

Veterinary role in wildlife rescue and Rehabilitation

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ABSTRACT

Wildlife plays a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance and biodiversity. However, increasing human-wildlife interaction, habitat loss, and environmental changes have led to the emergence and spread of several diseases affecting wildlife, domestic animals, and humans. Veterinary professionals play an essential role in wildlife conservation, health monitoring, disease diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of zoonotic diseases. They are also involved in wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, population management, and research. Through the One Health approach, veterinarians help in controlling diseases that can spread between wildlife, livestock, and humans, thereby protecting public health and biodiversity. Effective collaboration between veterinarians, wildlife biologists, and conservation authorities is necessary for sustainable wildlife management and ecosystem stability.

INTRODUCTION

India is home to a rich and diverse wildlife population, with numerous protected areas such as national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and tiger reserves. These regions play a crucial role in conserving endangered species and maintaining the ecological balance. However, the presence of wildlife close to human settlements often leads to conflicts and challenges that need to be addressed. Wildlife veterinarians play a vital role in both conservation efforts and mitigating human-wildlife conflict in India. They are responsible for the health and well-being of wild animals, both in the wild and captivity. They also work to mitigate the negative impacts of human-wildlife conflict on both humans and wildlife. In this article, we will explore the various responsibilities and tasks undertaken by wildlife veterinarians in protected wildlife regions.

- safe and appropriate to the environmental, economic and cultural context.
- It is essential to follow ethical best practices regarding local communities, rightsholders, and animal welfare.

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

Wildlife rehabilitation is the treatment and subsequent release of injured wildlife. This ranges from small-scale operations of individuals, working from their homes, usually with a veterinarian, to professionally staffed wildlife hospitals. Other than the welfare of the injured animal, wildlife rehabilitation also provides opportunities to monitor wildlife health, contaminant loads, and disease prevalence.

Wildlife rehabilitation contributed immensely to conservation medicine, an interdisciplinary field that recognizes and integrates the links between human health, wildlife health, and ecosystem health. Furthermore, wildlife rehabilitation benefits from a rapidly expanding knowledge base and ever-increasing professional standards. Generally, by law, free-ranging native wildlife is a natural resource that belongs to the public. Therefore, wildlife rehabilitation is regulated by state, provincial, and federal wildlife agencies. Treating injured wildlife often focuses on common and widespread species, and human-wildlife interactions are typically the leading cause of admission.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

1. Project Tiger (1973)

Launched to protect the declining population of tigers in India.

WILDLIFE DISEASE SURVILENCE

- Wildlife health is foundational to the outcomes of the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Surveillance of free-ranging wild animals is essential to understand the risks and impacts of
- diseases, pathogens and toxins, as part of a One Health approach.
- A clearly defined purpose and process is beneficial to the design, implementation and evaluation of a surveillance programme.
- Surveillance programmes should be context-specific to ensure that sampling approaches are
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It focuses on establishing tiger reserves and preventing poaching.

Veterinarians monitor tiger health and treat injured animals.

2. Project Elephant (1992)

Started to conserve elephants and their habitats.

It aims to reduce human–elephant conflict and protect elephant corridors.

Veterinarians provide treatment and disease monitoring.

3. Project Crocodile (1975)

Initiated to conserve endangered crocodile species.

The programme includes captive breeding and habitat protection.

Veterinarians help in breeding management and health care.

4. Project Snow Leopard (2009)

Launched to protect the endangered snow leopard in Himalayan regions.

It focuses on habitat conservation and community participation.

Veterinarians assist in wildlife health monitoring and research.

5. Project Dolphin (2020)

Started to conserve freshwater and marine dolphins.

It aims to protect river habitats and reduce water pollution.

Veterinarians support rescue, health assessment, and conservation research.

ROLE IN GOVERNMENT AND WILDLIFE POLICIES

Legislative Actions.

REFERENCE

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2. Wildlife rehabilitation:

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3. Wildlife Institute of India:

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4. Role of veterinarians:

<https://www.pashudhanpraharee.com/role-of-wildlife-veterinarians-in-the-conservation-and-human-wildlife-conflict-mitigation/>

- Forest Conservation Act (1980) Regulates deforestation and forest diversion, requiring government approval for non-forest use
- Wildlife Protection Act (1972) Protects endangered species establishes tonal parts and wildlife sanctuanes, and penalizes illegal wildlife trade
- National Forest Policy (2018) Aims to increase forest cover to 33% of the country's land area and ensure sustainable forest manageme

Conservation Programme:

- Project Tiger (1973) and Project Elephant (1992) Focus on protecting canto species and their habitats through dedicated conservation programs
- Afforestation and Reforestation Insarves like the Green India Mission help resture degraded land and enhance green cover.

CONCLUSION

Veterinarians play a vital role in the protection and conservation of wildlife. They help in disease diagnosis, treatment of injured animals, health monitoring, and rehabilitation of wild species. Their work also supports important conservation programmes such as Project Tiger and Project Elephant in India. By controlling diseases and improving animal health, veterinarians help maintain biodiversity and ecological balance. Therefore, veterinary professionals are essential for the successful conservation and sustainable management of wildlife.