

MONKEY STERILIZATION CENTRE TUTIKANDI, SHIMLA INSPECTION REPORT

**Submitted to**

Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), 13/1, 3rd Seaward Road, Valmiki Nagar, Thiruvannamipur, Chennai 600 041

Authorised by

Letter No 9-/2014-15/PCA/IR, dated 20 February 2015, issued by the Animal Welfare Board of India (**Annexure 1**)

Inspection conducted by

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2. Ms. Gauri Maulekhi, Co-opted Member, AWBI, Delhi
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DATE OF INSPECTION

27 and 28 February 2015

TIME OF INSPECTION

11:00 hrs to 15:30 hrs on 27 February at MSC and 08:00 hrs to 11:00 hrs in Jakhu forest area of Shimla on 28 February 2015.

Purpose of the Inspection

Having received complaints that the monkey sterilisation programme in Himachal Pradesh is being conducted with the monkeys being caught and treated in an inhumane manner; subjected to pain, suffering and negligence after surgery; and that the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 are being violated, the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) authorised an inspection of the Monkey Sterilisation Centre (MSC) in Shimla to ascertain the health conditions of monkeys, and whether the monkey sterilisation programme is in compliance with central/state laws.

Specific Objectives

1. Assess the welfare of monkeys at the MSC
2. Evaluate the housing and living conditions of monkeys at MSC pre- and post-surgery.
3. Evaluate the surgical facilities, procedures and techniques used for sterilisation.
4. Assess whether monkeys are handled and treated humanely during capture, transport, surgery, post-operative care and release.
5. Scrutinise the policies, protocols, records and registers to assess whether they are sufficient and in proper order.

I. INTRODUCTION

The facility was established in 2006 to deal with the issues of monkeys occupying human dwellings, damaging crops and causing other disturbances. The MSC is located at Rescue and Rehabilitation Home in Tutikandi is run by Himachal Pradesh Forest Department, which is recognised by Central Zoo Authority.

II. OBSERVATIONS:

1. Monkeys with untreated injuries:

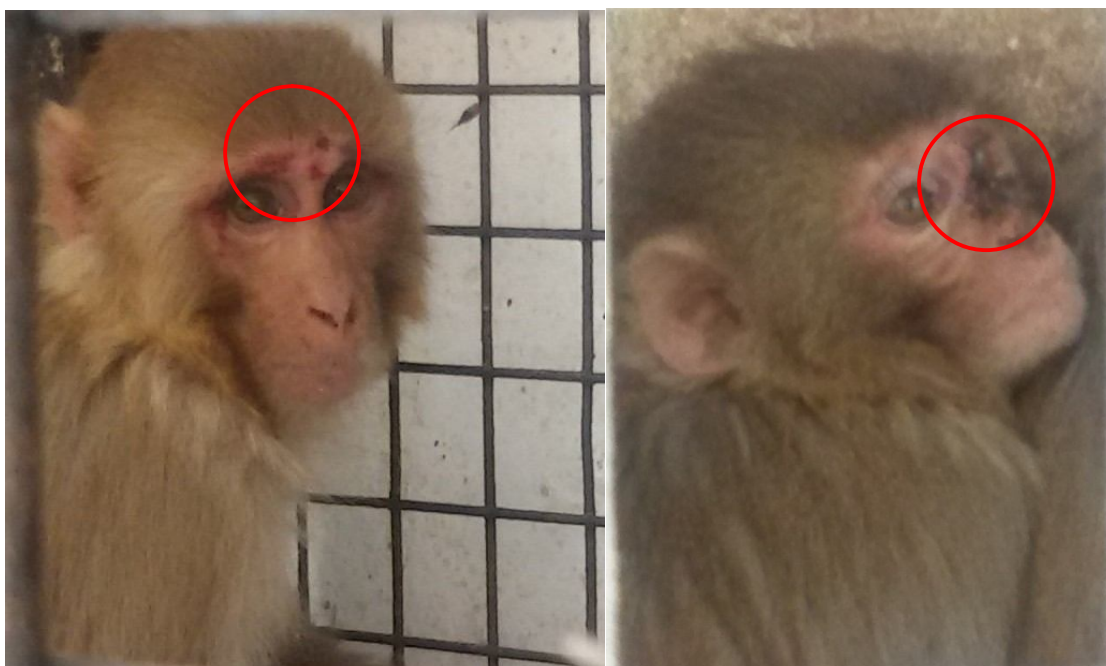
The inspectors observed that out of the monkeys in the post-operative ward, several had terrible tail and face injuries. These injuries may have been caused during the process of capture or in nature. Upon enquiry, the MSC veterinarians replied that no injuries and other health issues are treated by them and the monkeys are released once sterilisation is done. The only wound being monitored and treated is the one caused during the surgery.



