

National Zoo Policy

Preamble

1.1 The growing awareness for nature & wildlife conservation has made zoos a popular institution. Estimates indicate that 10% of the world's population visit zoos every year. There are about 350 animal collections in India, which are visited by more than 50 million people annually.

1.2 While there is a history of scientific interest, conservation and welfare of captive wild animals in the country, many zoos have evolved from menageries and private collections, and most zoos until the last two decades were set up mainly for entertainment and recreation. As wildlife resources were abundant in the past, scientific knowledge about the behavioral and biological requirements of animals did not receive adequate attention, with the result that scientific management of wild animals in captivity has evolved slowly.

1.3 The need for making conservation as one of the main objectives of management of zoos was realized by Government of India soon after independence and the Indian Board of Wildlife made important recommendations in this regard. The Government set up an Expert Committee on Management of Zoos in November, 1972 and its recommendations were accepted in June, 1973. The recommendations are relevant even now for improving the management of Zoos. The National Wildlife Action Plan of 1983 again emphasized the role of ex-situ conservation in national conservation efforts. However, because of varied ownership patterns and divergent nature of animal collections not much was achieved.

1.4 Today when wildlife habitats are under severe pressure and a large number of species of wild fauna have become endangered, the zoos have not only to sustain their own populations but also augment the depleting populations of endangered species in the wild. This new role has been acknowledged by the global conservation community and Article 9 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

1.5 As zoos are visited by a large number of visitors, zoos are a point a potent tool for educating people about the close linkage between protection of natural areas and maintaining the life supporting processes of nature. Well-planned and appropriately designed zoos can sensitize visitors to the dangers of a hostile or indifferent attitude towards nature.

1.6 In India, many well designed zoos were set up in some of the States but for the most part, zoos have not been able to meet the challenges imposed by the changing scenario and still continue with the legacy of past i.e. displaying animals to the animals nor educative and rewarding to the visitors.

1.7 The amendment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, in 1991, provided for the

enforcement of mandatory standards and norms for management of zoos through the Central Zoo Authority. However, it is realized that the objectives of the Act can be achieved only through co-operation and participation of various government agencies, non-governmental organisations and people at large.

1.8 The National Zoo Policy aims at giving proper direction and thrust to the management of zoos by mustering co-operation and participation of all concerned.

Objective

2.1 The main objective of the zoos shall be to complement and strengthen the national efforts in conservation and strengthen the national efforts in conservation of the rich biodiversity of the country, particularly the fauna. The objective can be achieved through the following protocol :-

2.1.1 Supporting the conservation of endangered species by giving species, which have no chance of survival in wild, a last chance of survival through coordinated breeding under ex-situ condition and raise stocks for rehabilitating them in wild as and when it is appropriate and desirable.

2.1.2 To inspire amongst zoo visitors empathy for wild animals, an understanding and awareness about the need for conservation of natural resources and for maintaining the ecological balance.

2.1.3 Providing opportunities for scientific studies useful for conservation in general and creation of database for sharing between the agencies involved in in-situ and ex-situ conservation

2.1.4 Besides the aforesaid objectives, the zoos shall continue to function as rescue centres for orphaned wild animals, subject to the availability of appropriate housing and upkeep infrastructure. Where appropriate housing and upkeep is not available, State Government and the Central Government would ascertain setting up rescue facilities in off-the-display areas of the zoo, subject to the availability of land.

Strategy for Achieving the Objectives

3.1.1 Since zoos require a significant amount of resources in the form of land, water, energy and money, no new zoo shall be set up unless a sustained supply of resources including finance and technical support are guaranteed.

3.1.2 Zoos shall prepare a long-term master plan for development to ensure optimum utilisation of the land, water, energy and finance.

3.1.3 Every Zoo shall maintain a healthy, hygienic and natural environment in the zoo, so that the visitors get an adequate opportunity to experience a natural environment.

3.1.4 Zoos shall give priority to endangered species in their collection and breeding plans. The order of preference for selection of species shall be (in descending order) locality, region, country and other areas.

3.1.5 Zoos shall regulate the number of animals of various species in their collection in such a way that each animal serves the objectives of the zoo. For achieving this objective, a detailed management plan of every species in the zoo shall be prepared.

3.1.6 Every zoo shall endeavor to avoid keeping single animals of non-viable sex ratios of any species. They shall cooperate in pooling such animals into genetically, demographically and socially viable groups at zoos identified for the purpose.

3.1.7 Zoos shall avoid keeping surplus animals of prolifically breeding species and if required, appropriate population control measures shall be adopted.

Acquisitions of Animals

3.2.1 Except for obtaining founder animals for approved breeding programme and infusion of new blood inbred groups, no zoo shall collect animals from the wild.

