

# ZOO NEWSLETTER

*Arignar Anna Zoological Park*



## THE ZOO STORY

**VOL III , EDITION 01**

# DIRECTOR'S CORNER

I am very happy and proud to present before you our Zoo Newsletter after a short break. This marks a fresh beginning, and we are excited to present a more engaging and informative version, now released quarterly. A key highlight is the introduction of a dedicated Student Activity Corner, designed to spark curiosity through puzzles, quizzes, and wildlife-themed challenges.

AAZP, popularly known as Vandalur Zoo holds a unique place in people's hearts. This deep bond initiated during days of Madras Zoo, still continues at Vandalur Zoo, especially during Pongal when families and friends visit zoo to celebrate together. Actually it is a celebration of nature with people. This edition highlights the crowd management efforts made to ensure a safe and pleasant pongal experience at Zoo.

Welfare of our animals remains our top priority. With the onset of summer, special climate management practices are in place for their comfort and health.

Various enclosure enrichment activities are being planned to be taken up immediately. Special effort is being made to provide best possible environment and diet for our caged friends.

Our veterinary wing continues to provide the best care for our animals. The zoo education wing actively connects people with wildlife through various events focusing to inspire and build a more informed and compassionate generation .

We are also planning to provide better experience for our visitors at Zoo. Plan is in place to improve visitor amenities and to create better learning experience for our guests.

With the continuous efforts of our dedicated team, I am sure that Arignar Anna Zoological Park will continue to uphold excellence and will be in the path towards becoming a leading zoo at global level.

## DIRECTOR

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

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# *The Story of Vandalur Zoo Through Time*

The Arignar Anna Zoological Park, commonly known as Vandalur Zoo, holds the distinction of being India's first public zoo. Established in 1855 as the Madras Zoo within the Government Museum premises in Chennai, it was initiated by Dr. Edward Balfour (Fig-1) a distinguished surgeon the then director of the museum. Dr. Balfour persuaded the Nawab of the Carnatic to donate his private animal collection, laying the foundation for the zoo's inception on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1855.



Fig 1

The Madras Zoo, originally started in the Government museum, was shifted to People's Park (Fig 2&3) in 1860 due to an increasing number of species. During the centenary celebration in 1960, a statue of Gorilla was installed in old zoo and later its brought to new location at Vandalur (Fig-4). The building exhibiting the carnivores enclosures where reconstructed in AAZP ( Fig -5)

In 1873, the Central Railway Station was built nearby. The zoo, under Madras Corporation, had to be relocated as the station expanded, and steam engines were affecting animal health. 1950s, madras zoo was referred as 'Uyir College' which means 'College of Live animals'.



Fig 2



Fig 3

However, with urbanization leading to space constraints and environmental concerns, the Government of Tamil Nadu decided in 1979 to move the zoo to a more suitable location. The government formed the Ruben Committee to identify a new site. Among options like Guindy Park, Pallikaranai Lake, and Nanmangalam RF, Vandalur Reserve Forest was selected, which is scrub jungle with an extensive efforts by local residents and volunteers it transform it into a lush evergreen forest, which is followed constructed of enclosures for zoo animals. The new zoo was inaugurated on July 24, 1985, by then Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran.

Today, the Arignar Anna Zoological Park spans over 602 hectares, 1600 animals across about 130 species. The park has secured the top ranking under the "Large Zoo" category in India's First Management Effectiveness Evaluation for Zoos, conducted by the Central Zoo Authority, New Delhi in 2022.

Under conservation breeding programme, the park serves as a co-ordinating zoo for Lion tailed macaque and Nilgiri langur and participating zoo for Indian Gaur, Royal Bengal Tiger, Grizzled giant squirrel and Wild dog. The Park has state-of-art veterinary hospital. The park pioneers in its conservation education programmes .



Fig 4

The Gorilla statue, installed during the centenary celebrations in the 1960s, has stood at Vandalur Zoo ever since, greeting visitors as they arrive.

