

An updated report on the Tsunami destruction regarding Animals in India

Dr S Abdul Rahman, CVA – 4/1/05

1. It is fortunate that there has been relatively few deaths to wild life in the affected areas. This is not to say that there has not been a large amount of destruction to turtles and sea life washed ashore by the tsunami.

2. Immediate damage due to the tsunami to domesticated animals has been far below what could have been expected from a major calamity like this.

3. Without, in any way belittling the deaths of animals by the tsunami, we are at present concerned with preventing and alleviating the suffering of the surviving animals.

4. Volunteers from Blue Cross India were on the beaches of Chennai within minutes of the tsunami striking and helped save many tethered animals by cutting them free.

Several rat snakes and a cobra rescued from the flood waters were handed over to the Government Forest Department at Snake Park. Many pups and injured dogs were removed to the Blue Cross shelter. Many of the volunteers have been temporarily housing as many as 15 dogs each in their houses in Besant Nagar for the last 7 days. Starting from Monday, volunteers have been feeding dogs on the city beaches once a day.

For the last 5 days, they have been going in trucks carrying fodder (hay and grass) to the cattle in the coastal areas and food for the dogs .

Ms.Clementien Pauws and her team of four of Karuna Society, have left Chennai on 2/1/2005, and are carrying food and water for the animals between Pondicherry and Cuddalore. She is also carrying required medical supplies and equipment.

Mr..Gagandeep Singh Bedi, IAS, District Collect of Cuddalore has informed that a total of 745 poultry/goats and 45 cattle perished in the tsunami. The condition of the surviving animals is satisfactory. However, they may require some vaccines and other help which is in poor supply ,It has been observed that even the healthy animals are getting weakened due to lack of potable water. All water sources in the coastal areas have been affected by the sea water and have become saline. The immediate requirement now is to ensure that surviving animals receive water and food. This would include water and food for cattle.

A very touching scene in some of the relief camps including the one at Olcott Memorial School in Besant Nagar was the large number of dogs which the people have taken with them and with whom they were sharing the food provided by relief agencies.

In view of the water situation, the Blue Cross is now trying to mobilise water tankers to get water from inland sources to the coastal areas which can be given to the animals there. Since potable water is in very short supply even for the people, volunteers the of Blue Cross and others working in coastal areas have been told that they should keep water sachets which can be given to the people while water is being given to animals so that people do not feel that animals are being given water when people do not have enough. Drinking water has become a very major requirement.

While so much goodwill and fellow-feeling has been shown in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy, the baser side of human nature is now tending to show. Lorry drivers have doubled their charges and price of fodder has gone up. Added to this, volunteers who have been working and putting up with so much personal inconvenience are beginning to tire out.

To sum up, what is really required at this point is more volunteers who can speak Tamil and money for buying and transporting food and water. The requirement of medicines, vaccines etc. if required by the Animal Husbandary Department will be communicated soon.

WSPA have committed to send US \$ 15,000 and many others have pledged much needed funds. These include - Maneka Gandhi; Animal People of the US & Kim Bartlett; Jill Robinson of Animals Asia Foundation; Dr.Mark Rissi, Swiss Animal Protection; Ahimsa Foundation; Mr. N. Sugal Chand Jain of Singhvi Charitable Trust; Erika Abrams, Animal Aid Unlimited in Rajasthan and USA; Mr. Phillip Wollen of The Winsome Constance Kindness Trust; Ms. Marcelle Meredith of the NSPCA of South Africa; Ms. Kay Mayfield, United Animal Nations; Mike & Ellie Maynard of Sirius; Ms. Terri Crisp of Noah's Wish; Ms.Eileen Weitraub and Mr.Robin Krish.

Shall keep you updated.

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Secretary CVA