3.2.2 Zoos shall not enter into any transaction involving violation of the law and provisions of international conventions on wildlife conservation.

3.2.3 Zoos shall not enter into any transaction in respect of their surplus animals with any commercial establishment. Even the animal products should not be utilised for commercial purposes. The trophies of the animals could, however, be used for educational or scientific purposes.

Animal Housing

3.3.1 Every animal in a zoo shall be provided housing, upkeep and health care that can ensure a quality of life and longevity to enable the zoo population sustain itself through procreation.

3.3.2 The enclosure for all the species displayed or kept in a zoo shall be of such size that all animals get adequate space for free movement and exercise and no animal is unduly dominated or harassed by any other animal.

3.3.3 Each animal enclosure in a zoo shall have appropriate shelters, perches, withdrawal areas, wallow, pools drinking water points and such other facilities

which can provide the animals a chance to display the wide range of their natural behaviour as well as protect them from extremes of climate.

Upkeep of Animal Collections

3.4.1 Zoos shall provide diet to each species, which is similar to its feed in nature. Where for unavoidable reasons any ingredients have to be substituted, due care will be taken to ensure that the substitute fulfills the nutritional requirement of the species.

3.4.2 For the well being of the animals, round the clock supply of portable drinking water shall be made available to all animals kept in the zoo.

3.4.3 With the objectives of avoiding human imprinting and domestication of animals. zoos shall prevent physical handling of animals by the staff to the extent possible.

3.4.4 Zoos shall not allow any animal to be provoked for tortured for the purpose of extracting any performance or tricks for the benefit of the visitors or for any other reason.

Health Care

3.5.1 Zoos shall ensure availability of the highest standards of veterinary care to all the animals in their collection.

3.5.2 Adequate measures shall be taken by every zoos for implementing wildlife health and quarantine rules and regulations. Appropriate vaccination programmes shall also be taken up for safeguarding against infectious diseases. Timely action to isolate infected animals from the zoo population shall be taken to avoid further spread of disease.

Research And Training

3.6.1 The zoos shall encourage research on the biology, behaviour, nutrition and veterinary aspects of animals in their collection. They shall also endeavor for creation of expertise on zoo architecture and landscape designing, cooperation of recognised institutions already working in relevant fields in this regard shall be taken.

3.6.2 Zoos shall endeavor for transfer of technical skills available in the field for zoo personnel. The Central Government, Central Zoo Authority and State Government shall provide due support to zoos in these efforts. Assistance of Wildlife Institute of India (WII), India Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) and other institutions within India and abroad, having appropriate expertise shall be taken in this regard.

3.6.3 Zoos shall also endeavour for dissemination of information on scientific aspects of management through publication of periodicals, journals, newsletters

and special bulletins. Help of non-governmental organisation (NGOs) and government institutions shall also be availed in such efforts. The Central Zoo Authority shall provide technical and financial support to the India Zoos Directors Association (IZDA) and other institutions in this regard.

Breeding programme for species

3.7.1 Before taking up breeding programmes of any species, zoos shall clearly identify the objectives for which the breeding programme is being taken up. The targeted numbers for the programme would be decided keeping in view the identified objectives.

3.7.2 All zoos shall cooperate in successful implementation of identified breeding programmes by way of loaning, pooling or exchanging animals for the programme and help creation of socially, genetically and demographically viable groups even at the cost of reducing the number of animals or number of species displayed in individual zoos.

3.7.3 Breeding programme shall be taken up by zoos after collection of adequate data like biology, behaviour and other demo-graphic factors affecting the programme. including the minimum number of founder animals and the quantum of housing facilities available.

3.7.4 Programmes for breeding of zoo animals for re-introduction in the wild shall be taken up after getting approval of the State Government, the Central Zoo Authority and the Central Government as the case may be.

3.7.5 Zoos shall give priority in their breeding programmes to endangered species representing the zoo-geographic zones in which they are located.

3.7.6 For carrying out breeding programmes in a scientific and planned manner the zoo shall mark every individual animals involved in the programme in an appropriate manner and maintain appropriate records.

3.7.7 Zoos shall take utmost precaution to prevent inbreeding. They shall avoid artificial selection of traits and make no explicit or implicit attempts to interbreed various genera, species and sub-species.

3.7.8 Special efforts shall be made to avoid human imprinting of the stocks raised for reintroduction purposes by providing off exhibit breeding facilities.

Education and Outreach Activity

3.8.1 Each zoo should have a well drawn-up plan for education the visitors as well as other in the community. Zoos shall keep a close liaison with other ex-situ facilities in this regard.