Photo 1: Monkey with serious injury of the tail untreated



Photos 2: Close up of the untreated serious tail injury



Photos 3: Monkeys with face injuries

2. Monkeys in a state of fear, distress and pain

It was observed that the monkeys in the post-operative ward were in a state of fear and shock and were found to be huddling together in the corner in fear of people. No monkeys were showing normal behaviours such as social grooming. In most of the cages the monkeys were found to have refused food and water, a strong indication of pain. Continuous captivity and post-operative stress contributes to poor mental welfare.

In the book “Recognition and Alleviation of Pain in Laboratory Animals” published by National Research Council (US) Committee on Recognition and Alleviation of Pain in Laboratory Animal it is stated that “nonhuman primates show remarkably little reaction to surgical procedures or to injury, especially in the presence of humans, and might look well until they are gravely ill or in severe pain. Viewing an animal

from a distance or by video can aid in detecting subtle clinical changes. A nonhuman primate that appears sick is likely to be critically ill and might require rapid attention.”

It further states that “A nonhuman primate in pain has a general appearance of misery and dejection. It might huddle in a crouched posture with its arms across its chest and its head forward with a ‘sad’ facial expression or a grimace and glassy eyes. It might moan or scream,² avoid its companions, and stop grooming. A monkey in pain can also attract altered attention from its cagemates, varying from a lack of social grooming to attack. The animal may show acute abdominal pain through facial contortions, clenching of teeth, restlessness, and shaking accompanied by grunts and moans. Head pain may be manifest by head pressing against the enclosure surface. Self-directed injurious behavior may be a sign of more intense pain. Primates in pain usually refuse food and water. If an animal is well socialized or trained to perform tasks as part of a research protocol, changes in response to familiar personnel or in willingness to cooperate may indicate pain.”



Photo 4: Monkeys huddle together indicating fear and pain



Photo 5: Monkeys huddle together indicating fear and pain



Photo 6: Wasted food and water are an indication of pain

3. Poor housing conditions at MSC

The monkeys were found to be kept in tiny, rusted, filthy and barren cages. The monkeys were forced to sit and lie directly on iron mesh flooring which can cause a great deal of discomfort and lead to the development of sores and blisters on their body and feet. There were rusted sharp iron mesh projections-broken parts cages, or where the cages lock -that may potentially cause serious injuries. The lower floor of the cage was found to be filled with wasted food, mixed with faeces and urine and not routinely cleaned. The water bowls were dirty and unclean. Shockingly there was no lighting provided in the wards. The veterinarians claimed that after the recent repair work, they “forgot” to fix the lighting. There was no behavioural enrichment (a practice of providing animals under managed care with stimuli such as natural and artificial objects) provided to monkeys in the cages. The cages were not labelled adequately with details of the troops such as location and number of adults and babies etc., impairing the most important concept of releasing them to the same place from where they were captured.



Photo 7: Tiny, rusted, filthy barren cages



Photo 8: Sharp iron mesh on the broken part of the cage or used for locking the cage can potentially cause serious injuries to monkeys

4. No Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):

No written SOP on the monkey sterilisation programme is place to ensure and monitor humane and scientific capture, handling and transport, standard housing, surgery, post-operative care and release.

