# Zoo Newsletter

## ARIGNAR ANNA ZOOLOGICAL PARK

Vandalur, Chennai - 600 048

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# MESSAGE FROM PCCF & CWLW

Arignar Anna Zoological Park continues to set high standards in ex situ wildlife conservation through its dedicated efforts in all aspects of zoo management. The park has also undertaken significant improvements in visitor infrastructure and amenities, including the reopening of the beautifully renovated Brindavan Garden, creating a more enriching and enjoyable experience for visitors. The last surviving rescued circus lion in india Lioness Heera at Arignar Anna Zoological Park is a proud testament to the zoo's dedication, scientific management, and compassionate care for rescued wildlife. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the entire team of Arignar Anna Zoological Park for their unwavering dedication and commendable efforts in wildlife conservation and animal welfare.

**Thiru. Rakesh Kumar Dogra I.F.S.,**
**PCCF & CWLW**

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# DIRECTORS CORNER

This year 2026 began on a joyous note with the Pongal celebrations, during which Arignar Anna Zoological Park welcomed thousands of visitors, especially during the Kaanum Pongal holidays.

The zoo has successfully completing the second round of the Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE). It is a matter of great pride that Arignar Anna Zoological Park secured the first rank among Indian zoos in the first MEE assessment, reflecting our unwavering commitment to conservation, animal welfare, education, and effective management.

Brindavan Garden, is now reopened to visitors which remained closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following extensive renovation and landscaping, the garden now offers visitors a serene and aesthetically enriched space to relax and appreciate nature. Sustainable initiatives such as the installation of a UV water filteration system for wet-moat enclosures, modernisation of solid waste management units, installation of additional solar power plants.etc has been taken.

Improvements in visitor amenities, including construction of additional rest shelters, renovation of roads and signages continue to enhance the overall zoo experience.The zoo has also welcomed new animal additions through exchange programmes with Jambu Zoo.

Among our cherished residents is Heera, the oldest rescued lionesses from a circus, whose remarkable journey stands as a symbol of wildlife rescue and compassionate care in zoos.

Our dedicated teams continue to provide regular veterinary care, enrichment, conservation education programmes, and comprehensive summer management measures to ensure the well-being of both animals and visitors.

As we move forward, our vision remains steadfast—to create a world-class zoological park that inspires conservation, education, and a deeper appreciation for biodiversity.

**Thiru. T.Ritto Cyriac I.F.S.,**
**Director**
**Arignar Anna Zoological Park**

# BEYOND THE RING :THE STORY OF ⊛ LIONESS HEERA

CELEBRATING A LEGACY OF RESCUE AND PROTECTION



## ARIGNAR ANNA ZOOLOGICAL PARK – RESCUE CENTRE

Following the Government of India's ban on the performance and exhibition of lions, tigers, leopards, bears, and monkeys in circuses in 1998, The Ministry of Environment and Forests entrusted the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) with the responsibility of rehabilitating animals rescued from circuses.

Between 1999 and 2001, the CZA established dedicated rescue centres for lions and tigers in the off-display areas of five zoos: Bannerghatta National Park (Karnataka), Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur (Tamil Nadu), Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), Sri Venkateswara Zoological Park, Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh), and Nahargarh Biological Park, Jaipur (Rajasthan).

Through these rescue centres, the CZA has successfully rehabilitated 314 lions and tigers rescued from circus establishments across the country.

Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), Vandalur, was established as one of the principal rescue centres by the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) in 2000 due to its vast land area and infrastructure. Spread over nearly 92 hectares of adjoining Reserve Forest, the facility provides a natural environment for rescued animals. In 2000, a dedicated rescue centre with the capacity to house 40 lions and 20 tigers rescued from circuses was established to provide lifelong care and welfare under scientific management.

Between 2000 and 2005, Arignar Anna Zoological Park received a total of 67 rescued lions (35 males and 32 females), 16 tigers (3 males and 13 females), one leopard(female), and four Himalayan black bears(male) from various circus establishments.

With dedicated care and scientific management, Lioness Heera, one of the 67 rescued circus lions at Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), continues to thrive in good health at the age of 24 years, which is remarkable considering that the average captive lifespan of a lion ranges between 14 to 20 years.



Heera stands as a living symbol of the dedication and compassion of the staff at Arignar Anna Zoological Park. Her long and healthy life demonstrates how modern zoo practices, specialized veterinary support, careful manged diet and continuous welfare monitoring in captivity can significantly enhance the lifespan and well-being of rescued wildlife.

At 24 years of age, Lioness Heera is recorded as the oldest living rescued circus lioness under zoo care in India. she was rescued at a young age of around 1.5 years, she remains healthy with a proper diet and dedicated care.

