

PROGRAMME

Comune Di Roma Servizio, Giardino Zoologico, E. Museo Di Zoologia

In my opinion the realization of an education programme in the Zoological field is necessary and urgent, in order to develop the naturalistic feeling of the Italians, which is still very uncertain and very often disorientated by non-qualified information, which is quite inadequate and in many cases erroneous or having the effect of making the public less interested. The information media, from Press to Television, do not have available any discriminating agency for Wildlife matters, and often circulate -along with occasional valid news - too many mistakes and erroneous data. Arbitrariness, superficiality and incompetence are the general rule in this field, and they are so much more obnoxious for the public is less prepared and unable to evaluate what is presented to it.

In order to educate the Italian public to a better naturalistic and specifically zoological attitude, the Direction of the Rome Zoo intends to realize soon the following initiatives:

1. DEVELOPMENT OF CONTACTS WITH SCHOOLS of all orders and grades.
2. WALL NEWS REPORT, to be affixed in special stands, with tables, posters, photographs and news relative to events in the zoo, (births, arrivals, buildings etc.) Alongside educational material on zoological and ecological problems - mainly of national interest - of a critical form whenever it is advisable to stop or correct some wrong initiatives (e.g. in the control of poisonous snakes which stands the risk of becoming excessively destructive), or to rectify erroneous information reported by the press or other sources.
3. DISTRIBUTION OF LEAFLETS on the above subjects or for information on matters of general interest.
4. INSTALLATION OF LOUD SPEAKERS near the cages and enclosures, to give information about the animals kept therein. The explicative talks, recorded on tapes, will be both in Italian and in the main foreign

languages (English, French, German, in order to assist also the many foreign visitors to the Rome Zoo. The equipment of course shall have suitable technical characteristics in order to avoid interference between the various listening points, to avoid disturbance between two close points, and with such a periodicity of transmission as to enable visitors to listen to the entire programme in its various parts.

With the same system will also be given to the public suggestions and advice on the best way to watch the animals and on the proper behaviour to be observed towards the animals, the installations, the plants and flowers, and for the sake of cleanliness.

5. PRINTING OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION BOOKLETS for distribution to visitors of the Zoological Garden.

6. BOX FOR COLLECTION of suggestions, criticisms, questions etc.

7. PROMOTION OF AN ACTIVE COLLABORATION with organizations such as the Italian World Wildlife Fund and wildlife associations, in order to promote and organize campaigns and manifestations in the respective fields of action and interest.

REPORT

Zoological Garden of Rome

In the Zoological Garden of Rome does not yet exist, in official form; an Education Service, but in practice the administration staff has been for years taking care of the activity in the field of education, in addition to its other engagements.

The first step of course has been the preparation and affixion of labels with the nomenclature of each animal species, which are often accompanied by explanatory and descriptive plates which illustrate the most important morphological and ethological aspects of the most remarkable

species, or groups of genera, or of the major systematic entities (families or subfamilies). These plates, executed in plastic materials, are affixed to the cages or enclosures of the animals which they describe, or are placed in a suitable position in order to refer to an entire group of cages housing separately various species of the genus or family described.

Near the enclosures which house some particular animals (e.g. Ostriches) are placed some large plates with information and unusual facts, as well as recommendations concerning the relevant animals.

At the zoo entrance, along the avenues, and by some cages and enclosures are exhibited some plates with instructions for the behaviour of visitors (e.g. "Do not go too close to the animals", or "Do not feed these animals" etc.). These notices are very important to avoid improper actions by the public, although they are not totally effective in eliminating the bad habit of bothering the animals or offering them unsuitable foods. This area of zoo management can be considered as part of the educational work and the confiscation of the improper food is followed by an explanation - unfortunately not always well received - of the dangers and consequences involved in wrong feeding. This task is performed by any member of staff who happens to discover the infringement: 'managers; keepers, gardeners, etc.

As from 1964 all school classes (accompanied by teachers) of any order and grade, both public and private, Italian and foreign, are admitted free to the Rome Zoo.

It has been ascertained that the specific Zoological knowledge of school teachers is often inadequate and, since 1970, guided tours for schools have been organized. Some university students of Biology; Natural Sciences or similar faculties have been entrusted with the task of accompanying school classes on their visits to the Zoo, giving information on the animals and replying to the questions posed by children. A sum of 5 million Lire (8,000 dollars) has been allocated for the reimbursement of these guides. A volume of 128 pages, typed and

duplicated, prepared by the Director of the Zoo and his Scientific Assistants, has been edited for the specific training of the guides.

Within the Zoological Garden exists also a Civic Museum of Zoology, which houses large mammalogical, ornithological, entomological and malacological collections, to which all visitors to the Zoo are freely admitted. This Museum is often visited by school classes as a complement to the Zoo visit. Here, too, the guides give explanations and illustrations.

The following cultural and informative activities, although not properly educational, deserve to be mentioned. All members of the Zoo Administration (scientific) staff as a whole participate in some informative activities, such as editing of scientific publications, scientific consultancy for cinema and television zoological, ecological and ethological documentaries etc. All are credited either singly or in collaboration with others, with many publications and documentaries.

From time to time papers on zoological subjects are presented publicly in a special conference hall of the Museum.

The Museum houses the headquarters of some Associations of people interested in various zoological sciences (Malacology, Entomology, Herpetology, etc.)