The old model of the carnivores' enclosure from the Madras Zoo has been recreated with the same design at Vandalur. According to word of mouth, the bricks were sourced from the original Madras Corporation Zoo, and this structure now serves as the Doddabetta shop.



Fig 5



# *Pongal in the Wild: A Traditional Celebration at Vandalur Zoo*

For many years, Arignar Anna Zoological Park has been a favorite spot for families and friends to enjoy the Pongal holidays together. During the week of pongal around a lakh of people visit vandalur zoo. The zoo continues to attract visitors seeking a refreshing outdoor experience, where they can connect with nature and share meaningful moments with friends and family

In expectation of increased footfall, the zoo management, in coordination with the relevant line departments, the park has made extensive arrangements to ensure the comfort and convenience of all visitors. The arrangements includes

- Visitors were encouraged to book tickets through a digital platform, with free Wi-Fi access provided by zoo for their convenience. Additionally, separate counters were also available.
- A separate vehicle parking areas for two-wheelers and heavy motor vehicles were established, which were efficiently utilized by over 8000 vehicles. Continuous free shuttle services were also provided from the parking area to the zoo entrance.
- Around 6000 children under 8 years were provided with wrist tags for their safety and for easy identification, along with a parent contact details.
- Additional 15 Nos. RO water points, 24 Nos. of bio-toilets and refreshment outlets (Aavin) were set up.



- Four medical help desks, along with ambulance facilities, four help desks, and one fire engine, were strategically placed, offered assistance to over 5,000 visitors
- Visitor movement was monitored through CCTV system from the control room and proper navigation instructions were provided to guide the crowd
- A total of 90 Nos. of uniformed forest staff, 150 Nos. of police personnel, and 50 NCC students were deployed for crowd management and visitor assistance.
- Information and navigation boards were installed at key locations across the zoo, further enhancing the visitor experience.
- The zoo also established a separate exit gate for the parking area and to designated bus stop to facilitate convenient transportation.

During pongal week, the park attracted around 80,000 visitors this year.

# Summer

## Management in Vandalur Zoo

**Exclusive Special  
arrangements**



### SUMMER MANAGEMENT IN ZOO

To beat the heat, carnivores were given frozen meat, while primates and bears were treated to fruits frozen in ice cubes. Despite the soaring temperatures, visitors enjoyed frequent sightings of butterflies in the Butterfly Park, thanks to the park's proactive measures, including the use of foggers, misters, and providing adequate shade for host and nectar plants.

Cervids, both in the zoo and safari, were provided extra shade, water, and specialized feeds, ensuring they stayed hydrated and cool. Reptiles were given additional haul-outs to help them regulate their body temperature. The summer management plan was executed across the park, with specific measures for different species. All deer enclosures received new thatched sheds, while the elephants were given showers and allowed to wallow twice a day for heat relief. Sprinklers were installed in the enclosures of ostriches, terrestrial birds, zebras, and giraffes, as well as in the walk-through aviary, helping to cool down the animals during the hottest parts of the day.

The Serpentarium was equipped with mud mounds and multi-tiered mud pots to provide varying temperatures, crucial for the reptiles' digestion, moulting, and reproduction processes. Additionally, special dietary arrangements were made for primates, bears, and elephants to help them manage the heat more comfortably. Shade nets were also installed in aviaries, as well as in the enclosures of ostriches and white tigers, to shield them from the harsh sunlight. Through these well-planned measures, the park continues to excel in managing the summer heat while ensuring the health and comfort of its diverse residents.

Arignar Anna Zoological Park has implemented a unique and innovative summer management plan to ensure the well-being of its mammals, birds, and reptiles during the extreme heat.

All the animals were provided with sufficient shade and adequate water. Shade net were provided at required places to beat the penetration of direct sunlight in the enclosures namely White Tiger, Exotic birds, Water and terrestrial bird aviary.



Mega herbivores animals Rhinoceros, Elephant, Hippopotamas were provided with water showers or with sprinklers. Extra thatched sheds were provided well in advance of summer.

