



In the name of conservation



Report about horrifying conditions of animals at Indian zoos

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About Us:

Elsa Foundation is a non-profit charitable trust that focuses on conservation of biodiversity, prevention of cruelty to animals, animal rights issues of both domestic and wild animals. It opposes keeping wild animals in captivity.

We have travelled to several countries to study best practices and implement them in India.

The foundation supports various government bodies, in informed policy making and decision making on critical issues impacting biodiversity and rights of animals.

Our work areas are research, advocacy, awareness, publication, support in policy and decision making.

Website: www.elsafoundationcharity.org

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Zoo policy on health care of animals

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 zoo 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.

Section 1: Condition of Primates

Condition of Primates

Case 1 : Thrissur zoo, kerala

Rhesus macaque – emergency attention needed

- One single rhesus macaque is kept in a small enclosure
- This animal is having multiple tumors
- Apart from tumors it is seriously affected by mange.
- Unable to bear the stress of its lonely life with sickness and without veterinary care this animal exhibits an **extremely abnormal behavior of licking the walls** of the cage (Tongue-Playing). (Video footage available)
- This animal needs to be shifted immediately to an alternate larger zoo for providing emergency veterinary care and further rehabilitation to live in better living conditions with the company of other macaques.

Psychologically affected sick and solitary Rhesus Macaque with multiple tumors and mange (Needs emergency medical attention)



Condition of Primates

Case 2: Thirussur zoo, Kerala

Condition of bonnet macaques

- There are about **27 bonnet macaques** kept in one single small cage. With crunch for space these animals are **forced to consume the food and water mixed with their own stool and urine.**
- There is always severe fight among the macaques overcrowded and lot of them have open bloody wounds. Dominant macaques harass other macaques and weak macaques are deprived of food
- There is not even a single bar or tree or a rope to simulate the natural atmosphere or to play around.

Condition of primates continued....

- **Garbage / polythene is dumped into the monkey cages by the public as the cages are of easy reach by the public. The animals are forced to eat and drink water mixed with this garbage.**
- **The water inside the cages is completely soiled and unfit for drinking.**
- **99% of the macaques are affected by mange**
- **A macaque with a huge tumor (about 3 kgs) on stomach and with extreme condition of mange needs immediate medical care**

**Recognition of Zoo (Amendment), Rules, 2004 -
Standards and norms subject to which recognition
under section 38H of the Act shall be granted**

(27)

The condition and health of all animals in the zoo shall be checked every day by the person in-charge of their care. If any animal is found sick, injured, or unduly stressed the matter shall be reported to the veterinary officer for providing treatment expeditiously.

Macaque with serious mange and large tumor on stomach
(Image of tumor shown in next page)



Macaque with large tumor (about 3 Kilograms) on stomach
Needs emergency medical care



Bonnet macaque with skin disease (mange) lying down



Bonnet macaque with skin disease (mange)



A sick, old and stressed macaque affected by skin disease kept in over crowded cage



Zoo policy on upkeep of animal collections

3.4.2

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

Polythene and garbage mixed by visitors in drinking water pit of solitary macaque and not cleaned by zoo staff



Macaque excretion in the drinking water pit inside cage



A solitary macaque with colour polythene sheets mixed with its food by visitors and scattered on floor



Zoo keeper has thrown this small portion of polythene milk packet inside the cage after feeding the macaques with milk & bread



**Macaque holding the small portion of polythene milk packet
thrown inside the cage by zoo keeper**



**Recognition of Zoo (Amendment), Rules, 2004 -
Standards and norms subject to which recognition
under section 38H of the Act shall be granted**

(36)

Every zoo shall keep in its collection only such number of animals and such species for which appropriate housing facility exists. The zoo operators shall be responsible for ensuring that the number of animals of any species does not go beyond the holding capacity of the enclosures available in the zoo and housing standards are not compromised for keeping the excessive numbers.

Zoo policy on Animal Housing

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.

