of keepers, who have to engage in interacting with the visitors in providing the basic information in animals. In foreign Zoos education officers, zoo keepers and even gardeners interact with visitors to communicate conservation and provide information on animals, so as to enhance the zoo's value for visitors. The curator underlined the importance of speaking politely to visitors, to leave good impression in their minds about the zoo.

He related the evolution of the zoos, first emperors and kings were running zoos, and subsequently, business class took over zoos for commercial purpose. Later, civic bodies and the government took over the management of zoos and display techniques also improved. He has cited examples of Kerala and Mysore Zoo, which were started by rulers and later were taken over by the government. The Hyderabad Zoo had been under the horticulture department and during those days animals were exhibited in small cages. The Nehru zoo was functioning in the public gardens, adjacent to the assembly hall. During 1959, the



**Discussion with the Hyderabad Zoo Director**

task of maintaining the zoo was entrusted to the forest department. Sri pushpkumar, the well known zoo architect and the director had designed each and every enclosure, in the new area comprising 400 acres, as per the modern principles of zoo management. By 1963, the zoo was completed and the Nehru Zoological Park was inaugurated by the Governor on 6th October 1963. The zoo was started as a sort of experimental one, with innovative housing pattern, in the order of Primates, Carnivores, Pheasants, Safari complex, Reptile House, as per the Zoological Classification and Category.

The zoo houses about 2000 specimens with 524 mammals, 222 reptiles and 1159 birds, comprising 54 species of mammals, 53 species of reptiles and 154 species of birds.

## **1. Staff of the Zoo:**

The staff of the zoo was very courteous and particularly the animal keepers, who welcomed us, and provided information about their respective animal enclosures and the animals. The curator appreciated the management of Mysore zoo, with regard to our uniforms worn during the course of visit to their zoo. We informed about the organization of zoo day celebrations and the gift viz., wrist watch and cooker provided to us on the occasion. The curator appreciated the initiation and interest taken by our executive director.

The curator has stressed about the shortage of staff and the problems faced by the management in maintenance of the zoo. The literacy level of keepers is almost zero. So, that it is not possible to change the attitude of the keepers, working from the beginning, but he said that new comers are showing interest in the upkeep of the animals. The

**Administrative Assistant, Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens, Mysore**

gardeners working in horticulture department were provided compensatory jobs in the zoo and without literacy background they cannot expect much from them.

Facilities provided to zoo keepers of Hyderabad:

- General amenities like uniform, shoes, soap, towel, raincoat (once in 2 years) and a sweater are given.
- Cash rewards for outstanding keepers.
- Medical check-up once in a year
- Treatment cost and transportation is borne in case of accidents.
- Health is screened for Keepers working in Primates and Elephants house.
- Once in a month, they have a durbar, where the keeper's grievances are heard.
- They have a small number of daily wagers, paid Rs. 1,750 per month.

## 2. Visitation.

It was told that 80% of the zoo visitors are picnickers. Locals visit the zoo more in number, as they prefer to spend the whole day in the zoo, as the temperature will be around 2 degree less in the zoo compared to the outside. In view of this, they litter plastics and other waste materials after eating. Though attempts were being made, educating visitors has become a difficult task. Total number of visitors to the zoo is around 16 to 17 lakhs annually and the total entrance fee is around Rs.2.00 Crores.

## 3. Visitor Services.

The Zoological Park is open from Tuesday to Sunday and every Monday is holiday. The following are the tariffs for entry into the Zoo and also for other facilities.

Timings of the Zoological Park:

April – June : 8.00 am – 5.30 pm

July – March: 8.30 am – 5:00 pm

<u>Particulars</u>	<u>Rate in Rs.</u>
Entry into the zoochildadultrcars/ Jeeps/lorries for film shooting	5/10/200/1000
Photography with camera	10
Photography by professionals	500
Video camera amateur professional	75 / day 500 / day
Film shooting with 'u' matic Video/cine cameras	1000 / location 5000 / day
Train ride child / adult	2 /10
Elephant ride child / adult	2/10
Safari child / adult	5 / 15
Butterfly safari child /adult	2 / 5
Nocturnal animal house child adult	
Zoo guest house (rents during day only)	2 / 5
For occupation 9-5.30 pm	150

## 1). Vehicle:

One van is provided for use by tourists to go round the Zoo. Each trip duration lasts 45 minutes. Mostly tourist groups who come in vans utilize the facility to minimize vehicular traffic inside the zoo and also check air pollution. Visitors both young and old, who like to see important animal enclosure use this facility more often. During the year 4610

adults and 802 children have availed battery-operated vehicles.

