

7130

Administration Report of Museums
Zoos, and Government gardens.
Department for the year 1950-51

ERNAKULAM,
1952

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ADMINISTRATION REPORT OF MUSEUMS, ZOOS AND GOVERNMENT GARDENS DEPARTMENT

FOR THE YEAR 1950—1951

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ERNAKULAM
1952

ADMINISTRATION REPORT
OF MUSEUMS, ZOOS AND
GOVERNMENT GARDENS
DEPARTMENT

FOR THE YEAR 1950-1951

CENTRAL ADMINISTROLOGICAL

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GOVERNMENT OF TRAVANCORE-COCHIN

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

PROCEEDINGS

(Miscellaneous Section)

Sub:—Administration Report of the Museums, Zoos and Government Gardens for the year.

Read: The Administration Report of the Museums, Zoos and Government Gardens for the year 1950-51 forwarded by the Director, Museums and Zoos.

Order D. Dis. 10246/52/EHL., dated 25th August 1952.

(1) Recorded.

(2) Shri R. Kesavan Nayar, was in charge of the Museums, Zoos and Government Gardens during the period under review.

The receipts and expenditure of each of the Section were as follows for the period under review.

<i>Name of the Section</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>			<i>Receipts</i>		
	<i>Rs.</i>	<i>A.</i>	<i>P.</i>	<i>Rs.</i>	<i>A.</i>	<i>P.</i>
1. Museum and Zoological Gardens, Trichur ..	37,469	10	10	684	4	0
2. The Government Museum, Trivandrum ..	16,506	0	0	147	0	0
3. Museum, Zoo and Government Gardens, Trivandrum ..	2,14,413	0	0	17,117	0	0

(By order of H. H. the Raj Pramukh)

(Sd.)

Assistant Secretary to Government

To

The Director, Museum and Zoos, Trivandrum
The Superintendent, Government Presses with copy of the Administration Report
The General Section.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS OF THE MUSEUMS, ZOOS AND GOVERNMENT GARDENS OF THE TRAVANCORE-COCHIN STATE FOR 1950-51

Introduction.—The Department of Museums and Zoos formed of the Museum and Zoo at Trichur and the Museums, Zoo & Gardens at Trivandrum, as a result of the reorganisation of Departments continued under the administrative control of the Director of Museums and Zoos during the year 1950-51. The details of administration of the different units are given as sectional reports. It may be mentioned in general that in all the sections the activities were in consonance with the ideals of a wider department. Improvements were effected in all these sections to the benefit of the visiting public.

MUSEUM AND ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, TRICHUR

General

Staff.—The institution worked under the administrative control of the Director of Museums and Zoos, Trivandrum. Shri N. Balakrishnan Nayar, continued to officiate as Superintendent till 8th December 1950 when he was relieved by Shri M. Govindankutty Menon who was transferred as Superintendent, consequent on the abolition of the post of the Personal Assistant to the Conservator of Forests, Trichur. Shri K. C. Paul, Head Clerk, was reverted to the Revenue Department and Shri V. Gopalan was appointed in his place from 15th May 1950. Early in April Government passed orders on the Reorganisation of the Museums and Zoos and Gardens fixing the staff and their scales of pay.

Visitors.—The institution was open to the public on all days of the year except Fridays and five special holidays. As usual public holidays and festival days recorded the largest number of visitors. Leaving out the extraordinary crowds on these days there was an average attendance of about 300 to 400 per day. Of late, there has been a general increase in the number of excursion parties of school children accompanied by their teachers. Special facilities were almost invariably given to these parties to make their educational tours both interesting and instructive.

Finance.—The total expenditure amounted to Rs. 37,469—10—10. The receipt for the year was Rs. 684—4—0.

Accommodation

There were no new additions to the Museum buildings and animal houses except the construction of a small cage with a long protected run for breeding poultry and another sheltered enclosure for the large sized birds such as cranes. Minor repairs to some of the structures in the Zoo were, however, carried out. Thus the ceiling of one of the monkey houses was reinforced with half inch planks, the wooden platform on which the pigeon roost was fixed was replaced by a reinforced concrete slab and thatties were fixed in the temporary shelter shed of the barbary sheep to protect them from excessive heat and rain. The entire wood work of the Museum buildings

was painted or coated with wood oil which gave a slightly better appearance to this old building.

Membership in Learned Societies and other activities

Membership in the Bombay Natural History Society and the Museum Association of India was continued for the year and all the journals of the former were received. The Smithsonian Institution of Washington also sent to this Museum the ethnological publications for the year.

The Museum Advisory Committee had become defunct by efflux of time and proposals have been submitted for the nomination of a few visitors to make periodical visits to the Museum & Zoo and record their suggestions for the better and efficient working of the institution.

The Museum

The maintenance and preservation of all specimens were systematically carried out and the general cleaning of all exhibits was also attended to. Besides oiling and greasing the old guns kept in the store, the arms and weapons put up for exhibition were relabelled with bold indian ink labels. The portrait of an old Chinese Royal Family as also another painting on glass in the Rajput Style were thoroughly cleaned and reconditioned. The valuable picture albums kindly presented by the late Shri A. R. Banerji were cleaned and rebound. The Taxidermist did useful work by mounting a few common birds, by setting up a stuffed barking deer kid and by working up a small 'group case' of birds in an alcove in the central hall of the Museum where the birds of the locality are exhibited. A representative collection of shells, corals, and a few fossils received from the Madras Museum in exchange of a live python were added to the Zoological collections.