Heera is known for her calm and gentle temperament and shares a strong bond with her animal keepers, responding well during feeding and routine management procedures. She is maintained on a carefully regulated diet of 3 kg beef with bone, 150 g liver and 3 kg live chicken.

Heera India's last surviving circus lion, she stands as the final living reminder of a bygone era when lions were used for entertainment in circuses. Her remarkable journey from the circus arena to a life of dignity and care symbolizes the nation's transition from animal entertainment to animal welfare. Over the years, Heera has become a powerful symbol of the successful long-term rescue and rehabilitation efforts of Arignar Anna Zoological Park and the Central Zoo Authority.

THE LAST LIVING CIRCUS LION- HEERA

ARIGNAR ANNA ZOOLOGICAL PARK

More importantly, her story highlights the evolving role of modern zoos—not merely as places of exhibition, but as centres for wildlife rescue, conservation, education and ethical animal care.

As the last living testimonial of India's circus lion era, Heera's legacy will continue to inspire compassion and commitment towards wildlife welfare for generations to come.



**Lioness- Heera**

# MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION OF ZOOS (MEE-ZOOS) 2026

Arignar Anna Zoological Park is the first zoo to score the top rank in india's first Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Zoos (MEE-ZOOS). Among the 147 recognized zoos in the country categorized as large (17), medium (23), small (33), mini (60) zoos and rescue centres (14). In this phase of the MEE-Zoo, 41 Zoos from large and medium categories zoo were selected for evaluation. Out of the 41 Zoos, 39 zoos underwent the evaluation process. The evaluation of carried 6 element with 40 criterias. In the six element, AAZP ranked the first position in 4 criterias. Overall AAZP ranked the top position in the MEE(Zoos)- 2022.

In the same context, the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) is conducting the second cycle of Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Zoos (MEE-ZOOS) across the country. In this regard, evaluation teams have been constituted to undertake assessments of all large and medium category recognized zoos in India.

Accordingly, the Central Zoo Authority, has deputed Shri.KSSVP Reddy, IFS(Retd.) and Dr. Vilas S Bardekar, IFS(Retd.), to carry out the MEE-ZOOS assessment for Arignar Anna Zoological Park on 18.4.2026 and 19.4.2026.

The zoo team comprising Biologists, Zoo Educators, Veterinarians, Uniformed Forest Staff, WL1 Section staff and Research Assistants worked tirelessly to compile and organize all supporting documents and records required for the MEE evaluation. A comprehensive documentation compilation was meticulously prepared by the zoo team in two volumes, comprising around 430 pages of records. The compilation includes all supporting documents and evidences required for the Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) criterias. The evaluation process was successfully carried out, and the entire zoo team is eagerly awaiting the results.














## Enrichment for zoo animals

In Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), periodic enrichment is provided to zoo animals to enhance their overall well-being by stimulating their physical and psychological needs. These enrichment measures encourage natural behaviours, promote activity, and contribute to improved animal welfare in zoo







# VANDALUR ZOO'S
# PONGAL FESTIVAL



Arignar Anna Zoological Park continued its tradition as one of Tamil Nadu's most preferred destinations for Pongal celebrations, welcoming a large number of visitors during the festive holidays this January.

The zoo witnessed an overwhelming public response, with more than 1.2 lakh visitors visiting the park during the Pongal festival holidays.

To enhance visitor engagement and provide a memorable festive experience, the zoo introduced several attractions and visitor-oriented activities this year. Elephant feeding sessions and the immersive 7D Theatre emerged as major crowd favourites. Lion and Deer Safari services, battery-operated zoo round vehicles, and access to all animal exhibits added to the visitor experience and received an appreciative response from the public.To ensure smooth crowd movement and visitor safety, volunteers, NCC cadets, NSS members, and college students were deployed throughout the zoo campus. Visitors cooperated with officials and followed queue systems while visiting the areas with narrow pathways such as the Serpentarium, Aquarium, and Nocturnal Animal House.

The zoo also utilized the festive gathering as an opportunity to strengthen public awareness on environmental conservation. Informational signboards were installed across the campus to educate visitors about wildlife conservation, sustainable lifestyles, reduction of carbon footprint, and energy conservation practices.

In coordination with relevant line departments, the zoo management implemented extensive arrangements to ensure visitor comfort and convenience throughout the festival period. Visitors were encouraged to use digital ticketing platforms, supported by free Wi-Fi facilities provided within the zoo campus. As a result, ticketing operations were carried out entirely through digital modes. Separate parking facilities for two-wheelers and heavy motor vehicles efficiently accommodated more than 12,000 vehicles, while continuous free shuttle services operated between parking area and the zoo entrance.