For most of the bird enclosures gunny bags were tied and sprayed with cool water during hot hours of the day, this reduced the temperature inside the enclosure drastically.



# Synchronized Bird Census

Arignar Anna Zoological Park conducted a synchronized bird census covering both wetland and terrestrial birds, including species active during both day and night.

The wetland bird census was held on March 8 and 9, 2025, with Otteri Lake serving as an ideal site due to its rich biodiversity and suitable wetland habitat. The terrestrial bird census took place on March 15 and 16, 2025, with surveys conducted along four mapped routes to ensure comprehensive coverage across the zoo.

A total of 20 volunteers from the Madras Naturalists Society actively participated in the census, contributing their expertise and enthusiasm to the fieldwork. For the bird census, both the direct and point count methods were employed to record the presence and abundance of bird species along the designated routes.

The collected census data will be analyzed and published through the department.





# ZOO VETERINARY CORNER

## **Surgical Excision of an Extensive Fibroma in a Royal Bengal Tiger**

9 year old Male Tiger, was suffering with a tumorous growth on the right lateral neck. The tumour grew up from peanut size to more than a size of tennis ball over a span of 12 months.

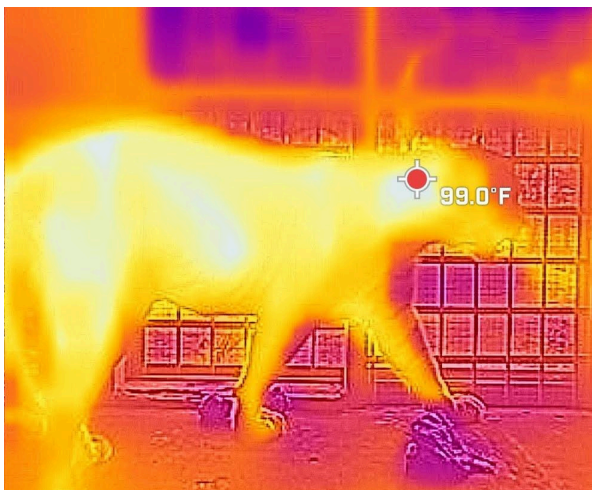
As animal suffered from hemoprotozoan diseases and acute renal failure, the animal was unable to be operated for tumour. The tumour mass was surgically excised under gas anesthesia. Multiple perfusing blood vessels of the tumour were cauterized using a vessel sealer for effectively arrest bleeding. Post operatively the Tiger was continuously monitored until it's complete recovery. The tiger was found brisk and more agile on very next day with regular feed intake. Post-operative healing assessment was monitored with the help of thermal imaging camera. The tumour mass weighed around 1.4kg and on histopathological investigation, it is diagnosed as Fibroma, a benign tumour. The surgical wound healed up completely and animal recovered uneventfully on 12th day of procedure.



Tiger with tumorous growth



Post-operative day 1, after excision of tumour



Post operative assessment of wound healing using thermal imaging camera.

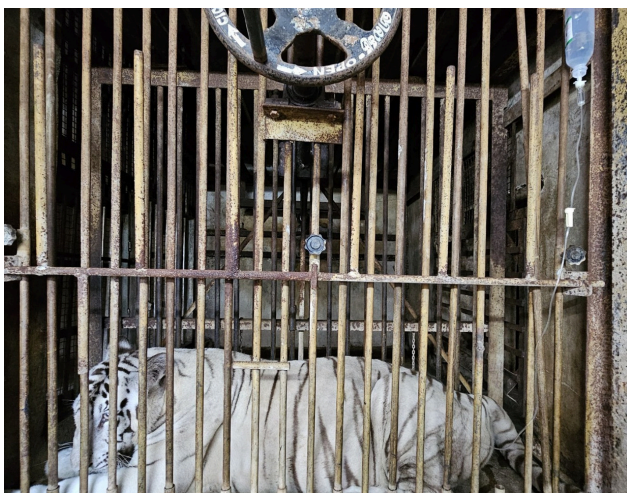


## Management of Chronic Kidney Disease in a Senile Tigress

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) involves the loss of functional renal tissue due to prolonged structural and functional changes in the kidney, hindering its ability to filter waste and excess fluid from the blood. The damage to the kidneys can potentially lead to kidney failure or end-stage renal disease. The prevalence increases with advancing age and can affect up to 10% of canine and 60% of feline geriatric populations.

