

Fatalities in Wild Rescued Young Carnivores : Report of Leopard Cub (*Panthera pardus*) at Kota Zoo

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This paper is about the rescued young wild carnivores brought, injured or diseased, from the wild to wildlife centres by wildlife authorities or other people for treatment and care. It has been observed by this writer, a veterinarian attached to Kota Zoo, that quite a lot of these animals die mainly due to improper knowledge or handling of the particular species. Lack of knowledge of feeding behaviour, necessary for bringing up orphaned carnivores, is also a major cause of fatalities. Trained veterinarians in this specialty of wildlife care is much required for smaller centers or local zoos. Improper housing of the animal can also contribute to its failure to adjust to captivity and thrive under treatment. Lack of asepsis also plays a role in animal's death. A case in point involves a month-old panther cub brought to our local zoo at Kota, Rajasthan, which had been rescued from the forests of Bundi, an old city about 35 kms from Kota.

Report

A live panther cub was brought at Kota Zoo one afternoon from Bundi forest. The cub was found in a crouching position near an old temple in a village in Bundi District. The animal seemed to be quite afraid, undernourished and dehydrated. It had been removed from there by then Hon. Wildlife Warden of Bundi and kept overnight at Bundi forest range and next day morning shifted to Kota Zoo in a weak but responsive condition. The cub moved around without any assistance finding any hiding place when left free. The cub was shy, and shunned human presence; it was aggressive in behaviour and snarled when agitated reacting as if shocked when touched or caressed.

The cub was kept in isolation at an old office in the zoo premises with one caretaker residing there for its care without disturbing it. A small open cage was provided for it with a adequate amount of hay to provide bedding in the cold of February. The cub adapted to these conditions, crawling inside the open cage and making itself comfortable there. Occasionally it used to climb on a stack of fuel wood kept there in one corner. Only three people were allowed there and the cub became accustomed to their presence. Occasionally during dusk and dawn the cub was taken and left for free walk under guidance when the zoo was closed and at these times, it was very active and tried to run away from us under shrubs or any hiding place. On day three the cub expired.

Day 1:

- The cub arrived at Kota zoo in daytime.
- Vets prescribed some analgesics and antibiotics, multivitamins, Syp. LIVOFEROL, Inj. Neohepatex, Electral powder and some analgesic injections.
- Cub lapped some water and milk.
- Offered soft solid meat chunks at 10-11 am
- Given intravenous glucose drip.
- Cub developed diarrhoea by evening
- Cub lapped more milk in the evening.

- Tube fed with milk at night.
- Left meat pieces were removed at night

Day 2:

Movement of cub was sluggish and seemed to be more afraid and dehydrated; stomach seemed to be empty and compressed. In the morning had slight water lapping, noon slight milk lapping night tube feed with milk. Crepitus in chest noted while holding it while feeding. After feeding the cub walked by itself to its cage and sat inside comfortably.

Day 3:

Died in condition of sleep in early hours 3-4 A.M.

Postmortem was conducted same day at about 11 A.M. by the team of local vets.

Report: On Examination:

- Panther cub (*Panthera pardus*)
- Sex: Female
- Age: approx 2 months
- Height: 1 Foot
- Length: 36 inches
- Colour: natural
- Condition of cadaver: good
- Hair coat: rough and hairy
- Scars: nil
- Superficial wounds etc.: nil

On Incision:

- Sub cutaneous fat: not present
- Peritoneum: NAD
- Lymph nodes: NAD
- Viscera: NAD
- Haemorrhages: NAD
- Respiratory system: Froth present in trachea and bronchi
- Cardiovascular System: clotted and non clotted blood present
- Spleen: shrunken and wrinkled
- Liver: shrunken
- Gall bladder and bile duct: full of bile
- Gastro intestinal tract: severe inflammation in intestines indicating gastro enteritis
- Kidney: pulpy
- Bladder: empty

Diagnosis: Animal died due to shock following dehydration.

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