Security arrangements were strengthened with the installation of four metal detectors at entry points, and frisking procedures were carried out by police personnel. For child safety, around 10,500 children below eight years of age were provided with identification wrist tags containing parent contact details.

Additional visitor amenities included 10 extra RO drinking water points, 20 bio-toilets, additional refreshment outlets operated by Aavin, and food stalls managed by Women Self-help groups to cater to visitor needs. Emergency response systems were also strengthened with five medical help desks, ambulance facilities, four visitor help desks, and a stationed fire engine. These facilities collectively provided assistance to more than 3,000 visitors during the festival period.

Visitor movement across the zoo was monitored through a CCTV surveillance system from the central control room, while additional navigation and information boards were installed at strategic locations for effective crowd guidance. The zoo also established separate exit gate for the zoo and the MTC bus stop. For effective crowd management and public assistance, a total of 65 uniformed Forest Department staff, 100 police personnel, and 120 NCC, NSS, and college student volunteers were deployed across the zoo campus.

During the three major festival days alone, nearly 75,000 visitors have visited the zoo. The zoo recorded 14,570 visitors on Pongal day, 22,205 visitors on Mattu Pongal, and 26,866 visitors on Kaanum Pongal. In addition, around 12,000 children below five years of age and differently-abled visitors visited the park during the holiday period. Photo points were set up across the zoo, enabling visitors to capture and cherish memorable moments during their visit

The successful management of the Pongal holiday crowd reflected the coordinated efforts of the zoo administration, Forest Department, police personnel, volunteers, and supporting departments. Through its extensive visitor services, educational outreach, and conservation messaging, Arignar Anna Zoological Park once again ensured a safe, memorable, and enjoyable Pongal celebration for all visitors.

# SUMMER MANAGEMENT

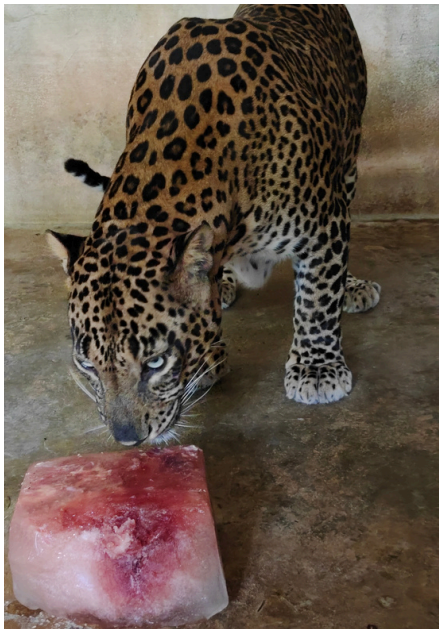
The Arignar Anna Zoological Park, situated in the south Indian metropolitan city of Chennai, lies in the tropical zone and hence, is subjected to hot and humid weather conditions. The seasonal impacts could potentially alter the behaviour and impact the health condition of animals housed at the zoo. Therefore, it is essential to intervene and make facilities for the welfare of animals housed in the zoo. Summers, typically last from mid-March to late June here and peaks by the middle of May.



In order to manage the heat, the following activities have been carried out.

For most of the bird enclosures gunny bags are tied on top and side of the enclosures and sprayed with cool water during hot hours of the day in the morning and evening to reduce the temperature inside the enclosure drastically. Reptiles are provided with extra haul-outspaces. Reptiles come under severe stress during summer. In order to improve their comfort level, heat relief measures are undertaken. For Iguanas, Broccoli has been suggested as a water rich diet for summers. Serpentarium is provided with mud mounds and mud pots in multiple tiers to ensure differential temperature for facilitating their different physiological functions as snakes require variable temperatures for digestion, molting and reproduction.

Large herbivorous animals like Rhinoceros, Elephant, Hippopotamus and Giraffe are provided with water showers / with sprinklers. Water troughs in all enclosures are maintained full enabling the animals to cool themselves down. Manchon grass thatched sheds are provided well in advance of summer in all enclosures. Elephants in the zoo are given showers and allowed to wallow in the pond twice every day to provide relief from heat. Play materials such as tyres, balls and other play things are provided to keep them engaged.Special dietary arrangements are made for primates, bears and elephants to maintain them hydrated and to cool them off. Frozen feed will be provided to combat heat.Sprinkling of water has been arranged in open enclosures housing ostrich and other terrestrial birds, and in the walk-through aviary.Lassi and tender coconut will be provided for chimpanzee to improve hydration. Thatched roof sheds in ostrich and other enclosures have been replaced as per requirement for sufficient shade. Shade-net has been provided at required places to beat the penetration of direct sunlight, in theenclosures such as exotic birds, water and terrestrial bird aviary.