Anu, a 19-year-old Bengal tigress (*Panthera tigris tigris*) housed at Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Vandalur, had reduced appetite, lethargy and occasional vomiting. Given her geriatric status, chronic degenerative conditions were suspected. Haematological and serum biochemistry profiling indicated elevated Symmetric dimethylarginine (SDMA) and creatinine levels, two biomarkers of kidney function. Haemoprotozoan screening by PCR was found to be negative. Ultrasonography revealed irregular renal contour with hyperechoic kidney cortex and heterogenous, hyperechoic parenchyma interspaced with hypoechoic nodular areas in the grossly enlarged liver. Urinalysis indicated a low specific gravity; all supporting the diagnosis of chronic kidney disease.

Prompt therapeutic interventions were initiated, including parenteral fluid therapy to maintain the hydration status and flush out the kidneys (diuresis), oral synbiotics for enteric dialysis, parenteral gastroprotectants and multivitamins, along with dietary modifications. Animal regained its appetite within a week of treatment. Periodic hematology and serum biochemistry profiling was done to assess the response to treatment. Within a month of treatment, the frequency of fluid therapy using Ringer's lactate was reduced as the animal's kidney function improved with values in normal range. Though Anu was stabilized, CKD is a progressive disorder involving permanent impairment of kidney function. So, the affected animal should be maintained in lifelong care with appropriate dietary plans and supportive medications.



Parenteral Fluid Therapy being administered in physical restraint



Abdominal Ultrasonography being done in physical restraint

## Acute Gastritis and Intervention Protocol in an Asiatic Lion

Acute gastritis in Asiatic lions (*Panthera leo persica*) refers to inflammation of the stomach lining. It can result in symptoms such as vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, loss of appetite. Similar to other carnivores, it can be caused by various factors such as bacterial infection (e.g., *Helicobacter pylori*), viral infection, dietary factors, toxins or poisoning, parasites and physical injury .

A male Asiatic lion named Sher- yar, aged 4 years, housed at Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur, was reported with symptoms including vomiting diarrhea, dullness and depression. Intervention protocols include collecting blood in EDTA for a complete blood count, and performing Serum Biochemistry with SDMA which indicates elevated BUN (Blood urea nitrogen) and Creatinine values. The temperature (102.2 F) was recorded using infrared thermal imaging camera. Faecal analysis was conducted to check for parasitic infections. Supportive care involves dietary adjustments with easily digestible foods along with the administration of probiotics and antacids to neutralize stomach acid and encourage a healthy gut flora balance. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs were used along with broad spectrum antibiotics. Proton pump inhibitors were administered to reduce stomach acid production and protect the stomach lining. Continuous monitoring was carried out regularly checking vital signs, appetite and stool consistency to assess recovery through ensuring there were no remaining signs of infection or inflammation. Environmental stress reduction was also emphasized, providing the lion with a quiet, low stress environment. Environmental enrichment was implemented to reduce stress and boredom, ensuring both physical and psychological well being through which the lion made a full recovery.

Prevention methods include providing a consistent diet to ensure the lion receives nutritionally balanced food that is fresh and free from contaminants to reduce the risk of bacterial contamination and minimizes the stress through effective stress-reduction strategies.



Collection of blood from lateral coccygeal vein



Partially digested meat noticed from vomition



# ZOO SCHOOL

## World Wildlife Day

To celebrate World Wildlife Day 2025, AAZP School, in collaboration with NSS volunteers from Hindustan College of Engineering, organized a variety of engaging activities and events for visitors. To mark the occasion and attract more participants, the park hosted various events including animal sketching, hand-print pledges to support wildlife conservation, street plays, and theme-based games, all followed by informative awareness programs on 02.03.2025.

