



## **A REPORT ON ANIMALS EXHIBITED AT A RESTAURANT**

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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](http://www.elsafoundationcharity.org)

<h3><b>Important</b></h3>
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<p>Based on recommendations given in this report, major changes were made to animals living conditions, some animals were sent to other appropriate place (not exhibit) that is having suitable living conditions.</p>
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## **1 Introduction**

A study on the condition of animals exhibited for the visiting public at the restaurant in Chennai was done on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2009 and the details are presented in this report.

This restaurant is owned by a major hotel group.

Recommendations for improvement are provided at the end of this report

Keeping animals in captivity and exhibiting them involves very complex branches of animal biological science, animal behavioral psychology, veterinary science and ethology.

Before any one attempts to exhibit animals, they must thoroughly understand these scientific facts. Exhibiting animals without understanding these facts (or) without having proper knowledge (or) without doing a deep study in these animal sciences will lead to miserable living conditions of animals that includes animal being affected by psychological illness.

Even after considering all these scientific facts captive animal exhibits provide very little scope for an animal to lead a natural life style.

Such poor exhibits violate the following laws of this land

- 1. Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960**
- 2. Madras City Police Act 1988**
- 3. The Towns Nuisance Act 1889**
- 4. India Penal Code (IPC) section 429 read with section 511**

## **2    The Five Freedoms**

Captive animals' welfare is assessed by the principles of five freedoms

1. Freedom from thirst and hunger
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury and disease
4. Freedom to express normal behavior
5. Freedom from fear and distress

The observations presented here are also based on above principles and keeping in to consideration the welfare of animals and biological needs of the animals on highest importance.



### 3 Persian Cat Exhibits



#### 3.1 Total number of cats

Total 20 cats are exhibited.

8 pairs Persian cats are kept in separate small cages.

7 Persian adults in a common room type enclosure.

1 Persian young cat kept in the same common room type enclosure.

1 Persian cat mother and 2 kittens in a partitioned area inside the room type enclosure.

1 single Indian cat is kept in a small cage.

#### 3.2 Problem: Nocturnal animals exhibited during day time

Cats are nocturnal animals and they sleep during the day time and prowl during the night.

At this restaurant since the nocturnal animals are exhibited during day time allowing visitors to disturb the animals during the entire day time the animals are completely out of its regular biological life cycle.

This condition puts the animals to complete distress and out of regular health.

### 3.3 Problem: No Hideouts



The Persian cats kept in cages inside pigeon paradise are not having any hideouts to move out of vicinity of disturbing humans and to avoid human contact.

A very important point to be mentioned here is all the four sides of the cage are exposed making way for easy human intervention and making the animal stress level to the highest.



### 3.4 Problem: Too tiny cages:



The cages that cats are exhibited are too tiny that hardly the animals could move. It is extremely shocking that when too much of free space is available at the restaurant these cats are forced to live in these tiny cages and lead a miserable life.

### 3.5 Problem: Human Contact and Zoonosis:

Due to the poor design of the cages easy human contact is allowed. Human contact purposefully allowed are a high disturbance to these nocturnal animals that prefer to rest during the day time.

Further exposing the animals to human contact leads to **Zoonosis** disease which spreads from animals to humans and from humans to animals.

There are other diseases that spread from humans to animals (which includes contagious TB)



### 3.6 Problem: Predator and Prey exhibited in adjacent cages



Image: Predator (cat) and Prey (Rooster & Hen) exhibited in adjacent cages

Predator (CAT) and Prey (Rooster & Hen) are exhibited in adjacent cages that lead to increased stress level of prey the whole day.

### 3.7 Problem: Diurnal and nocturnal animals exhibited in same enclosure



Diurnal (Pigeons) animals that are active during day time and Nocturnal (Cats) animals that are active during night are exhibited in the same enclosure. When the cats try to sleep during the day time the pigeons continuously fly with flapping wings and create loud chirping noise putting the condition of the nocturnal cats to an extremely worst situation.





Image: Isolated Indian cat

### **3.8 Problem: Isolating an Indian cat in a tiny cage:**

This Indian cat is exhibited as a single animal in a tiny cage preventing it from living its natural life.

### **3.9 Problem: No scratch posts for cats:**

By nature, feline species have a habit of sharpening their claws on suitable scratch posts (ex. Trees in the wild, Domestic cats use specially devised scratch posts). There are no scratch posts available in cat cages or enclosure.

### **3.10 Problem: No warming rugs for cats:**

Cats prefer to curl down on warm materials (example: Cotton mat, Yoga mat etc.). There are no comforting materials in the cage. Wooden planks available would be able to provide only a little warmth.



### 3.11 Problem: No Environmental Enrichment inside the Cages

The cages don't have any environmental enrichment. Leading to severe boredom and leading to psychological problems.

### 3.12 Problem: No water in cages:

The cat cages do not have any fresh drinking water facility.