Carnivores have been provided with frozen meat while primates and bears are given fruits frozenin ice cubes for hydration as well as to reduce the temperature.Cervids in the zoo and in safari have been provided with extra shade, water and special feeds.Shade-nets cutting off sunlight, are provided for white tiger and leopard enclosures.

Similar interventions have also been carried out at the transit enclosures and cells in the Rescuecenter as per the requirements.Water sprinklers, spraying minute droplets of water on visitors to give them a pleasant experience have been kept at different points around the zoo, namely, neat the lion-tailed macaque enclosure near the entrance, near gaur enclosure, near the bear enclosures, near the reptile enclosures and near the wild boar enclosure.

## Animal exchange  with Jambu Zoo

An animal exchange programme between Arignar Anna Zoological Park and Jambu Zoo was initiated in August 2025 and approved by the Central Zoo Authority in September 2025. Following a technical visit by the zoo's Deputy Director, Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, and Biologist, a pair of Leopard Cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) and Himalayan Black Bears (*Ursus thibetanus laniger)* were selected for exchange based on their health, behaviour, and compatibility.



**Hippopotamus sent from AAZP to Jambu Zoo**

In February 2026, a team of two Veterinary Assistant Surgeons and a Biologist safely transported the selected Leopard Cats and Himalayan Black Bears from Jammu to Chennai by special railway coach. After arrival, the animals underwent quarantine before being introduced into their enriched enclosures. In return, a pair of Hippopotamuses (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) from Arignar Anna Zoological Park was safely transported to Jambu Zoo, reaching its destination on 10 March 2026. The exchange strengthened the animal collections of both zoos and promoted collaborative conservation efforts.





**Himalayan black bear: Female (left) and Male (right) brought to AAZP**



**Leopard cat pair**
**Female (left) and Male (right) brought to AAZP**

## Animal exchange  with Sakkarbaug Zoo

AAZP has find a compatible female mate for the alone male Asiatic wild ass since 2023, the zoo proposed exchange programme in Sakkarbaug Zoo in two phase under phase 1, one female wild ass received for which Mouse deer 2:2, White peafowl 1:2, Yellow anaconda 2 nos were given. In phase 2 for Asiatic lion 1:2 from Sakkarbaug Zoo , White Tiger 1:1, Indian Gaur one male will be exchanged from AAZP. This initiative aims to strengthen captive populations and promote cooperative conservation among Indian zoos.



## Efforts taken to get Asiatic lion from Indore Zoo

Arignar Anna Zoological Park is in the process of acquiring one pair of Asiatic Lions (1.1) from Kamla Nehru Prani Sangrahalaya, Indore, addressing the long-standing demand from visitors for additional lions at the zoo. This proposed exchange will not only enrich the zoo's animal collection but also strengthen its conservation initiatives.

As part of the exchange programme, AAZP is also proposed to receive one pair of Egyptian Vultures (1.1) and one Red Junglefowl, in exchange for one pair of Hippopotamuses (1.1), two pairs of Yellow Anacondas (2.2), and two Ostriches. The exchange is expected to enhance species diversity and promote collaborative conservation efforts among Indian zoos.

## Opening of Brindavan Garden



The renovated Brindavan Garden at Arignar Anna Zoological Park is now open to visitors, offering a refreshed and aesthetically appealing recreational space within the zoo campus. The garden has been revitalized with the addition of colourful flowering plants, fresh sand filling, and a refurbished fountain, creating a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere for visitors of all age groups.

To further enhance the landscape, several ornamental and non-edible grass species, including Pearl Grass and Mexican Grass, have been planted to improve the visual appeal while ensuring compatibility with the garden environment. A diverse range of hedge plants such as *Duranta golden*, *Pisonia*, *Ixora coccinea*, *Ficus panda*, *Clerodendrum inerme*, *Murraya paniculata*, and *Nicotiana* have also been planted to create attractive green borders and enhance the overall horticultural value of the garden.

The renovated garden now serves as a serene space where visitors can relax amidst lush greenery and colourful blooms while enjoying the natural surroundings. The improved landscaping and enhanced amenities not only beautify the zoo campus but also contribute to a more enjoyable and memorable visitor experience, reinforcing the zoo's commitment to providing an engaging and nature-friendly environment.



## Sustainable Practice- Moat water treatment

Arignar Anna Zoological Park promotes sustainable zoo management, as part of it AAZP is utilizing its wet moat enclosures for fish rearing. The wet moats surrounding the Lion-tailed Macaque and Nilgiri Langur enclosures serve as productive aquatic habitats. To maintain water quality, the moat water is treated using UV filtration technology, which effectively controls algae growth and creates a healthier environment for the fishes. This eco-friendly approach enhances habitat management while supporting biodiversity within the zoo. this work is being contributed by Rotary Club of Madras under CSR.

