

23 November 2011
New Delhi

Most Urgent

Dear Mayor and Members of Council, City of Toronto :

We write to you regarding the Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) sanctuary in California. I understand some people have expressed concern about the transfer of the Toronto Zoo elephants to the PAWS sanctuary. We have only just recently visited the PAWS elephant facility a few weeks ago and would like to convey our impressions on the same.

We are the founders of Wildlife SOS, an international wildlife protection and conservation organization head quartered in India. We operate four sanctuaries housing nearly 600 rescued sloth bears and are currently collaborating with the Haryana Forest Department for the establishment of an Elephant Rehabilitation and Research Center. Wildlife SOS has formal 'co-operative' agreements in place with state Governments and forest departments in more than nine states in India.

First, we wish to state that we were highly impressed by the facilities available for elephant care and rehabilitation at the PAWS Sanctuary. The elephant habitats are exceptionally large, well laid out while giving the animals access to water, shade and enrichment, a key consideration when housing these highly mobile, wide-ranging mammals (mega fauna). The PAWS sanctuary spread over hundreds of acres also provides ample room for the elephants to satisfy their behavioral and biological need to forage, graze, move about and engage in exploratory behaviours. The enclosure topography (e.g. hills, valleys, ponds etc) guarantees a level of exercise and activity not achievable in perhaps most elephant enclosures.

In addition, the elephants are free to socialize with other elephants, forming their own relationships and bonds, and they have the option of obtaining privacy by moving to another part of their sprawling habitat.

The various other facets of the PAWS elephant management regime were equally impressive. Their expansive, purpose-built, well planned, well designed and sophisticated elephant barns combined with their highly trained team of elephant keepers and veterinarians and comprehensive health care program make PAWS a superior facility to any other specialised elephant facility we have seen in the world.

We are very familiar with elephant biology, behaviour and their needs in captivity. Having visited the PAWS sanctuary, we have no hesitation in saying that it is the right choice for the Toronto Zoo elephants and request you to make the right decision for these animals who do deserve nothing but the best now.

Thank you for your intervention and for helping these Elephants.

Sincerely,
For Wildlife SOS, India



Kartick Satyanarayan
Founder Chairman.



Geeta Seshamani
Founder Secretary



cc. Toronto Zoo Board of Management