

Advisory - Banning Elephants from Zoo collections

Time and again, it has been brought to the notice of this Authority that the housekeeping of elephants in zoos leaves a lot to be desired, causing trauma to the animal. Elephant is a large megaherbivore, which is free ranging, cruising over long distances. There are very few zoos in the country, which have adequate space to permit free movement of elephants, as a result of which they are kept chained for long hours, causing stress to the animal. Further, more often than not, such captive elephants in zoos hardly breed. There are instances of zoo elephants coming in 'Musth' causing serious threats to visitors. The zoo management also has tremendous financial liability for the day-to-day maintenance/ housekeeping of elephants. There is very little scope for ex-situ linkage in the context of zoo elephants in India.

Considering the above, the following directives are issued:

- (i) Elephants are banned from zoo collections throughout the country with immediate effect. All captive elephants in zoos should be rehabilitated in elephant camps/ rehabilitation camps/ facilities available with the forest department at National Parks/ Wildlife Sanctuaries/ Tiger Reserves for departmental use.
- (ii) The guidelines/ precautions issued by this Authority for transporting zoo animals, time and again, should be strictly followed. The programme for transporting elephants should be drawn up in consultation with the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State, under whose supervisory control the said process should be conducted.
- (iii) The Central Zoo Authority would bear the cost for transportation of elephants in this regard, based on a proposal received through the Chief Wildlife Warden of the State.

* Issued to the Chief Wild Life Wardens of all States/ UTs vide Central Zoo Authority Letter No. 7-5/2006-CZA (Vol.II) dated 7th November, 2009.