

Sterilization Of Male Cervids In Mumbai Zoo

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Zoos in the country are facing the problem of overcrowding of deer and antelope as well as some other animals which are proliferate breeding species. The Central Zoo Authority over the last few years have shown very much concern over this issue. There are standing directives from CZA that zoos in the country should adopt various methods for controlled breeding like separation, vasectomy and castration of males.

V.J.B. Udhyan Zoo, Mumbai is having surplus stock of Blackbuck, Sambar, Chital and Four-horned Antelope which far exceeds the carrying capacity of the zoo. Many individuals of Sambar and Chital have been released into the nearest reserve forest but this method has limitations. We have now therefore adopted the practice of sterilization of males by either vasectomy or castration. During the past couple of years we have castrated around 5 Sambar, 9 Blackbucks, and 2 Four-horned Antelope successfully after tranquilizing them.

The combination of *Xylazine* and *Ketamine* in the proportion of 1:1 has been used in the dosage as given below: -

Ref. No. of animal	Weight	Dosage per Kg.		Total Dose
		<i>Xylazine</i>	<i>Ketamine</i>	
Sambar 1	100 Kg.	3 mg	3 mg	600 mg (6 ml)
Sambar 2	130 Kg.	3 mg	3 mg	780 mg (7.8 ml)
Black buck 1	45 Kg.	3 mg	3 mg	270 mg (2.7 ml)
Black buck 2	35 Kg.	3 mg	3 mg	210 mg (2.1 ml)
Black buck 3	40 Kg.	2 mg	4 mg	240 mg (2.4 ml)
Four-Horned Ante.	25 Kg.	3 mg	3 mg	150 mg (1.5 ml)

The introduction period was around 10-15 minutes. Yohimbin was used as a reversal drug at the dose of 0.15 per kg. body weight (2 mg/ml).

Tranquillization in Carnivores

Earlier we used 1:2 proportions of *Xylazine* and *Ketamine*. Recently we have tried 1:3 proportions, which is found effective in Lions and Leopards.

Ref. No. of animal	Weight	Dosage per Kg.		Total Dose
		<i>Xylazine</i>	<i>Ketamine</i>	
Lioness 1	150 Kg.	1 mg	2.3 mg	495 mg. (4.95 ml)
Lioness 2	100 Kg.	1 mg	3 mg	400 mg (4 ml)
Tiger	200 Kg.	1 mg	2 mg	600 mg (6 ml)
Leopard	50 Kg.	1 mg	3 mg	200 mg (2 ml)

Reversal drug used is Yohimbin 0.15 mg per kg. body weight (2mg/ml). The team worked for the same.

Dr. Tripathi, M.V.Sc. (Surgery), Dr. Yuvaraj, Final Year Student and Dr. Shivani, Third Year Student assisted with the above described procedures.

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Seizure of Schedule - I Animals -- A Mechanic's Help

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The Forest Department of Gaya division in Bihar seized 298 freshwater soft-shelled turtles at Barachatti on 22.12.2002 during transportation of these reptiles, most likely to Kolkata. The turtles being transported to the said destinations were kept in 9 jute bags and a Mahindra Bolero jeep was used for the purpose.

When the smugglers, 5-6 in number stopped the jeep at a garage to repair the punctured tyre, the mechanic smelled a foul odour from inside the AC jeep. Suspecting a dead body inside, the mechanic informed the police by phone. The smugglers managed to escape by the time the police party arrived and the turtles were then handed over to the forest officials.

After departmental formalities, the turtles were sent to the Sanjay Gandhi Biological Park at Patna where the species were identified with the help of local experts as *Aspideretes gangeticus* and *Lissemys punctata*. Both the soft - shelled turtle species are listed in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 in Schedule - I reptilian fauna.

The *Aspideretes gangeticus* species were only two in number but their size was very big, one weighing 11 kg while the other 6 kg. Most of the turtles' shells were badly damaged due to poor handling by the smugglers and till date 6 have already died. It was thought that the turtles were *en route* to Kolkata from some place in Uttar Pradesh along G. T. Road as the seized Bolero jeep bears the registration number of West Bengal.

According to local people and officials, this route is one of the important routes of turtle smuggling from the rivers of Uttar Pradesh to West Bengal, which is a good market for turtles where its flesh is relished.

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