



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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JUN 17 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO : The Regional Executive Directors
DENR-Regions 1, 2, 3, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,
10, 11, 12, CARAGA, CAR and NCR

FROM : The Undersecretary for Special Concerns and
OIC, Director

SUBJECT : **TEMPORARY SUSPENSION ON THE IMPORTATION OF
WILDLIFE FROM INDIA AND PAKISTAN**

This is in relation to news article published on 04 June 2021 from "The News Minute" of India regarding death of a lioness suspectedly due to coronavirus infection and eight other lions at Chennai's Vandalur zoo tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. According to the news on May 26, 2021, five lions started showing loss of appetite and occasional coughing. A team of experts was formed and samples of the big cats were sent for testing and yielded positive results. In addition, a report was also published by "ABC News" in Pakistan regarding death of two (2) white tiger cubs in Pakistan Zoo in February 2021 which were suspected to be infected of COVID-19.

Relative to this and as precautionary measure, you are hereby instructed to temporary suspend the acceptance, processing and issuance of permits for the importation of any wildlife from India and Pakistan until further notice. In addition, the Regional Offices are hereby advised to undertake strict monitoring of the Regions' airports and sea ports.

For information and consideration.


EDILBERTO D. LEONARDO





Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT BUREAU



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Lioness at Chennai zoo dies of suspected coronavirus infection, 8 lions test positive

The Anna Arignar Anna Zoological Park said that samples were sent after some lions showed loss of appetite and occasional coughing, and nine out of 11 returned positive.



NEWS **CORONAVIRUS** | FRIDAY, JUNE 04, 2021 - 16:53



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One lioness has died of suspected coronavirus infection, while eight other lions at Chennai's Vandalur zoo have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. In a release, the Anna Arignar Anna Zoological Park said that on May 26, five lions started showing loss of appetite and occasional coughing. A team of experts was formed and samples of the big cats were sent for testing. The tests of nine lions returned positive. The zoo added that one of the nine, a lioness, 9-year-old Neela, died on June 3 at around 6.15 pm. The animal had been asymptomatic and showed some nasal discharge only the day before her death (June 2) and had been symptomatically treated immediately.

"As per the laboratory test results furnished by the Institute, samples in respect of nine lions out of the 11 sent, have tested positive for SARS CoV-2. In order to ascertain whether or not the reported findings are in the nature of false positives or the animal could have died of comorbidities, samples have also been sent on 4.6.2021 to the Indian Veterinary Research institute Bareilly and the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad," the statement said.

All the lions that have tested positive are under close observation, on prescribed treatment by the zoo's veterinary team and are also being supervised by an expert team from Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS). "All animal keepers and helpers for these animal houses are vaccinated against COVID-19. A separate set of animal keepers is engaged for



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lions in Hyderabad were found to belong to the 'A2a variant' of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. According to reports, the A2a variant was one of the most common variants found in the genomes of the virus analysed during the first wave. He added that it's possible the animals could have contracted the virus from zoo caretakers or other humans who were in contact with them.

It must be remembered that the Union government has said that there is no factual evidence that animals can transmit the disease to humans. The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued a statement earlier, saying, "Based on experience with zoo animals elsewhere in the world that have tested SARS-COV-2 positive last year, there is no factual evidence that animals can transmit the disease to humans any further."

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Two white tiger cubs in Pakistan zoo die of suspected COVID-19 infection

Posted Sat 13 Feb 2021 at 5:24pm



Zoo officials in Pakistan believe two of their white tigers, like this one in Lima, died of coronavirus. *(Reuters: Mariana Bazo)*

Two 11-week-old white tiger cubs that died in a Pakistani zoo last month appear to have died of COVID-19, officials have said.

The cubs died in the Lahore Zoo on January 30, four days after beginning treatment for what officials thought was feline panleukopenia virus, a disease that targets cats' immune systems and is common in Pakistan

But an autopsy found the cubs' lungs were badly damaged and they were suffering from severe infection, with pathologists concluding they died from COVID-19.

Although no PCR test for the new coronavirus was conducted, zoo deputy director Kiran Saleem told Reuters the zoo believes the cubs were the victims of the pandemic that has killed more than 12,200 people in Pakistan.

"After their death, the zoo administration conducted tests of all officials, and six were tested positive, including one official who handled the cubs," Ms Saleem said.

Key points:

- The cubs died in January with officials believing they had contracted feline panleukopenia virus
- An autopsy on their lungs have now led to officials believing they died of COVID-19
- Workers were tested for the virus after the deaths, with six returning positive results

"It strengthens the findings of the autopsy. The cubs probably caught the virus from the person handling and feeding them."

Pakistan's zoos regularly draw the ire of animal rights activists, who say hundreds of animals have died from poor living conditions there.

"The last two white tiger cubs have died at Lahore zoo and once again the negligence of the management and authorities has come out," Zufishan Anushay, founder of JFK (Justice for Kiki) Animal Rescue And Shelter, told Reuters.

"White tigers are extremely rare and need a specific habitat and environment to live a healthy life.

"By caging them in unhygienic conditions with no medical arrangements, we will keep witnessing these incidents."

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Ms Saleem rejected allegations of neglect at the zoo, telling Reuters that animal rights activists were welcome to visit and check the facility's safety and hygiene protocols themselves.

In December two Himalayan brown bears were airlifted out of the Islamabad Zoo to a sanctuary in Jordan.

That rescue came weeks after an elephant Kaavan was moved from Pakistan to a sanctuary in Cambodia, the culmination of a years-long campaign that included US pop star Cher.

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At the Peshawar Zoo, officials have said four giraffes died in 2020.

Last year two lions at Islamabad Zoo suffocated when workers lit fires in their cages.

Reuters

What you need to know about coronavirus:

- [The symptoms](#)
- [The number of cases in Australia](#)
- [Tracking Australia's vaccine rollout](#)
- [Global cases, deaths and testing rates](#)