The event witnessed active participation from around 1,000 visitors, making it a memorable day filled with learning, creativity, and a shared commitment to wildlife conservation.



Animal sketching event for below 8 yrs



Awareness campaign team - Volunteers





**Glimpse of World Wildlife Day events in AAZP**



## Bird Workshop for postal department



In a collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Postal Circle, Arignar Anna Zoological Park's Zoo School hosted a special pre-event in anticipation of the State-Level Philatelic Exhibition (TANAPEX 2025). As part of this initiative, a bird-watching session was organized, providing an exciting opportunity to the staff members of postal department to explore the rich avian diversity of the park. Around 20 members from Post department participated in the event on 25.1.2025



## Corporate awareness programme

As part of Corporate awareness programme, 40 female employees from LUCAS TVS, have attended environmental awareness programme on 10.03.2025. The talk session focus on the theme “mission life” and importance of conservation of wildlife and roles of zoo followed by field trip on 12.3.2025.



**The Planet's Future is in Our Hands – Act Wisely!**

**- Zooschool, AAZP**



# Training programmes in AAZP



**TNFD IFS trainees training programme hosted by Deputy Director, AAZP on 4.1.2025**



**After the outbreak, H1N1 Virus awareness programme for all animal care staff on 6.1.2025**



**Trainees from NBA, Chennai visited on 09.01.2025**



**SFS trainees- 38<sup>th</sup> batch training programme held on 10.2.2025**



**Judical Officer trainees training programme on 24.02.2025**



**FRO trainees from TNFA visited on 03.04.2025**



# CSR in AAZP

## CSR - AVNL



In a significant step towards improving the facilities for visitors, Arignar Anna Zoological Park has entered into a collaboration with Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVNL) Avadi under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on 27th January 2025, marking the commencement of construction of two toilets. The toilets will be constructed at two locations one in zoo parking area and other behind safari boarding point.

## CSR - SUN TV NETWORK

Arignar Anna Zoological Park is upgrading its visitor facilities by constructing six new toilets under CSR. This includes two large-sized toilets covering an area of 1,055 sq ft, two toilets in an area of 811 sq ft, two differently abled friendly toilets. Furthermore, two existing toilets will be renovated. The new facilities will be accessible to differently-able persons and will also include a mother feeding room, ensuring that a large number of visitors can comfortably use the amenities designed as per the expectation of visitors. The construction and renovation of toilets will be funded by Sun TV Network, with the building construction work being carried out by Sulabh International Social Service organization

On 12.02.2025, the park held an earth-worship ceremony for the toilet construction, which was attended by APCCF & Director Thiru. Ashish Kumar Srivastava I.F.S., Deputy Director Dr. H. Dileep Kumar I.F.S., Assistant Director P. Manikanda Prabhu, along with senior forest officers and Hony. Controller Jagdish Prasad Uniyal from Sulabh International Social Service Organization.





## CSR - LUCAS TVS

As part of its CSR initiative, Lucas – TVS has handed over two feed distribution vehicles to Arignar Anna Zoological Park. During this event, Thiru.K.S.V Babu President, Auto Motors and Electrification, Lucas TVS handed over the vehicles and the MOU documents to Dr. H. Dileep Kumar I.F.S, Deputy Director, AAZP. The occasion was graced by Thiru N.R. Mani, Corporate Head of IR, Thiru A.K. Rajakumar, Plant Head of MM Nagar from Lucas TVS, and Thiru P. Manikanda Prabhu, Assistant Director of AAZP, along with other senior officers from both AAZP and Lucas TVS.