## Renovation of Zoo roads

The zoo has laid bitumen roads connecting all loop roads and branch roads across the zoo premises. This infrastructure improvement has significantly enhanced internal connectivity, ensuring smoother movement for visitors, staff, and service vehicles. The upgraded road network also improves accessibility to animal enclosures and visitor facilities, contributing to a safer and more comfortable zoo experience. This development reflects the zoo's commitment to providing better amenities while supporting efficient management and operations.





## Rest sheds

To improve visitor comfort and experience, 15 existing rest shelters at Arignar Anna Zoological Park have been renovated, while two new rest shelters are under construction near the White Tiger Junction and the Elephant Enclosure. These facilities will provide convenient spaces for visitors to relax during their zoo visit. The shelter near the Elephant Enclosure will also offer an excellent vantage point to observe elephant bathing and feeding activities, enhancing the overall visitor experience.

## Safari Renovation

Arignar Anna Zoological Park offers visitors the unique experience of both Lion Safari and Deer Safari, providing an opportunity to observe wildlife in expansive naturalistic surroundings. To further enhance the visitor experience and improve habitat management, the lion and Deer Safari has undergone comprehensive renovation.

As part of the renovation works, several thatched shelters have been established at strategic locations throughout the safari area, providing shade and resting spaces for lions and deers. New bitumen roads are being laid to ensure smooth and comfortable safari movement. The project has also focused on ecological improvements. Existing percolation ponds have been desilted to increase water retention capacity and support groundwater recharge. In addition, new rainwater drainage channels have been constructed to facilitate efficient rainwater harvesting and improve water management within the safari landscape. Water and feed trough have been renovated.

These improvements not only enhance visitor comfort and safari operations but also contribute to habitat enrichment and sustainable environmental management. The renovated Deer Safari stands as an excellent example of collaborative conservation efforts and responsible corporate support for the conservation of animal in zoos.

# MEDICINAL PLANTS

When you walk along the shaded paths of Arignar Anna Zoological Park, your eyes are naturally drawn to the majestic tigers, elephants, and soaring birds. But if you look closer at the lush greenery framing our pathways, you will discover that our zoo is also a living museum of traditional wellness.Nestled within the Vandalur Reserve Forest, our park preserves a vital sanctuary for native South Indian medicinal plants. These plants have formed the backbone of Siddha and Ayurvedic medicine for centuries, proving that our ecosystem heals itself from the ground up.
The next time you embark on a walking safari through the park, keep an eye out for these extraordinary plant species growing right beside our main visitor trails:



**Common Name:** Neem Tree
**Botanical Name:** *Azadirachta indica* **Tamil Name:** வேம்பு
**Distribution & Habitat:** Native to the Indian subcontinent. Commonly found in tropical and semi-arid regions, growing well in dry, well-drained soils.
**Medicinal Uses:** Leaves, bark, and seeds are used for skin diseases, fever, dental care, wound healing, and as an antimicrobial agent.

**Common Name:** Purple Orchid Tree
**Botanical Name:** *Bauhinia purpurea* **Tamil Name:** மந்தாரை
**Distribution & Habitat:** Native to South and Southeast Asia; grows in tropical climates, roadsides, gardens, and open forests.
**Medicinal Uses:** Bark and flowers are used in treating ulcers, diarrhea, inflammation, and glandular swellings.





**Common Name:** Anjan Tree
**Botanical Name:** *Hardwickia binata* **Tamil Name:** ஆச்சா மரம்
**Distribution & Habitat:** Distributed in dry deciduous forests of India, especially in central and southern regions; thrives in rocky and dry soils.
**Medicinal Uses:** Bark and resin are traditionally used for wound healing, digestive disorders, and bone strength.

**Common Name:** Miracle Plant
**Botanical Name:** *Kalanchoe pinnata* **Tamil Name:** ரணகள்ளி
**Distribution & Habitat:** Widely distributed in tropical and subtropical regions; commonly grows in moist rocky areas and gardens.
**Medicinal Uses:** Leaves are used for kidney stones, wound healing, cough, burns, and anti-inflammatory treatments.





**Common Name:** Spanish Cherry Tree
**Botanical Name:** *Mimusops elengi* **Tamil Name:** மகிழ மரம்
**Distribution & Habitat:** Found in South and Southeast Asia; grows in evergreen forests and humid tropical regions.
**Medicinal Uses:** Bark, flowers, and fruits are used for dental problems, gum strengthening, diarrhea, and wound healing.