5. No training and monitoring of monkey catchers and staff:

MSC provides no training to the monkey catchers and staff of MSC regarding how to identify a pregnant monkey or monkeys who are already sterilised, or on humane and scientific capture, handling, transport, housing, surgery, post-operative care and release. The staffs are also not trained to identify signs of ill health and pain. MSC's role is limited to getting monkeys upon payment of Rs 500 per monkey, sterilising the monkeys and providing them post-operative care for 3 days. It was claimed by MSC that a forest guard joins the monkey catchers while capturing the monkeys and while releasing them back in the forest. However with no humane and scientific standards set on capture, transport and release, their role is limited to just company. It doesn't seems to be MSC's concern how animals are handled and treated before being taken to MSC and after being discharged.

6. Poor coordination between team capturing monkeys and MSC

MSC has 70 no of cages in the pre-surgery ward and 72 cages in the post-surgery ward. At a time the centre can handle only 142 numbers of monkeys. But, as per record there are many instances where the centre has received more than the limited number of monkeys, leading to overcrowding and related animal suffering.

7. Missing essentials during anaesthesia and surgical procedures:

- a. There is no mechanism to determine the body weight of the animals and calculate the dose of anaesthetic agents. The animals were claimed to be weighed once anaesthetised which does not serve any purpose.
- b. There is no recording or monitoring of the hours the monkeys were not fed or given water prior to the surgery. There are no details of when the monkeys were captured and the hours of starvation between capture and transportation to MSC are never accounted for. Upon arrival monkeys are starved for a minimum of 12

hours before taken for surgery. The record maintained by MSC indicates that there were occasions where monkeys were starved more than 24 hours and surgeries were performed even after 4-5 days of capture.

- c. There is no pregnancy diagnosis equipment such as ultrasound available at MSC, to determine whether any of the monkeys are pregnant. Often pregnancy is diagnosed only when the monkey is anaesthetised an abdominal opening is made. It was informed by the MSC veterinarians that once pregnancy is confirmed the sterilisation surgery is cancelled. However the pregnant monkeys would have gone through tremendous stress of capture, transportation, caging, starvation, anaesthesia and surgery by this time.
- d. With hypothermia being one of the common complications post-xylazine-ketamine anaesthesia, especially in colder climate locations like Shimla, the facilities in the recovery room were inadequate to provide enough warmth as to help the recovering monkeys retain normal body temperature and maintain normal physiological functions.

8. Inadequate post-operative care and pain management

There is no written protocol and instruction for the post-operative care and pain recognition and management is overtly overlooked. The staffs fail to recognise that wasted food and water is sign of pain. The only oral analgesic available in the post-operative ward is acetaminophen (Paracetamol) which can provide only mild analgesia. There are no written instructions regarding the frequency of analgesic drug administration and it gives an impression that analgesics are rarely given during post-operative care.

9. Inadequate record-keeping:

The following records were maintained by MSC:

- I. Record on details of the monkey troops captured, sterilised and released
- II. Receipts for payment of charges for capturing monkeys
- III. Veterinary record mentioning details of the monkeys sterilised, pregnant monkeys and already sterilised monkeys identified.
- IV. Rescue & rehabilitation record for other species of wildlife

The key observations are:

- a. During the period of 16-2-2007 to 20-2-2014 a total of 24751 monkeys have been sterilised. Out of which 11824 are males and 12927 are females. A total of 4557 monkeys were recorded to be either pregnant or already sterilised, which means out of the total of 29308 monkeys captured, **16%** were unfit for sterilisation.
- b. There was rewriting and erasing of information in the registers. In almost all pages of register I, the numbers were found to be manipulated.

The image shows a handwritten record book with two pages. The left page is titled 'Capturing' and the right page is titled 'Release'. Both pages contain columns of numbers and text, likely recording monkey captures. Two red circles are drawn on the right page, highlighting specific entries. The left page has a header 'Capturing' and the right page has a header 'Release'.

