

## A REVIEW OF WILD ANIMAL CASES PRESENTED TO THE VETERINARY TEACHING HOSPITAL

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This communication reviews a total of 51 clinical cases of wild animals presented to the Veterinary Teaching Hospital during a period of 7 months from August 2001 to February 2002 comprising of birds (n = 11; 22%), reptiles (n = 14; 28%), and mammals (n = 26; 51%). Rodents, viverrids, chiropterans, cervids, felids, proboscidians and primates were the mammals presented. Seven of these cases (14%) belonged to three species endemic to Sri Lanka, namely, toque monkey (*Macaca sinica*), Ceylon cat snake (*Boiga ceylonensis*) and Dumeril's kukri snake (*Oligodon sublineatus*). A majority (n=38, 75%) of these cases appeared to be adults. A substantial proportion of the cases (n = 22, 43%) reported had been found from home-gardens in the Kandy District, while 11 cases (22%) were found in their own wild habitats, and 10 (20%) had been kept as pets. It was possible to determine the sex of all the mammals, 50% of the reptiles and 18 % of the birds that were examined. It is interesting to note that 22% (n = 11) of these animals were brought by the public or collected by us solely for the purpose of releasing to the natural habitat. This number included one mongoose and 10 (out of 13) snakes that were rescued from potentially threatening situations.

In addition to general clinical examinations, the animals were subjected to radiological (7), bacteriological (3), parasitological (1) and haematological (1) examinations. Almost 50% of these animals had wounds, out of which 39% (n = 20) had resulted from trauma. Of the remaining cases, 14% (n = 7) were apparently not suffering from any diseases and therefore needed only captive management. Other conditions included, one each (2%) of dystocia, pigeon-pox and rectal agenesis, and 8 (17%) cases were not diagnosed.

The type of interventions used to treat these animals can be broadly categorized into 37% surgical (n = 19), 35% medical (n = 18) and 26% captive management (n = 13), and one case (2%) was dead on admission. In one fifth of the cases an anaesthetic agent (ketamine, n = 6) or sedatives (xylazine, n = 2; diazepam, n = 1; and phenobarbitone, n = 1) were used. Eighteen (35%) patients needed treatment with antibiotics, parenteral fluids and vitamin supplements.

Considering the survival rate, in addition to the 11 animals that were released to their natural habitats, 8 (16%) cases recovered completely following treatment and of which 3 were also released. The status of 8 out of the 10 animals treated was not known as the owners kept them as pets and did not communicate with us regarding the outcome of the treatment. Twenty two (43%) animals died despite treatment and necropsy studies were conducted on 11 of them and the information obtained was found to be beneficial in studying the comparative anatomy and pathology of these species.

It can be concluded that further knowledge on management, treatment, breeding and proper handling of wild animals among the veterinarians are essential to ensure their existence and well-being.