## 2). Private Vehicles:

Private vehicles (only 4 wheelers) are allowed in the zoo rs. 200/- is charged and 5 persons are allowed free entrance. Though zoo mobilizes good revenue, the entire zoo atmosphere is polluted, and disturbance caused, which normally irritates the visitors while walking in the middle of the road, especially when they have come to enjoy the calm atmosphere at the zoo, avoiding heavy traffic and disturbance in the city.

## 3). Electrical Train:

An electrical train is run inside the zoo, where they charge Rs. 15/- for adults and Rs.5/- for children. It was a Sunday and the crowd was quite large, thus appeared to be a Mela.

## 4). Facility for the Physically Challenged:

Now they plan to have a special ramp for the physically challenged according to the guidelines.

## 4. Veterinary Hospital:

They have 2 vets, 2 junior vets along with 2 junior assistant. They have scanner, operation theater, x-ray with experienced vets. One of their vets Dr. Naveen has undergone training at Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust.

They have links with

1.Veterinary Biological Research Institute, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh.

2.Prof. Been, Joint Director, V.B.R.I

3.Andhra Pradesh Veterinary College

Sample of faecal matter is sent to VBRI, they also assist in conducting Post-mortem

·Expert Committee – Veterinarians, follow CZA guidelines, (Rtd.) Gauhar Ali, (Rtd.) Dr. Ramakrishna (pathology), VBRI, and Dean of life science – Every 3 months they have meeting.

·In case of emergency, they call necessary experts and send their vehicle

·Presently their Vet. Dr. Naveen is an expert and also visit other zoos as an expert

·In the surrounding districts for any wildlife cause, their vets are called in.

·They do not have any special ration for their musth elephants.

·They have surrogate, brooding hen, since they have constraint power failure they have not gone for artificial incubation.

·Destitute, old animals are housed in summer housed in summerhouse, which is off limits to the visitors.

·They have good quarantine facility.

·Seasonal fruits are given to their animals:

## 5. Adoption of Zoo Animals:

It was told that only 3 adoptions have been received. One LTM is adopted by a school group, and tiger by an industry, and another animal by school.

The maintenance of lawn is taken by I.T.C., Co.,

## 6. Animal Enclosures:

Since the Zoo was recently established on modern lines, some of the enclosure are very good, open spacious wet moated enclosures with natural setup, provided with rocks and trees enjoyed by the animals. Aviary, pheasant housing is also good. The total area of the zoo is around 400 acres and the animals are housed in large areas according to their requirements.

The Reptile House with sufficient sunlight and visitors vicinity is well taken. The nocturnal enclosure displaying varieties of owls, slender lorry, porcupine, palm civet and civet cat are prominently displayed. The visitors have to bear additional entrance fee for this facility.

Some of the animal enclosures has a large areas, where regular cleaning is a difficult task, due to shortage of staff, the area is untidy, filled with dried and fallen leaves and other wastes.

Primates, tiger, lions, bear and majority of the animals are housed in wet moats, where water is not changed, but only bleaching powder is provided. The water in the moat appears to be stinky and requires cleaning also.

The holding area in almost all the enclosures have been kept clean and hygiene is ensured. Some of the simple techniques like erection of an an impounding structure at the entrance of the holding room to the outer moat in the Hippo enclosures, ensures easy treatment and transportation without much difficulty and less strain to the animal. Similarly in Tiger and Chimpanzee enclosures releasing of animal outside, with a simple device of lifting the doors is appreciable, laying wooden planks in the holding area of the tiger at 3 ft height, with small gaps in between facilitates for easy cleaning, urine passing and also protection to the animal during winter against cold, unlike concrete floor:



**The Butterfly Park**

## 7. Butterfly Park:

They have beautiful Butterfly Park with common butterfly pictures.



**The Safari Park**

## 8. Lion Safari and Tiger Safari Parks:

The Lion and Tiger Safari Parks transportation has been privatized and 4 vehicles have been provided and maintained by the contractor. Two lions and two tigers are found in the safari. Being Sunday, the General Holiday, there was heavy rush for vehicles, and visitors were standing in the long queue for their turn. The number visitors who have visited the Safari Parks during the Year is Adults 89985 and Children 32119.

## 9. Zoo Education:

Due to shortage of staff the management were crippled for organizing the Zoo educational activities effectively. However "Vanya Prani Saptaha" and Children Day was celebrated by the Zoo Authorities, where children were permitted free entry to the park. Unfortunately absolutely no – educational activities are being carried out. No Biologist or Education officer is engaged.

## 10. Zoo Vandalism:

As the visitors are picnickers and unlike Mysore Zoo has floating tourists, the management has expressed the difficulty in controlling the visitors. One could see people carrying plastic bags and majority of them were sitting in groups, busy eating food and littering plastic and waste materials. It was told that they have lost 15 Spotted Deers and one Black Buck because of plastic consumption littered by the visitors. There were instances of throwing plantains to tigers. In our presence a visitor had thrown a full packet of popcorn to bears, but the keeper noticed it and removed immediately. They could not impose fine or they could punish the visitors indulging in vandalism, due to the fact they are not co-operating, and majority of them are localities, which will lead to clashes. Despite persistence of the management to control vandalism, stone throwing, feeding and disturbing animals is common, unless visitors co-operates these menace cannot be controlled.