Photo 9: The numbers in the record seems to be manipulated

10. Capture of monkeys

- Monkeys were captured by untrained persons who are not employees of Forest Department
- The Forest Department doesn't keep any identity record for such trappers, even though they are dealing with protected animals.
- The trapping is done without the veterinarian present at the spot and the injuries caused while trapping are left untreated. On occasions facial and tail injuries were noticed on captured monkeys which were not attended by any MSC veterinarians at any stage.
- The entire troop was never captured all together. Few take the bait and get trapped. Hence the troops break up, leading to stress and anxiety. This causes infighting, aggression and disruption of social structure.
- Thorough record of the place of capture is not kept.

11. Flaws in transportation of monkeys

- No health certificate is issued by a qualified veterinary surgeon to state that the monkeys are in a fit condition to travel from the trapping area to MSC and are not showing any sign of infections or contagious disease. Apparently sick or disabled monkeys exhibiting external injuries or infested with parasites are also being captured and transported.
- The vehicle accepts the caged monkeys and the cage without asking for the health certificate.
- There is no provision for providing food and water to monkeys enroute, when there is a delay of more than 6 hours to reach MSC.
- Monkeys were found to be transported in open trucks with very little protection from extreme weather conditions.
- Pregnant monkeys were transported without the permission of the central government.
- The cages are not made of wood or bamboo.

- g. Monkeys are transported in metallic cages with nails, metallic projections and sharp edges.
- h. Cages were not equipped with appropriate water and feed receptacles which are leak-proof and capable of being cleaned and refilled during transit.
- i. The floors of the cages are not made of bamboo reapers.
- j. The cages do not meet the specifications in terms of length, breadth and height as per the number of monkeys being carried.
- k. The cages were not labelled showing the number of monkeys and location of capture.



Photo 10: The entire troop monkeys were not captured causing disruption of the social structure



Photo 11: Monkeys are transported in open vehicles with minimum protection from the extreme weather

12. Reports on death of monkeys

As reported in The Tribune, Chandigarh on 20 February 2012, approximately 700 monkeys died at Gopalpur MSC. As per the news report, Satish Gupta, DFO Wildlife in charge of the Gopalpur MSC confirmed that deaths of the monkeys were caused due to mishandling. Dr Vjay Bharti, the veterinarian at the MSC stated that there is a mortality rate of 6% and that some of the deaths could be due to overcrowding and trauma in the cages.

13. No evaluation done to check the effectiveness of the programme

Since its inception, no scientific evaluation has been done by MSC or Himachal Forest Department to understand the effectiveness of the sterilisation programme, its implications on the welfare of monkeys, compliance of legal provisions and to see whether the original objectives of the programme are being met.

14. Mobile operation van with pre-fitted laparoscopy machine discarded after disuse

A mobile operation van funded by Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh was given to the MSC, Shimla with a laparoscopy machine for doing on-the-spot sterilisation of monkeys, but reportedly could not be put to the mandated use and as of now lies discarded in the Tutikandi campus. Any such future investments should be guarded against.



Photo 12: Monkeys are transported in open vehicles with minimum protection from the extreme weather

III. LEGAL VIOLATIONS

There is violation of various provisions of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 1960 by MSC.

1. MSC does not treat any injuries or ill health in the monkeys other than the surgical wound of sterilisation and fails to recognise signs of pain and management of pain post-surgery. This is a violation of Section 3 of PCA Act, which states that "Duties of

persons having charge of animals: It shall be the duty of every person having the care or charge of any animal to take all reasonable measures to ensure the well-being of such animal and to prevent the infliction upon such animal of unnecessary pain or suffering.”

