SOUTH ASIAN ZOO & WILDLIFE NEWS

India

Zoo transfers
A spate of zoo transfers occurred this months, many of which (but not all) are rumoured to have had to do with zoo deaths and other problems.

B. R. Sharma, Director of National Zoo was transferred to Darjeeling Zoo to replace D. Biswas.

B. S. Bonal of Kaziranga was transferred to National Zoo to replace B. R. Sharma who went to Darjeeling Zoo.

K. N. Benerjee was transferred from Nehru Zoological Park to Warangal due to a promotion as Conservator and later transferred to Visak Zoo as Director.

Vinod Kumar was transferred to Nandankanan Zoo to replace B. C. Prusty.

Amphibian captive management
A training workshop for management of amphibians in captivity is planned for 22-24 September 2000. The ZOO/CBSG, India Amphibian SIG has initiated the workshop. The Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Chennai has agreed to host the workshop. Other reptile facilities in Chennai as well as the Central Zoo Authority will collaborate on the training. Central Zoo Authority has agreed to send Brij Gupta, Scientist, who has successfully bred and reared amphibians in captivity and authored a handbook on the subject, as a resource persons.

The main resource person will be John Birkett, Curator of Reptiles and Amphibians at the Melbourne Zoo. John brings many years of experience in housing, designing environments, breeding and rearing amphibians. Melbourne Zoo is well known for its role in breeding and reintroducing a critically endangered species, to its natural habitat in Hong Kong.

Participants will, in addition to hearing various presentations by resource persons on aspects of amphibian decline in the world and in India and conservation, also do practical work. They will construct and furnish 4 or 6 larger terreria for amphibians which will be left at the Arignar Anna Zoo or shared with other reptile facilities in Chennai.

Arignar Anna Zoo was requested to host the workshop because they are the only zoo with a functioning amphibian exhibit and because of the generally cooperative and positive attitude of the zoo officials and their superiors in Tamil Nadu Forest Department.

Corporate sponsors for Hyderabad Zoo enclosures
The Nehru Zoological Park has revived a proposal to invite and accept corporate funding and assistance for animal enclosures in an "animal adoption" scheme. The decision came following the animal deaths at Nandankanan which brought to light the need for improved upkeep of animals in many subtle ways. The government of Andhra Pradesh will continue to provide funding at the usual level while the corporate funds will be used for improving the zoo.
Already offers have come and raised controversy. Lobbyists against smoking have protested sponsorship from tobacco companies, stating that it sends the wrong message to children, who love to visit zoos.
Animal adoption does not give the sponsor special privileges over the animal. It does not go home with the adoptive parent but a signboard will be placed on the enclosure stating that an amount of money has been donated by a particular donor. This scheme has been widely practiced very successfully in numerous western zoos around the world. The Singapore Zoo also has depended heavily on corporate sponsorship. This scheme was attempted possibly for first time in Mysore Zoo during 1981, however, the zoo did not give enough attention to the donors and the amounts requested were trivial so it did not contribute much to the zoo.

Sikkim Zoo celebrates birth of more Red panda cubs
Sikkim Zoo had been given Red Pandas from Darjeeling Zoo as part of one of the two international breeding programmes of which any Indian zoo is a member. Now the Red Pandas have littered a third time, the second successful parturition in 3 years. The Sikkim Zoo has a very large naturalistic enclosure for their pandas. The cubs and mother are under strict quarantine.

Goa announces plan to set up an open zoo
In the midst of the tiger death crisis and other death statistics so enthusiastically reported by the press, the Government of Goa has announced their intention to start an open zoo with Rs. 50 lakh. Rare animals in an open zoo would be a great attraction for tourists, one very senior politician was reported to have said.

Editors' Note
Due to paucity of space and time, there is no news of other South Asian zoos prepared this issue. This is regrettable but will be corrected next issue.

ARS WII to be held on 27-28 September (and possible 29th)