Nature's Cycle, Perfected at the Zoo

# Zoo Roots




Adding value to its sustainable initiatives, Arignar Anna Zoological Park has launched the sale of native tree seedlings raised in its own nursery and vermicompost produced at the Zoo's Solid Waste Management Unit. Marketed under the brand name "Zoo Roots", both products are made available to the public at an affordable price of ₹20. The initiative has been well received by visitors and is steadily gaining popularity, promoting environmental stewardship while supporting the Zoo's sustainability goals.



## Remembering Gauri – A Beloved Member of the Zoo Family

Gauri, the much-loved chimpanzee of Arignar Anna Zoological Park, passed away on 16 March 2026, leaving behind a deep sense of loss among zoo staff, visitors, and her chimpanzee family ( Gombe (partner) & Adithiya (Son). Gauri arrived from Singapore Zoo in 2005 and soon became one of the most lively, intelligent, and curious chimpanzees at AAZP. Her playful behaviour, expressive personality,energetic nature, obedience with visitor, compartiable partnership with Gombe, lovely mother made her a favourite among visitors and animal keepers alike.

During the COVID period, after nearly 16 years at the zoo, Gombe and Gauri alias Susi become a parent of Adithya. They both lovingly raising him with extraordinary care and affection. She was a devoted and caring mother. She patiently taught Adithiya essential life skills, social behaviours, and ways to interact with other members. Her strong bond, affection, and guidance played a vital role in the growth and development of her young ones . Her contribution as a mother will always be remembered. Watching the bond between Gauri and Adithya became a memorable experience for many zoo visitors and also for the viewers who watch her through zoo livestreaming 24/7.

She also played an important role in maintaining harmony within her family group. With her calm and affectionate nature, she emotionally balanced Gombe, her rugged companion, and nurtured him into becoming a caring father.

Gauri shared a special bond with her caretakers – Annamma, Srinivasan(Retired) and Yegabaram (Retired) – who cared for her with immense dedication and love. Her obedience, intelligence, and trust towards her keepers reflected the beautiful relationship built through years of care and companionship.Gauri was more than a chimpanzee; she was an irreplaceable member of the zoo family. Her memories will continue to live in the hearts of the zoo team, her caretakers, countless visitors, and most importantly, her family who deeply miss her presence.

# ZOO VETERINARY CORNER

## Clinical Management of Trypanosomiasis in a Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*): A Case Report

An eight-year-old male Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris*) named Sanjay in the tiger breeding enclosure presented with a history of anorexia for two days in captivity. Clinical examination revealed dullness and pyrexia via thermal imaging.

Blood samples were collected for haematological evaluation and a peripheral blood smear was taken. Microscopic examination of the stained blood smear revealed the presence of *Trypanosoma* organisms (Fig:1). Haematological investigation revealed thrombocytopenia characterised by a reduced platelet count.

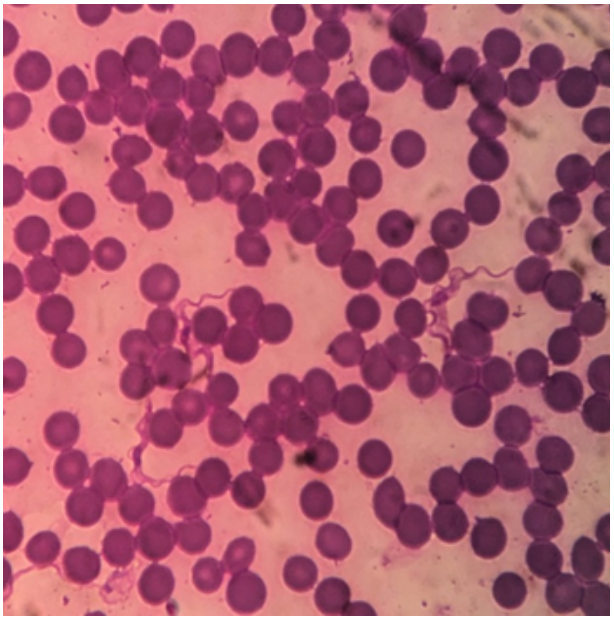


Fig:1 *Trypanosoma spp.* found in the stained blood smear



Fig:2 During the treatment of parenteral fluid administration

The therapeutic management focused on both supportive and specific anti-protozoal treatment. Supportive therapy included the administration of anti-emetics, anti-inflammatory agents and multivitamins along with parenteral fluid therapy to correct electrolyte imbalance and maintain hydration (Fig:2).

Specific therapy was initiated with diminazene aceturate (Berenil®) at a dose of 3.5 mg/kg body weight IM and doxycycline at 5 mg/kg body weight intravenously. The tiger responded favourably to the treatment protocol with gradual improvement in clinical condition.