### 3.13 Problem: Lung disease

Cats when kept in continuous close contact with pigeons are prone to develop a lung disease called "**Pigeon Fanciers Lung (Avian Alveolitis)**" due to floating antigens, floating feathers leading to asthma like condition in cats.

### 3.14 Problem: Rusted cages

Due to close proximity of sea the salt content in air here is high. Due to this many cat cages made out of iron are rusted and are in bad condition.



## 4 Rabbit Exhibit:



Image: Rabbit exhibited in an unnatural tiny cage with iron mesh at bottom.

### 4.1 Problem: Freedom for rabbits only at specific time and an unnatural living cage

Rabbits are kept inside tiny iron meshed cages which is very uncomfortable to the animals. The bottom portion of the cage is also meshed forcing the animal to lie down on a rough metal mesh. Such improper living conditions will lead to serious physical and mental health complications.

Rabbits are also allowed to roam freely outside the cage only for a short period of time every day.

### 4.2 Problem: Social animals isolated

Female rabbits are social animals and live in groups but here some rabbits are found isolated in cages.

### 4.3 Problem: Direct exposure to sunlight

The rabbit cages facing south are directly exposed to sunlight with animals exposed to hot atmosphere.

## 5 Emu Exhibit:



Image: EMU enclosure (This enclosure lacks shade area to avoid direct sunlight)

Not many trees are found inside this enclosure. Chennai being extremely hot during summer such lack of shade makes all the birds to over crowd below the one single tree inside the enclosure.

Emus being native to Australia where weather is considerably cool than Chennai's weather conditions live in extreme heat with direct sunlight contact with too less shade area.

Drinking water containers are less.

Bathing, swimming water facility is not there.

Source of grit (pebbles) that Emu eats for digestion is not there.



## 6 Fish Exhibit



Image: Dirty unhygienic water exhibiting schedule I endangered Shark

### 6.1 Species of fish exhibited

1. Puca (Family of Piranha)
2. Shark
3. Koi Carp

### 6.2 Problem: Water quality

The water quality is very bad and extremely dirty leading to unhygienic conditions that definitely force the fish to die.

## 7 Fancy bird exhibit

### 7.1 Fancy Pigeons:

Just as these pigeons are having a high fancy value several of these are kept in small cages with no opportunity to fly





## **7.2 Other fancy birds exhibited**

Even these birds closely related to budgerigars' family are denied flight opportunity and are confined to small cages

## **7.3 Fancy rooster and hen exhibit**



The rooster and hen by nature have pecking behavior and needs access to natural open space to live it normal life. The rooster and hen exhibited are trapped inside a tiny cage and denied an opportunity to live its natural life.

## 8 Geese exhibit:



### 8.1 Problem: Swimming water access only at specific time

The water pond is on the other side of the restaurant near the visitors' dining area. The geese are allowed to go to the pond only at specific time. The stress levels of these birds are increased due to the visiting crowd dining near the pond.

## **9 Recommendations:**

The following recommendations to improve the animal exhibit facilities and improve the living conditions of the animals are provided.

### **9.1 Recommendations for cats**

- 1.) Cats should never be kept inside cages.
- 2.) Large size enclosure needs to be constructed for the cats (At-least 2400 square feet land for the 20 cats exhibited now).
- 3.) Half of the enclosure must be covered with roof and walls on three sides and a concrete flooring to protect the cats from natural weather conditions like hot sun, rain etc.
- 4.) The other half portion should be a open garden with lot of environmental enrichment (trees, plants, sand etc)
- 5.) If the restaurant does not want to keep an Indian cat inside a Persian cat enclosure to avoid breeding between Indian and Persian cats, then instead of torturing the animal by keeping it in isolation in a tiny cage an easy solution is to do an Animal Birth Control (ABC) surgery to the Indian Cat and let it have a better life inside the large enclosure with other Persian cats.
- 6.) 24 hours fresh drinking water facility to be provided
- 7.) Environmental enrichment in the form of hanging vertical ropes, hanging swings made of rope to be provided.
- 8.) To encourage foraging behavior food hideouts made of bamboo, mud pots should be placed inside the enclosure and be used to keep some quantity of solid food.
- 9.) Cats should not be kept inside pigeon enclosures.
- 10.) Plenty of plastic tubs along with small washable plastic straw mats should be kept inside enclosure. This facility should be provided to help the cats overcome the cold weather at night and sleep in a warm condition inside the tub.
- 11.) Lot of hide-outs for the cats to avoid human disturbance should be provided.
- 12.) The animal has the right to decide when it would like to see the humans and when it doesn't want to get disturbed. It should be given an opportunity to hide itself.