**We thank our valuable animal adopters — 112 individuals this quarter. Their generous contributions helped us to provide special care for the zoo animals. Special thanks to DCKAP (Rhino enclosure adopter for one year) and Actor Sivakarthiskeyan for adopting Tiger 'Yuga' and Lion 'Sheryar' for three months.**

### *Peacock: A Symbol of Beauty and Balance in Nature*

*The peacock, with its vibrant feathers and majestic dance, is not just a bird—it's a symbol of grace, culture, and biodiversity. Often seen as a sign of beauty and pride, this magnificent creature plays an important role in our ecosystem by controlling pests and maintaining a healthy balance in nature.*





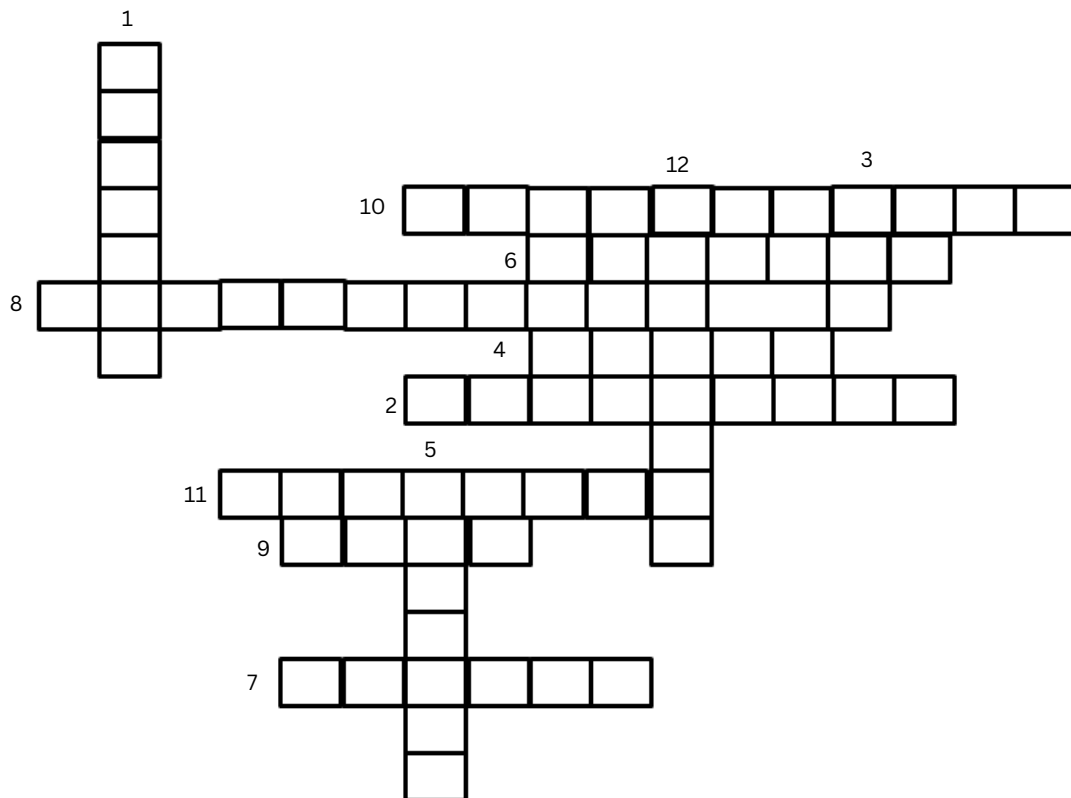
# STUDENT'S CORNER

## Track the Facts



1. Which animal can hold its breath the longest underwater?  
a) Sperm whale b) Sea Turtle c) Cuvier's beaked whale d) Dolphin
2. Which animal's fingerprints are almost identical to humans?  
a) Orangutan b) Gorilla c) Koala d) Chimpanzee
3. Which animal has the longest migration of any known animal on Earth?  
a) Monarch Butterfly b) Humpback Whale c) Arctic Tern d) Elephant
4. Which animal has the longest lifespan?  
a) Blue Whale b) Galápagos Tortoise c) Glass sponge d) Green Sea Turtle
5. Which is the smallest animal on the planet  
a) Shrew mole b) Bumblebee Bat c) Pygmy Shrew d) Humming bird
6. Which animal is known for its ability to regenerate lost limbs?  
a) Starfish b) Elephant c) Lion d) Kangaroo
7. What is the primary purpose of a bird's colorful feathers?  
a) To help with flight b) To attract a mate c) To keep warm d) To blend in with the environment
8. Which animal is capable of producing its own light?  
a) Firefly b) Jellyfish c) Squid d) All of the above
9. Which animal sweat is pink in colour?  
a) Seal b) Hippopotamus c) Otter d) Tiger
10. Which animal's heart is located in its head?  
a) Octopus b) Shrimp c) Giraffe d) Butterfly
11. Which land animal has the largest eyes?  
a) Giraffe b) Elephant c) Ostrich d) Horse
12. Which mammal is known to have the most powerful bite force?  
a) Lion b) Grizzly Bear c) Hippopotamus d) Tiger
13. Which animal has blue blood due to the presence of copper instead of iron?  
a) Starfish b) Octopus c) Seahorse d) Dolphin