About 27 macaques are forced to live in this small cage struggling for space and feeding on food mixed with their own excretion



Reference from previous survey

- Earlier survey conducted in this zoo in 2002 by Animal Crusaders (Calcutta) and Zoo check Canada confirms that 23 bonnet macaques were present in a single cage.
(Ref: www.zoocheck.org)
- At present the number of bonnet macaques exhibited in one single small cage have further increased to about 27 **violating**
Norm no 36 of Recognition of Zoo (Amendment), Rules, 2004
Standards and norms subject to which recognition under section 38H of the Act shall be granted -
and also
Violating the zoo policy on animal housing - section 3.3.2

Condition of Primates

Case 3: Pimpri mini zoo, Maharashtra

- The macaque cage here is completely filled with garbage.
- There is very little water in the drinking water pit and this water is completely soiled with lot of plastic toys, garbage, plastic bags
- Rotten vegetables are scattered all over the floor.
- The animals are not given proper feed or water so two macaques displayed here are forced to beg for food and water from visitors.
- Due to non-availability of drinking water these macaques are forced to drink water from polythene packets thrown by the visitors to quench their thirst .

Pimpri zoo, Maharashtra - Macaque cage completely filled with garbage



Pimpri zoo, Maharashtra
Soiled water with plastic bags, plastic toys & garbage



Pimpri zoo, Maharashtra: As zoo keepers are not providing water macaque is forced to drink water from plastic bag thrown by visitors



Condition of Primates

Case 4: Vellore mini zoo, Tamil Nadu

Vellore zoo, Tamil Nadu: Bonnet macaque cage . The drinking water pit and the garbage inside this cage says it all



Section 2: Disturbance by visitors

National zoo policy objective

Section 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.”

Thrissur zoo

- Proximity of the cages are so near to the visitors.
- Visitors have complete freedom to **dump garbage** in to the cage , **shout** at the animals, **intimidate** the animals, **throw** sticks, stones and polythene inside the cages, **attack** the animals with stick.
- The result of such freedom has put the animals in to miserable condition.
- All the animals are in **frequent contact with humans** posing danger to both the animals and humans

**Visitors feeding deep fried snacks to an endangered schedule-1
Lion Tailed Macaque with no objection from zoo keeper (In khaki uniform)**



Visitor poking a sick macaque with a stick



Visitor giving a polythene bag to macaque



Visitor intimidating a solitary Lion tailed macaque



Visitor giving a pen to macaque



Macaque eating a deep fried snack given by visitors



Youth getting inside the fence and pelting stone on a lonely macaque – Aurangabad Zoo, Maharashtra



Children poking the fully exposed owls, using a long stick

Gulbarga zoo, Karnataka



Section 3: Single Animals

Recognition of Zoo (Amendment), Rules, 2004 -
Standards and norms subject to which recognition
under section 38H of the Act shall be granted

(37)

No animal shall be kept without a mate for a period exceeding one year unless there is a valid reason for doing so or the animal has already passed its prime and is of no use for breeding purposes. In the event of a zoo failing to find a mate for any single animal within this period, the animal shall be shifted to some other place according to the directions of the Central Zoo Authority.

Trissur zoo (Kerala) has lot of single animals, many of them psychologically affected. These can be categorized as follows

- **Animals with no pair** (Lion tailed macaque, Painted stork , Rhesus Macaque, Single crocodile in a well, Civet cat, Dart (snake) bird)
- Animals in both genders are present but they have **crossed the prime breeding age** so they don't get acquainted and are isolated forever (Lion, Tiger).
- **Animals of same family** - 2 Hippos. Mother and its Son are separated to avoid inbreeding
- **Inappropriate mate** - Male camel is young and is in prime breeding age female camel is old and has crossed the breeding age so the camels are isolated for ever
- **Special cases:** There are 3 isolated male leopards. Even though leopards are solitary animals they are deprived of a mate even during breeding season
- Many of these isolated animals due to psychological stress exhibit stereotypic and abnormal behavior like circling (walking round and round), tongue-playing (licking wall of the cage)