By the second week of treatment, the animal regained normal feed intake and showed marked clinical recovery. A post-treatment haematological evaluation conducted after 12 days revealed an improvement in platelet count and the absence of detectable haemoprotozoans in a blood smear examination. This case highlights the importance of early diagnosis, haematological monitoring and prompt therapeutic intervention in the successful management of trypanosomiasis in captive wild felids.

## Management of Maggot Infestation in a Rhesus Macaque (*Macaca mulatta*)

Rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*) are highly social, cercopithecine primates predominantly found in the forests and grasslands of the northern and eastern parts of India. It is currently listed as of least concern by the IUCN.

In captivity, they typically live in groups with a well-defined, strict dominance hierarchy, so conflicts are relatively common. Social interactions are crucial for group stability. However, overcrowding, limited space, competition for food, breeding, stress and an unsuitable group composition can lead to aggressive encounters and infighting.



Fig:1 Before treatment showing open wound on the scalp region

These results in traumatic injuries such as bite wounds, lacerations, abscesses and fractures. An adult male Rhesus macaque was presented with a foul-smelling open wound infested with maggots on its scalp region.

A clinical examination revealed extensive cutaneous myiasis with necrotic tissue and larval infestation around the affected wound site. Treatment was initiated with physical removal of maggots following wound were dressed with antiseptic solution under physical restraint. Necrotic tissue was carefully debrided from the wound to promote healing and prevent further tissue damage.

Treatment initiated with parenteral antibiotics (Enrofloxacin) at the dose of 7.5mg/kg body weight S/C, anti-inflammatory (meloxicam) 0.3mg/kg body weight I/M and anti-parasitic medication (ivermectin) at dose rate of 0.2mg/kg body weight S/C. Course of oral antibiotics enrofloxacin (Endropet) at the dose rate of 5mg/kg body weight for 5 days was continued through feed to prevent secondary bacterial infection. Topical maggoticidal spray was applied regularly to prevent larval infestation at the wound site. The animal was closely monitored throughout the treatment period for wound healing. Progressive improvement in the wound was observed within a few days of treatment. This included a reduction in inflammation, the absence of maggot infestation and the formation of healthy granulation tissue. Complete wound recovery was achieved within 15 days. This case emphasises the significance of early intervention, appropriate wound care management and integrated therapeutic approaches for the effective treatment of myiasis in captive non-human primates.



Fig:2 After treatment shows complete wound healing

# ZOO SCHOOL

## Zoo Venture

Arignar Anna Zoological Park's Zoo Venture Programme, an exclusive educational initiative for Government School students, is being successfully conducted every Monday. Since its inception in July 2025, the programme has witnessed enthusiastic participation from 39 schools, benefiting around 2,000 students and 150 teachers during the academic year (2025-2026). The programme has been widely appreciated by students, teachers, and parents for its engaging activities and its role in creating awareness about wildlife, biodiversity, and environmental conservation among young learners. The positive response received highlights the programme's effectiveness in fostering environmental responsibility and conservation-minded attitudes among students. To participate in zoo venture programme, schools to register online at https://aazp.in/zoo-venture/









## Forest Range Officer trainees - AAZP visit

Forest Range Officer trainees from the Kundal Forest Academy, Maharashtra, visited Arignar Anna Zoological Park on 27.01.2026 as part of their field training programme. They were introduced to various aspects of zoo management, including animal care, conservation breeding, veterinary care, enrichment, visitor management, and conservation education, gaining valuable insights into the role of zoos in wildlife conservation.





## Zoo Outreach Programme

As the academic year drew to a close and schools began preparations for annual examinations, many institutions were unable to organize educational excursions for their students. To ensure that such students could still benefit from wildlife education. Arignar Anna Zoological Park conducted an Online Outreach Programme on 19th and 20th March 2026. Around 100 schools participated in the interactive virtual session, which included wildlife education and an educational documentary screening, successfully bringing the zoo experience to classrooms.



## World Wetland Day awareness campaign





AAZP conducted a field session for students, highlighting the importance of wetlands and their vital role in biodiversity conservation. Students actively participated in role-play activities and explored information from books to learn about wetland ecosystems, their rich biodiversity, and the need for their protection. The session enhanced their understanding of the ecological significance of wetlands and the importance of conserving these valuable habitats.

## Voting Awareness Campaign

As the State Elections approach, a voting awareness campaign on the theme “Your Vote, Your Voice“ was conducted at the zoo campus by 20 student volunteers from the SRM Institute of Science and Technology.

A mock voting demonstration was organized to educate visitors on the voting process and the importance of electoral participation. Around 300 visitors took part in the programme, which successfully encouraged voter awareness, especially among young and first-time voters





## Ex-situ conservation updates

A total of 39 II B.Sc. Zoology students from Madras Christian College participated in a knowledge enhancement programme at Arignar Anna Zoological Park on animal behaviour and habits in captivity. The programme provided valuable insights into captive animal management through field observations and interactive sessions.