14. What's the only known animal that can survive in space?  
a) Cockroach b) Tardigrade c) Ant d) Jellyfish
15. Which animal has cube-shaped poop?  
a) Kangaroo b) Koala c) Wombat d) Opossum

# Grid of the wild - Fauna Facts



## Down

1. Animal known for playing dead to avoid predators

3 Mammal that can fly

5. This ape can learn sign language

12. Rolls into a ball for protection

## Across

2. Animal whose tongue is longer than its body

4. Big cat that enjoys swimming

6. Fastest animal on land

7. The fastest bird in flight

8. Bird that fly backwards

9. Smart black bird known for using tools

10. Largest sea turtle

11. Marsupial that carries its young in a pouch

## 🐾 Track the Facts - Answer Key

1. Cuvier's beaked whale can hold its breath more than 3 hours
2. koalas have fingerprints that are remarkably similar to humans
3. Arctic tern travels over 70, 000km from Arctic to Antarctic region
4. Glass sponge found in Antarctic waters, can live for thousands of years, possibly reaching 15,000 year
5. Bumblebee bat weight 1.5-2 grams length 2.9-3.3 cm
6. The primary purpose of a bird's colorful feathers is to attract a mate through visual displays
7. Starfish can regenerate its lost limbs
8. All the animals can produce light
9. Hippopotamus sweat is in pink colour
10. A shrimp's heart is located in its head
11. Ostrich eye is bigger than its brain
12. Hippopotamus can crush bones with a bite force of over 1,800 PSI
13. Octopus blood contain haemocyanin which is colourless when combine with oxygen it get blue colour.
14. Tardigrade only organism that survive and reproduce in space
15. Wombats are the only animals known to produce cube-shaped feces.



# Spot out 7 differences



Dear Students,

If you have any query regarding Zoo and its animals. Please write to us at [aazpzooschool@gmail.com](mailto:aazpzooschool@gmail.com). You can also send us your articles/paintings/stories on nature/wildlife, certified by your school. Selected articles will be published and rewarded with a visit to the Zoo.



Scan to adopt zoo  
animals

SUPPORT TO CONSERVE  
WILDLIFE



**Im Safe  
@AAZP**



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Application

**Arignar Anna Zoological Park**

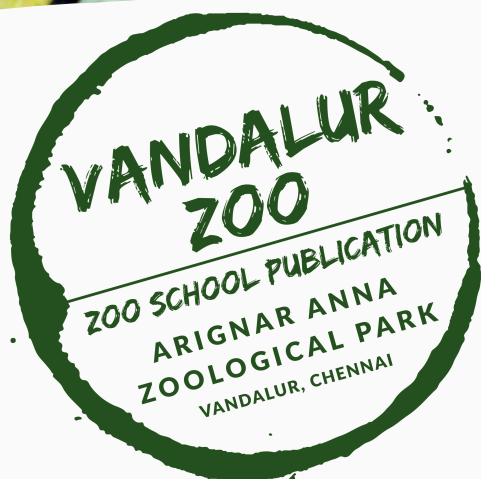
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