### **9.2 Recommendations for rabbits**

1. Rabbits should not be caged and let free on the ground inside the enclosure
2. Female rabbits are social animals and needs to be kept in groups in a free roaming enclosure.
3. Large enclosure (At-least 1000 square feet land for 5 rabbits exhibited now) with similar construction design like cat enclosure to be provided (with open and closed area)
4. Open area inside the enclosure should have plenty of grass
5. Large rabbit hutches need to be constructed inside the concrete area of enclosure and free movement of the rabbit from hutch to other open areas of enclosure should be allowed anytime of a day.
6. 24 hours fresh drinking water facility to be provided

### **9.3 Recommendations regarding neutering rabbits and cats**

Male cats and male rabbits are highly territorial and cannot be kept inside a common enclosure. The best solution for this is to neuter all cats and rabbits (both male & female) before leaving them inside a common enclosure.

If this is not done, then the males will have deadly fights among themselves inside the enclosure leading to serious injuries.

Allowing these captive animals to breed will lead to huge number of litters as female rabbits have ability to become pregnant up-to 10 times a year and cats up-to 4 times a year. The rabbit does not have any regular oestrus cycle and female rabbit (doe) can ovulate at any time of a year.

Each litter will have multiple kittens leading to too many animals overcrowded in the enclosure

A female rabbit is capable of producing 24 young in a single year

Without anyone available to adopt all the animals the process becomes too complicated.

Females are vulnerable to uterus infection and cancer. Occurrence of ovarian cancer is also very common.

Considering all these aspects it is best to neuter both males and females.

#### **9.4 Recommendations for exotic birds exhibited in small cages**

At present flight area is not there for these birds

##### **Horizontal flight distance:**

The flight area is an important factor for captive birds. A large aviary or a huge cage with long horizontal length needs to be provided as the flight of the birds happens horizontally and they don't fly up and down like a helicopter.

#### **9.5 Recommendations for fancy pigeons exhibited in small cages**

Since there is a large aviary available for other pigeons with good opportunity to fly even these fancy pigeons should be allowed to live in the same aviary and should not be caged.

In case the restaurant management wants to avoid mixing of fancy pigeons and normal pigeons then a separate aviary for these fancy pigeons with large flight area should be provided.

#### **9.6 Recommendations for aquarium**

The water quality needs to be improved a lot. Frequent cleaning of the aquarium and providing fresh water are of paramount importance.

Forcing the fish to suffocate in dirty water should to be avoided.

#### **9.7 Recommendation for rooster and hen kept inside cage**

These birds cannot be kept in cages

The rooster and hen needs to be kept in an enclosure where it has both covered and open areas similar to recommended rabbit and cat enclosures.

Access to open ground is must in order to allow the bird to exhibit the natural pecking behavior



## **9.8 Recommendations for Emus**

### **Shade:**

Since the shade area inside this enclosure is very less alternate arrangements like shade net that is used in plant nurseries to protect plants can be used to create some more shade area

If shade net is used, then the net should be of the following specification: **90% density** net should be used to filter the sunlight to the maximum.

### **Drinking water:**

More drinking water containers should be provided and water should be available 24 hours of a day.

### **Grit eating:**

Emus have a habit of eating small quantity of grits (pebbles) to aid digestion. Appropriate grit needs to be identified with the help of Australian experts working in this field and should be made available inside the enclosure

### **Dust bathing:**

Emus do dust bathing. Provision for some form of sand dust should to be provided.

### **Bathing and Swimming:**

When water facilities are available Emus bath and swim. So some water facilities for the birds to bath and swim should be provided. This also helps the birds to protect them from scorching heat of Chennai during summer.

### **Contagious disease spreading from bird to humans:**

Potential diseases of significance to human public health include avian tuberculosis and Chlamydia. Some provision for testing the birds for these diseases, and providing treatment if necessary, must be demonstrated.

### **Walking area:**

Emus walk up to 20kms per day in wild. So at any point of time in future emus should not be restricted to small enclosures.

## **9.9 Recommendations for geese**

24 hours swimming water access should be given to the geese.

The pond should be constructed in an isolated location and should not be near crowded visitors dining area.

## **9.10 General recommendations for all animals**

### **Quarantine facilities:**

For treating sick animals and to prevent contagious diseases spreading among all animals' quarantine facilities must be available in all enclosures. This facility can be used to keep sick animals and treat them

### **24 hours fresh drinking water:**

24-hour fresh drinking water facility should be available in all enclosures.

### **Physiological well-being:**

Animals, when kept in unnatural cages, start exhibiting strange behaviors due to psychological disorder.

Some examples are:

Bar biting (Biting the iron bars of the cage)


Head bobbing

Feather plucking (Birds pluck their own feather)

Self-mutilation (Biting its own body parts)

Tongue playing (Licking the walls of the cage)

At most care should be taken to design the enclosure considering all the recommendation provided in this document so that the animals live a stress free peaceful life.



What is  
wrong with  
keeping  
animals as  
exhibits at  
public  
places?



*Elsa Foundation*