3.8.2 The central theme of the zoo education programme being the linkage between the survival of various species and protection of their natural habitat, enclosures which allow the animals to display natural behaviour are crucial to zoo education. Zoo shall, therefore, display animals in such enclosures only where the animals do not suffer physiological and psychological restraint.

3.8.3 Attractive and effective signage methods and interactive displays to explain activities of various species to visitors, published education material and audio-visual devices are proven methods for driving home the conservation's message. A formal education programme should also be persuaded for strengthening the education message.

3.8.4 Beside signage, the zoos shall also use guided tours, talks by knowledgeable persons and audio-visual shows for effectively communicating the message for conservation to the visitors.

3.8.5 The help of universities, colleges and non-governmental organisation shall be taken to educate the students about the benefits of supporting nature conservation programmes.

Extension Activities

3.9.1 To provide the urban population with a window to nature and to serve as green lungs for the polluting environment, zoos shall extend their expertise and help to State Governments and local authorities to create nature parks extending over extensive areas near big cities.

Amenities to Visitors

3.10.1 Zoo shall provide basic civic amenities to the visitors like toilets, drinking water points, shelters and first-aid facilities. Ramps shall also be provided for the benefit of visitors in wheel chairs for approach to animal enclosure and other civic amenities.

3.10.2 Zoos shall not provide any infrastructure for recreation/entertainment of visitors that is inconsistent with the stated objective of zoos.

Wild Life Protection Act – 1972

CHAPTER IV-A

CENTRAL ZOO AUTHORITY AND RECOGNITION OF ZOOS

38-A. Constitution of central zoo Authority – (1) The Central Government shall constitute a body to be known as the Central zoo Authority (hereinafter in this Chapter referred to as the Authority), to exercise the powers conferred on, and to perform the functions assigned to it under this Act.

(2) The Authority shall consist of –

- (a) Chairperson :
- (b) Such number of members not exceeding ten : and
- (c) Member –Secretary :

to be appointed by the central Government.

38-B Term of office and conditions of service of Chairperson and member, etc –

- (1) The Chairperson and every member other than the member-Secretary shall hold office for such period, not exceeding three years, as may be specified by the Central Government in this behalf.
- (2) The Chairperson or a member may, by writing under his hand addressed to the Central Government, resign from the office of chairperson or, as the case may be, of the member.
- (3) The Central Government, shall remove a person from the office of chairperson or member referred to in sub-section (2) if that person –
 - (a) becomes an undischarged insolvent :
 - (b) gets convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for an offence which in the opinion of the Central Government. Involves moral turpitude.
 - (c) becomes of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court:
 - (d) refuses to act or becomes incapable of acting :
 - (e) is without obtaining leave of absence from the Authority. Absent from three consecutive meeting of the Authority : or
 - (f) in the opinion of the Central Government has so abused the position of chairperson or member as to render that person's continuance in office detrimental to the public interest :

PROVIDED THAT no person shall be removed under this clause unless that person has been given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in the matter.

- (4) A vacancy caused under sub-section (2) or otherwise shall be filled by fresh appointment.
- (5) The salaries and allowances and other conditions of appointment of chairperson. Members and member Secretary of the Authority shall be such as may be prescribed.
- (6) The Authority shall, with the previous sanctions of the Central Government. Employ such officers and other employees as it deems necessary to carry out the purposes of the Authority.
- (7) The terms and conditions of service of the officers and other employees of the Authority shall be such as may be prescribed.

(8) No act or proceeding of the Authority shall be questioned or shall be invalid on the ground merely of the existence of any vacancies or defect in the constitution of the Authority.

38-c Functions of the Authority – The Authority shall perform the following functions. Namely :

- (a) Specify the minimum standards for housing. Upkeep and veterinary care of the animals kept in a zoo :
- (b) Evaluate and assess the functioning of zoos with respect to the standards or the norms as may be prescribed :
- (c) recognize or de-recognize zoos :
- (d) identify endangered species of wild animals for purposes of captive breeding and assigning responsibility in this regard to a zoo :
- (e) co-ordinate the acquisition exchange and loaning of animals for breeding purpose :
- (f) ensure maintenance of stud-books of endangered species of wild animal bred in captivity :
- (g) identify priorities and themes with regard to display of captive animals in a zoo :
- (h) co-ordinate training of zoo personnel in India and outside India :
- (i) co-ordinate research in captive breeding and educational programmes for the purposes of zoo ;
- (j) provide technical and other assistance to zoos for their proper management and development on scientific lines :
- (k) perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of this Act with regard to zoos.