Reference from previous survey

- Earlier survey conducted in this zoo in 2002 by Animal crusaders (Calcutta) and Zoo check Canada confirms that Lion Tailed macaque and Painted stork were single even in the year 2002. (Ref: www.zoocheck.org)
- ***This is a clear violation of norm 37 of Recognition of Zoo (Amendment), Rules, 2004 - Standards and norms subject to which recognition under section 38H of the Act shall be granted***
“ No animal shall be kept without a mate for more than one year”

A single endangered lion tailed macaque in a small unnatural cage



Female hippo isolated in a small enclosure to avoid inbreeding with the only available male hippo (its son)



Single Painted Stork (No pair)



Single male leopard



Single male black panther (leopard)



Section 4 – Enclosure Design

Zoo Education and Outreach policy

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.

Section 4a

Condition of birds

Indian zoos claim that they conserve the wild animals and birds but actually there is no conservation of birds happening in Indian zoos. A simple example:

- **Birds are kept in small cages with**
 - **No trees to build nest for laying eggs**
 - **No nesting material (small sticks, natural fiber extra) available inside the cage**
 - **No tree holes to lay eggs**
- **Many cases birds are kept single**
- **In other cases even though male & female birds are caged together, with out nesting material available and trees to build nest the birds are expected to breed and lay eggs on hard cement floor of the cage**

- **You have to see a bird in a cage
and ask why do birds have wings ?
the rest follows.....**

Virginia McKenna – Founder “Born free foundation”

Pimpri zoo: Kite found in high altitudes languishing in a cramped cage. Without a mountain top cave how they are going to breed and lay eggs ?



V.O.C mini zoo, Erode,Tamil Nadu: Aquatic birds inside a prison ?

A gardener is the complete in-charge of this zoo and he has kept these goose caged as he does not have basic knowledge that aquatic birds need water



**Pimpri zoo, Maharashtra: A single heron.
A bird that lives in water bodies is locked in a tiny cage**



Pimpri zoo: This **nocturnal** barn owl trying to avoid shouting visitors during day time by crouching on roof top of cage, as there are no hideouts



Vellore mini zoo, Tamil Nadu: Mountain vultures that live on mountain tops - locked inside a cage



Section 4b

Condition of Schedule-I endangered Gharial

- Gharial enclosure **does not have a ramp** for the animals to climb from water to land inside the enclosure
- There are 4 Gharials exhibited. These animals are never allowed to bask in the sun light by climbing to the land
- **The animals are forced to stay in water 24 hours/365 days leading to hypothermia (reduced body temperature) and reduced consumption of feed**
- **Hypothermia may lead to other serious illnesses also**

Gharial pond with 'NO' ramp for the reptiles to climb to the land inside the enclosure so the animals are forced to be in **hypothermia**



**Unconsumed fish floats as Gharials avoid feed (fish) due to reduced body temperature
(not even a single fish was consumed on the particular day of observation)**



Section 4c: Serious problems with cages

- Many enclosures in Trissur zoo are too small and does not have any resemblance to the animal's natural habitat.
- Most of the animals live in cages with hard cement flooring due to this the animals are forced to live an extremely substandard life in heavily stinking cages with their excretion scattered all around them.
- Due to such cages with hard cement flooring animal feed, water and animal excretion gets mixed up.
- There are no hideouts in any cage for the animals to avoid the visitors if they are stressed by teasing visitors or for nocturnal animals to avoid continuous disturbance by visitors and sleep during day time and lead their normal life
- There are no scratch posts for big cats to sharpen their claws.
- Arboreal animals (macaques, toddy cat) that are supposed to live on trees don't have a single tree in the enclosure

The animals in worst cages are:

- All primate cages.
- All big cats cages (Lions, Tigers, Leopards)
- Jackal cage, Toddy cat cage, Jungle cat cage, Civet cat cage
- Bird cages, Tortoise cages, Snake enclosures
- Female hippo enclosure

This tiger is expected to display its natural behaviour in the space given to it - (2 x 2) meters.