The Lion Club have organized a cultural show-using mike, creating nuisance, on Sunday, but the authorities took immediate action to stop the menace.



### 11. Electricity and Water Consumption:

The management has to shoulder heavy burden of payment of monthly bills towards electricity and water consumption as follows:

- a. Unfiltered Water : Rs. 2.00 lakhs per month
- b. Filtered Water : Rs. 75,000/- per month
- c. Electricity charges : Rs. 1.00 lakh per month

### 12. Mirlam Tank:

The zoo is blessed with a beautiful Mirlam Tank, which is a good water source for maintenance of gardens. We found children swimming and boating facility has also been provided. It was told that the tank is first of its kind in the world and it is an arch tank.

### 13. Feeding Pattern:

The zoo animals were fed daily as per the diet chart. Most of the animals are fed twice in a day, including carnivorous animals. The carnivores are not fed once week from the health point of view. Balanced diet for all animals and special diet is prepared for sick animals. The food is procured locally through food suppliers and by raising browse and fodder plants in the zoo premises by private contractor and no chemical fertilizers or insecticides were used.

### 14. Rehabilitation of orphans/ Deserted animals:

Except in one or two cases, unlike Mysore Zoo, the Hyderabad Zoo has to rehabilitate young ones deserted by mothers in the wild or orphans coming for rehabilitation

It was told that there is a small hill, adjacent to the zoo, where animal have taken shelter. Very often people mistakenly telephone to Zoo Authorities that animals have been escaped, confusing to the wild animals in the free range.

### 15. Inventory of Live Stock :

The total collection of birds and animal as on 31/3/2003 in the Zoo is 1621 Numbers.

- 1.Carnivores – 108
- 2.Herbivores – 171
- 3.Free Ranging Animals (Spotted Deers) – 150
- 4.Flying Mammals (Fox) – 19
- 5.Primates – 26
- 6.Rodents – 4
- 7.Birds – 937
- 8.Reptiles – 206
- Total – 1621

### 16. Publications and Signages:

The zoo has not published enough materials in the recent years. Also the signages needs improvement.

### 17. Security Measures:

1.The Hyderabad Zoo management engaged private security for night and watch ward, besides regular watch and ward appointed by the zoo. There are 6 TVs in 2 Tiger enclosures. They were installed after the cage of a tiger was visited and the tiger skinned by miscreants. They have mobile phones, they have raised the wall, walkie-talkie, mobile sets are provided to Asst. Conservator of Forests and Curator.

2.During Communal violence/strike although zoo closes some time, they have special pass to let them bring food and feeder. None of the charitable institution is involved to support the zoo.

3. They do not have taxidermy facilities.

4. They do not have any monkey menace, in case of Rodents they take assistance from municipal corporation and use fumigation and ultrasonic machine.

5. Enumeration of sandalwood is done.

6. Previously a tiger had mauled a woman and in safari a person was killed.

### Recommendations made by the group visited Hyderabad for consideration and implementation in Mysore Zoo.

1. In Tiger and Chimpanzee enclosures releasing of animal outside, with a simple devise of lifting the doors is appreciable. The door can be lifted without any difficulty, and this could be observed by the person operating the door directly.

2. In the Tiger enclosure, in the holding area, wooden plants at the height of 3 ft have been laid, with small gaps in between, which facilitate for easy cleaning, urine passing and also protection to the animal during winter against cold, unlike concrete floor.

3.An impounding structure at the entrance of the holding room of the outer moat in the Hippo enclosure ensures easy treatment and transportation without much difficulty and less stain to the animal.

4.Beef without bones are fed to Carnivoures animals, and thereby the animals appears to be healthy. This proposal can be studied.

5. A monthly meeting of the animal keepers can be arranged to hear their grievances.

6. Mysore Zoo can propose an exchange deal, requesting Hyderabad Zoo to spare 1 Orangutan for exhibit purpose, one male lion on breeding loan, and one female Malayan Sun Bear, along with some birds from their surplus stock.

7. The housing facility for pheasants is very good. The technique could be adopted here.

8. The lawns in the Mysore Zoo, may be entrusted for maintenance by charitable Institutions and Philanthropists.

9. The entrance fee in Mysore Zoo may be hiked, as the Hyderabad Zoo is charging additional entrance fee for nocturnal enclosure, butterfly and lion safaris.

10. The keepers of the Hyderabad Zoo may be requested to visit Mysore Zoo, on exchange programme.