## Upgrading zoo signage boards














The zoo has upgraded its signage and information boards across various exhibits to enhance visitor experience and strengthen educational outreach. The newly installed displays provide clear, engaging, and updated information on the animals, their habitats, conservation status, and unique biological characteristics. QR codes have also been incorporated, enabling visitors to access additional information about the animals and listen to their calls. These interactive features help visitors gain a deeper understanding of wildlife, biodiversity, and the importance of conservation.

## Zoo keepers talk



To enhance visitor engagement and learning, Zoo Keeper Interactive Sessions are conducted on weekends, holidays, and other high-visitation days. During these sessions, visitors have the opportunity to interact directly with animal keepers, who share insights into animal behaviour, feeding habits, enrichment activities, and daily care routines.



These interactions generate significant interest among visitors, providing them with a deeper understanding of the animals and the dedicated efforts involved in their welfare and conservation.

**AAZP is the only zoo in the world that livestream 15 animal enclosures 24 x7 at free of charge**

**https://livestreaming.aazp.in/**

# ZOO KEEPERS CORNER



Tmt. M. Lakshmi has devoted 32 years of dedicated service to animal care and management. Over the years, she has been entrusted with the care of several species, including kangaroos, jaguars, and squirrels. She has also served in the Vedanthangal Aviary, where she contributed to the maintenance and welfare of a variety of bird species. Her ability to adapt to different animal groups and exhibit requirements has made her a valuable member of the zoo's animal care team.

For the past 19 years, Tmt. M. Lakshmi has been serving in the Nocturnal Animal House, where she has played a vital role in the daily management and welfare of nocturnal species. Her responsibilities include monitoring animal health and behaviour, ensuring proper nutrition, enclosure maintenance, supporting veterinary care and environmental enrichment activities. Her patience, dedication, and keen observational skills have contributed significantly to the successful care and upkeep of these specialized animals."

She is ably supported by Keeper Mr. E. Dhakshan, and together they ensure the smooth functioning of the Nocturnal Animal House by adhering to strict husbandry protocols, closely monitoring animal behaviour, and providing timely care and management. Their coordinated efforts help create a safe, healthy, and enriching environment that promotes the well-being of the animals under their care.

Tmt. M. Lakshmi's decades of selfless service, meticulous work ethic, and deep affection for wildlife exemplify the dedication of zoo professionals who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Her remarkable career serves as an inspiration to fellow zoo staff and aspiring wildlife caretakers, reflecting a lifelong commitment to animal welfare, conservation, and excellence in zoo management.



# IDENTIFY Who's tail



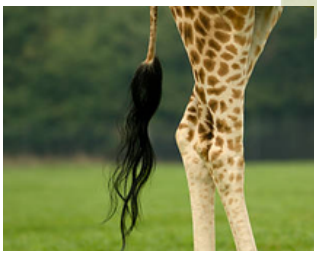
My tail carries hollow quills that rattle.
I use the sound to warn predators.



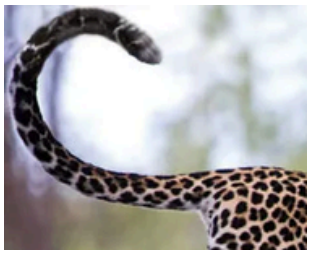
My powerful tail helps me swim.
It can propel me quickly through water.



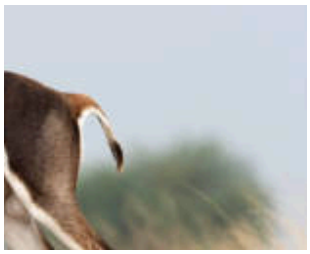
My tail helps me stand upright
while keeping watch. I live in groups.



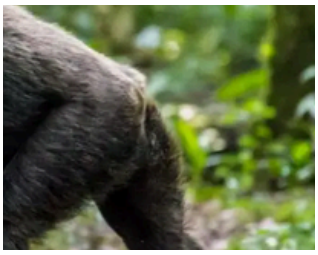
My tail is long with a black tuft.
I use it to swat flies high above the ground.



My long tail helps me balance on trees.
My body has rosettes.



My tail is short with a dark underside.
I flick it when alarmed.



I don't have a tail.
I am an ape, not a monkey.



My tail is almost as long as my body.
It helps me balance while jumping.

# Match the right



Compound eyes with thousands of lenses



Sharp eyesight for spotting prey from great distances



Excellent night vision



Long eyelashes protect the eyes



Spots carcasses from high in the sky



Hunts effectively during dawn and dusk

# Director office renovation











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