2. By not providing appropriate housing conditions, MSC has violated Section 11 (1) (h) of the PCA Act, which states that “being the owner of (any animal) fails to provide such animal with sufficient food, drink or shelter; or” is a punishable offense.
3. MSC has violated most of the provisions of Transport of Animals, Rules, 1978.
 - a. Section 16 of the rules states that “A valid health certificate by a qualified veterinary surgeon to the effect that the monkeys are in a fit condition to travel from the trapping area to the nearest unit-head and are not showing any sign of infections or contagious disease shall accompany each consignment.”
 - b. Section 16 (a) (b) states that “In the absence of such a certificate, the carrier shall refuse to accept the consignment for transport”.
 - c. Section 17 (3) states that “If the travel time is longer than six hours provision shall be made to feed and to give - water to the monkeys en route.”
 - d. Section 17 (4) states that “During transit, precautions shall be taken to protect the monkeys from extreme weather conditions and monkeys that die en route shall be removed at the earliest available opportunity.”
 - e. Section 19 (a) states that “Pregnant and nursing monkeys shall not be transported except when specifically permitted by the Central Government.”
 - f. Section 23.1 (a) states that “Monkeys shall be transported in suitable wooden or bamboo cages, so constructed as not to allow the escape of the monkeys but permit sufficient passage of air ventilation.”
 - g. Section 23.1 (b) states that “No nails, metallic projections or sharp edges shall be exposed on the exterior or in the interior of the cages.”
 - h. Section 23.1 (c) states that “Each cage shall be equipped with appropriate water and feed receptacles which are leak proof and capable of being cleaned and refilled during transit.”
 - i. Section 23.2 states that “The floor of the cages shall be made of bamboo reapers and the space between each reaper shall range between 20 mm and 30mm.”
 - j. Section 23.5 (a) states that “The following two sizes of cages shall be used. a) 910 x 760 x 510 mm - to contain not more than twelve monkeys, weighing between 1.8 and 3.00 kilograms each or ten monkeys weighing between 3.1 and 5.0kilograms, each.”
 - k. Section 23.5 (b) states that ”710 x 710 x 510 mm - to contain not more than ten monkeys weighing between 1.8 and 3.00 kilograms each or eight monkeys weighing between 3.1 and 5.00 kilograms each.”
 - l. Section 31 (a) states that “The cages shall be clearly labelled showing the name, address and telephone number (if any) of the consignor and the consignee in bold red letters.”

IV. DISCUSSION

MSC does not follow any SOP for capture, handling, transportation, housing, surgery, post-operative care and release of monkeys to ensure their welfare. Moreover important provisions of The PCA Act, 1960 and Transport of Animals Rules, 1978 are violated by the centre.

V. RECOMMENDATION

The MSC facility in Shimla and other similar facilities working on the same line in Himachal Pradesh must be closed down immediately, until the following recommendations are implemented:

1. Immediate evaluation of the viability and effectiveness of the monkey sterilisation programme by a third party recognised by the central government.
2. Monkey Sterilisation Programme must be replaced with Monkey Population Management Programme which will include scientific survey of their population, exploring the use of immune-contraception and incorporating other humane techniques to manage the monkey population. The Senior Veterinarian of MSC, Dr Sood has recently presented a paper on immuno-contraception at Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), Lucknow which must be explored as the next breakthrough since the viability of effectiveness MSC in controlling man-animal conflict is in question.
3. Develop Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) including protocols for capture, transport, housing, pre-operative management including recognition and management of pain, operative procedure, post-operative care including pain management, treatment and vaccination and rehabilitation with the same troop. The SOP must be approved by AWBI.
4. Training of staff including veterinarians and non-veterinarians on humane and scientific handling and management of primates.
5. Quarterly clinical and financial audits to check the implementation of the SOPs, and staff performance appraisal to check their knowledge and skill sets and to assess the training needs.
6. Provision for humane capture of primates facilitated by trained handlers in the presence of veterinarians to provide immediate first aid to screen out pregnant, infant and already sterilised monkeys.
7. Transport and housing standards are improved with the replacement of metal cages with that made of wood and bamboo, provide straw/ rubber mat for bedding, sufficient heating and lighting in the animal houses and ensure behavioural enrichments.
8. Basic equipments such as weighing machine to determine the anaesthetic dose rate for a monkey and an ultrasound scanner for detection of pregnancy.
9. A full time nodal officer with at least 10 years experience in wildlife medicine and surgery must be posted to oversee, coordinate and execute the monkey population management programme in the state.

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