

## ➤ FEEDING OF ZOO ANIMALS

In feeding captive animals, the food habits of each species must be considered. Some are herbivores e.g. Gorillas, Rhinoceros, Donkeys etc. Yet some are insectivorous feeding primarily on insects and worms e.g. some birds, monitor lizards etc.

For a successful management of captive animals, it is important to feed each species with their particular food items.

These animals hardly have problem locating their food or prey if let alone in the wild. The experience however is that when already captured from the forest and kept in Zoos, is that when already captured from the forest and inability to get all their normal varieties. In fact, there have been cases of Zoo managers refusing acceptance of some species in Zoos because of the fear of lack of food items they needed for survival. This same reason have accounted for the death of some Zoo collections.

Consider the case of pangolin, an animal whose life and growth depend mainly on insect and worms. Its survival propensity is zero in captivity. Another dimension of feeding problem common to zoo inmates in Africa is the inability to identify all the food varieties particularly the vegetation. At time the weather changes, compound the problem during the dry seasons some grasses and biological growth. The imbalances in diets have been observed a great factor against captive animals, physical and biological growth. The only solution lies in providing substitute food varieties capable of enriching their diets. E.g. boiled eggs, vebrages, boiled beans and meat.

## ➤ THE CONCEPT OF FEEDING REGIME

Feeding regime involves drawing up a feeding time table for different Zoo species. The quantity and quality of food ration are worked out. Each meal will be weighed depending on the digestive system, body size and weight of each species. The food ration need be served to individual animal since there could be possible domination by older or more powerful members during scrambles at food times if species are served together in their group. Feeding of captive animal may not be compared with feeding animals in free wild. The Zoo inmates feeding is regulated while those in the wild feed as often as the opportunities abound. However, the inmates have their food supplies without any efforts of their own while those in the wild roam and hunt fending for themselves. Probably they may consume more since they are at liberty to walk off excesses.

A typical example of feeding regime is that of University of Ibadan zoo were all carnivores are fed every other day by 10am or 11.30am. They are fed every other day by 10am or 11.30am, they are fed with weighed cow, goat or ram meat.

The primates feed daily at 10a.m and reptiles once per week etc. The food must be weighed based on individual animal consumption abilities.

## ➤ FOOD SOURCES AND STORAGE

Zoos must make adequate arrangement such that animal foods should be available as at the feeding hours. The food items could be contracted out by giving orders to animal food contractors at quoted prizes and such supplies may be received on weekly basis.

In some zoos, farmland are acquired for planting of various food items such as fruits, yams and rearing of goats for carnivores feeding. The problem usually associated with the feeding of animals in captivity is that of wastage generally.

Food ordered and supplied need be kept in the central food store. The experience at times is that much waste may be recorded than the actual quantity served the animals. The reasons being (1) faulty storage system (2) perishable items such as vegetables and fruits remaining in store for many days. Not many zoos can afford effective cooling and preservation system. Electricity power failure is a major threat where standby generators are lacking. Another general problem of feeding could be finance. This is possible where and when financial decisions are left in the hand of people of low knowledge of zoo management and wildlife conservation. They see no strong reason why much money should be committed to feeding animals. At times the contractors bills are not paid and hence stoppage of supplies. Also, general bureaucratic bottlenecks – in cases of Zoos run under Civil Service setting.

### ➤ **ZOO SANITATION –**

Zoo sanitation simply describes management activities that keep the Zoo hygienic and free of germs.

#### - **Importance of Zoo Sanitation:**

- To keep zoo animal healthy
- To prevent disease outbreak within the zoo
- It ultimately keeps zoo animal alive
- It safe cost of treating sick animals
- It also prevents visitors, zoo keepers and administrators from being infected with transmissible pathogens (Zoonosis).
- Regular weeding of zoo premises also prevents visitors, zoo keepers and administrators from being injured from deadly/injurious animate and inanimate objects such as scorpions, poisonous snakes and broken bottles etc.

#### - **Important Zoo Sanitation Activities includes:**

- Regular cleaning of zoo animal pen and cages
- Proper disposal of zoo animal droppings
- Regular weeding of zoo premises
- Disinfection of zoo premises and surrounding
- Removal of injurious inanimate objects from the zoo premises
- Proper placement of inmate feed in pens away from droppings