Comment

Duty of the authority – it is the bounden duty of the zoo authorities to ensure that wild animals in the zoo are kept and confined in such a manner that they are incapable of causing damage or injury to visitors. If any injury is caused to the visitor. The presumption would be that it was the zoo authorities who were negligent.

38-D procedure to be regulated by the Authority- (1) The Authority shall meet as and when necessary and shall meet at such time and place as the chairperson may think fit.

- (2) The Authority shall regulate its own procedure.
- (3) All orders and decisions of the Authority shall be authenticated by the member-secretary in this behalf.

38-E Grants and loans to Authority and constitution of Fund- (1) The Central Government may, after due appropriation made by parliament by law in this behalf make to the Authority grants and loans of such sums of money as that Government may consider necessary.

- (2) There shall be constituted a fund to be called the central zoo Authority Fund and three shall be credited thereto and grants and loans made to the Authority by the Central Government, all fees and charges received by the Authority under this Act and all sums received by the Authority from such other sources as may be decided upon by the central Government.

- (3) The Fund referred to in sub-section (2) shall be applied for meeting salary, allowances and other remuneration of the members, officers and other employees of the Authority and the expenses of the Authority in the discharge of its functions under this chapter and expenses on objects and for purpose authorized by this Act.
- (4) The Authority shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts in such form as may be prescribed by the central Government in consultation with the comptroller and Auditor-general of India.
- (5) The accounts of the Authority shall be audited by the comptroller and Auditor-general at such intervals as may be specified by him and any expenditure incurred in connection with such audit shall be payable by the Authority to the comptroller and Auditor-General.
- (6) The comptroller and Auditor-General and any person appointed by him in connection with the audit of the accounts of the Authority under this Act shall have the same rights and privileges and the Authority in connection with such audit as the comptroller and Auditor-General generally has in connection with the audit of the Government accounts and, in particular, shall have the right to demand the production of books. Accounts, connected vouchers and other documents and papers and to inspect any of the officers of the Authority.
- (7) The accounts of the Authority, as certified by the comptroller and Auditor-General or any other person appointed by him in this behalf together with the audit report therein, shall be forwarded annually to the Central Government by the Authority.

38-F Annual report and audit report to be laid before parliament – The Central Government shall cause the annual report together with a memorandum of action taken on the recommendations contained therein. In so far as they relate to Central Government, and the reasons for the non-acceptance, if any, of any of such recommendations and the audit report to be laid as soon as may be after the reports are received, before each houses of parliament.

38-H Recognition of zoos- (1) No zoo shall be operated without being recognized by the Authority.

PROVIDED THAT a zoo being operated immediately before the date of commencement of the wild life (Protection) Amendment Act, 1991(44 of 1991) may continue to operate without being recognized for a period, the zoo may continue to be operated until the said application is finally decided or withdrawn and in case of refusal for a further period of six months from the date of such refusal.

- (1-A) on and after the commencement of the wild life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2002 (16 of 2003), a zoo shall not be establishment without obtaining the prior approval of the Authority.
- (2) Every application for recognition of a zoo shall be made to the Authority in such form and on payment of such fees as may be prescribed.

- (3) Every recognition shall specify the conditions, if any, subject to which the applicant shall operate the zoo.
- (4) No recognition to a zoo shall be granted unless the Authority, having due regard to the interests or protection and conservation of wild life, and such standards, norms and other matters as may be prescribed, is satisfied that recognition should be granted.
- (5) No application for recognition of zoo shall be rejected unless the applicant had been given a reasonable opportunity of being heard.
- (6) The Authority may, for reasons to be recorded by it, suspend or cancel any recognition granted under sub-section (4) :

PROVIDED THAT no such suspension or cancellation shall be made except after giving the person operating the zoo a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

- (7) An appeal from an order refusing to recognize a zoo under sub-section (5) or an order suspending or canceling a recognition under sub-section (6) shall lie to the Central Government.
- (8) An appeal under sub-section (7) shall be preferred within thirty days from the date of communication, to the application, of the order appealed against :

PROVIDED THAT the Central Government may admit any appeal preferred after the expiry of the period aforesaid if it is satisfied that the appellant had sufficient cause for not preferring the appeal in time .

- 38-I Acquisition of animals by a zoo-(1) subject to the other provisions of this Act, no zoo shall acquire, sell or transfer any wild animals or captive animals specified in schs, I and II except with the previous permission of the Authority.
- (2) No zoo shall acquire, sell or transfer any wild or captive animal except from or to a recognized zoo.
- 38-J Prohibition of teasing etc, in a zoo- No. person shall tease, molest Injure or feed any animal or cause disturbance to the animals by noise or otherwise, or litter the grounds in a zoo.