Small unnatural cage for lion



Jackal cage – Too tiny



Unnatural Jungle cat cage with NO hideout for this nocturnal animal to sleep during day time, avoiding visitors



Unnatural Tortoise cage



Rabbits at Vellore Zoo (Tamil Nadu)



Bear in a tiny cage – Gulbarga Zoo, Karnataka



Section 4d

Condition of nocturnal animals

- At Thrissur zoo nocturnal animals (Civet cat, Toddy cat, Jungle cat, Big cats) are unable to sleep during day time due to continuous disturbance by public and in turn has a serious impact on their health and life style
- The animals don't even have any hideout to avoid the public.

Section 4e

Animals with special requirements

Pangolins

Vellore zoo, Tamil Nadu had a captive pangolin.

- Pangolins eat ants
- Pangolins have no teeth
- They lick the ants from the mounds using their tongue
- It's very complicated to keep such animals in zoos as supply of ants is impossible
- This animal was tortured and finally killed by this zoo by doing the following
 - 1. By putting this burrow animal on a open platform. The animal felt too nervous by the teasing public and for the entire day this animal was rolling its body in to a ball and was lying in one corner of the open display platform.
 - 2. This pangolin was starved without feed (ants) and finally it died.

Pangolin winding itself at one corner of fully exposed cage



Pangolin winding itself at one corner of fully exposed cage



Section 5: Zoo education and outreach policy

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.”

Rusted display boards with information about the species exhibited not clearly visible to public



Section 6: Sick and injured animals exhibited

**Recognition of Zoo (Amendment), Rules, 2004 -
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**(6) “No zoo shall exhibit any animal that is seriously
sick, injured or infirm.”**

Many sick and injured animals are exhibited at Thrissur zoo:

- Bonnet Macaque with Cataract
- Two blind Himalayan Black bears
- Himalayan black bear with skin infection
- Sick , injured Bonnet Macaques
- Bonnet Macaques with mange
- Bonnet Macaque with tumor
- Rhesus Macaque with tumor and Mange
- Leopard with broken upper jaw
- Crocodile with broken upper snout
- Toddy cat with severed tail

Condition of Himalayan black bears

- **Two Himalayan black bears are exhibited in a small cage**
- **Both the bears are blind due to cataract**
- **One of the bear has mange at preliminary stage**
- **Due to blindness these bears are not allowed in to the moated enclosure attached with cage as they may not be able find its way back to its feeding cage.**
- **Cataract surgery done to one of the bears was not successful.**

Two blind Himalayan black bears are exhibited in a small cage



Himalayan black bear with skin infection on head



Macaque with eye disease (Cataract)



Toddy cat with severed tail



Section 7: Fire and Smoke inside zoo

- There are 2 fire kilns inside the Pimpri zoo (Maharashtra)
- The dry leaves and garbage collected in the zoo are dumped and burnt inside the zoo which creates heavy smoke spreading throughout the zoo .
- **Such burning can cause serious fire accidents and may kill caged animals.**

Fire and smoke due to garbage burnt inside the zoo



Fire kiln very close to Sambar deer enclosure



Section 8: Feed for big cats

- Raw meat given to big cats needs to be examined daily by a veterinarian to see if the meat is fit for consumption by the animals to avoid any food poisoning / fatal illness to the animals

Section 9: Veterinarians, wildlife clinic not available

*Recognition of Zoo (Amendment), Rules, 2004 - Standards and norms
subject to which recognition under section 38H of the Act shall be
granted*

(14)

Each large zoo shall have at least two full-time veterinarians and medium and small zoo shall have at least one full-time veterinarian. The mini zoo may at least have arrangement with any outside veterinarian for visiting the zoo every day to look after the animals.

(31)

Every large and medium zoo shall have a full-fledged veterinary unit with basic diagnostic facilities, comprehensive range of drugs and a reference library on animal health care and upkeep. Each veterinary unit shall have isolation and quarantine wards to take care of newly arriving animals and sick animals as to minimize the chances of infections spreading to other animals of the zoo.”;

Vellore Zoo, Tamil Nadu



- There is **NO** full time veterinarian available in Thrissur zoo
- There is only a visiting veterinarian from the Thrissur veterinary college.
- With **so many species** of animals exhibited in the zoo its shocking to know that there is **not even a single full time veterinarian available**

END