A small section for the industrial articles made in the State was opened near the Krishna-Kallyani Library, the nucleus for the collection being different varieties of soaps and a toy car presented by the Director of Industries, Trichur.

The Museum Library

The Museum library continued to serve as a valuable reference library both for the public and for officers of other Departments. The additions during the year were confined to the quarterly issues of the Bombay Natural History Society and one publication from the Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution of Washington.

Krishna-Kallyani Library

The library served as a useful reference library for the public. The malayalam books received during the previous year were catalogued and classified.

The Zoo

As already pointed out no major improvements were carried out in the animal houses during the year under report, although proposals for remodelling of the smaller carnivora house, the extension of the deer park and the

provision of suitable enclosures for the barbary sheep have been sanctioned by the Government. Meanwhile, the growing demands of the Zoo necessitated the execution of several minor works for the health and safety of its inmates. Thus, when the male barbary sheep came into heat it had to be segregated into an improvised iron cage within the enclosure lest the female that had only calved recently should come to grief by the unwelcome attentions of her partner. The extreme congestion in the aviary was also relieved to some extent by the separation of the cranes to a newly put up shady enclosure, while in the deer park the same problem was solved by the sale of eight adult samburs to the public.

Hatching of birds in the aviary has been rather rare for want of natural conditions for incubating the eggs. Thus the attempt to induce the pelicans to sit over their eggs until hatching was not successful due to various factors. But it was very interesting to observe that both male and female took their turns over the piled up eggs exhibiting a remarkable instance of parental care. The eggs laid by the pea-hens were, however, got hatched by ordinary hens and these foster mothers tended the young pea-chicks until they were half grown. Among the other additions by birth may be mentioned a rhesus monkey, two samburs, one barbary sheep, besides a number of pigeons, rabbits and guinea-pigs.

There were the usual deaths and disposals by sale or exchange. An old male lion fell ill early in the year and died after a prolonged illness in spite of the care and attention bestowed on him by way of veterinary aid and administration of special diet. A pair of tiger cubs were received from the Trivandrum Zoo in exchange for a pair of lion cubs. In order to relieve the congestion in the deer park, eight adult samburs were sold by public auction while a female spotted deer was added for breeding purposes and to replenish the stock of this species that had got depleted by too much in breeding.

The total number of animals added to the Zoo during the year was sixty-six. There were on the whole 28 deaths and 55 disposals by sale or exchange.

Gardens

The existing garden plants and flower beds were maintained in an attractive condition and fresh flowering plants and trees were also added. A few orchids, cactii, ferns and seedlings of flowering trees received from the Trivandrum Public Gardens were planted and a new rockery was also constructed. An old Pongamia tree and a couple of dried up Gold Mohar trees were sold by auction.

THE GOVERNMENT MUSEUM (ART MUSEUM), TRIVANDRUM.

General.—As forecast in the report for the preceding year, the retransfer of the Natural History collections to the Museum building was effected early in the year. To accommodate these new sections, the objects of Art spread out in the corridors and wings were moved to the central Hall of the building. To get over the overcrowding which followed, alcoves were improvised for the display of the sculptures. Eight double-walled alcove screens each 1' thick were made out of cardboard nailed to reepers and painted the colour of the walls. The other exhibits included inlay work, ivory and jewellery. By a judicious re-arrangement of these in existing show cases it was possible to dispense with their cumbersome containers. A new show case which went along a corner wall was specially made for the jewellery. The huge Radhom (temple car) which was on show in one of the wings, presented a very difficult problem in its removal to the central Hall. This was however accomplished with a good deal of labour. The Museum staff limited in personnel and budget has stretched its skills and energies remarkably well in co-operating to solve the problems that have arisen during this period of change.

Finance.—The total expenditure of the Institution during the period amounted to Rs. 16,506 and receipts Rs. 147.

Visitors.—More than 1½ lakhs of people visited the Museum during the year.

Publicity.—Near the main entrance adjoining the Art section, a counter was provided for the display of picture post cards and guide books. This counter also served as a place for enquiries and information for the visitors. A few photographic blocks of the Art objects were lent for publication in journals devoted to Art. The Curator gave a talk on "The Foreign contacts of Kerala" at one of the meetings of the local Rotary Club.

Cleaning and preservation.—For the proper preservation of the Bronzes and Jewellery exhibited special skilled assistance was required in the matter of cleaning. In this the Archaeological Chemist of the University Central Research Institute rendered valuable help and advice.

Labels.—Re-arrangements of the exhibits necessitated their relabelling so new Bilingual labels in Malayalam and English were provided.

Numismatics.—Classification of the coin collection was started by the Curator and some progress has been made although the volume of material to be studied forbids early completion of the work. It has been decided to provide new coin display cases and for the arrangement of these cases in a suitable space in the central Hall.

Acquisitions.—Because of the re-arrangement of the exhibits many of the objects previously on display had to be weeded out and kept in the reserve collection. No new additions have therefore been made during the year. Journals and books devoted to Art were however added to the Library.

MUSEUM, ZOO AND GOVERNMENT GARDENS, TRIVANDRUM

Finance.—The total expenditure for the Museum, Zoo and Government Gardens at Trivandrum amounted to Rs. 2,14,413 and the receipts for the year was Rs. 17,117 made up of Rs. 12,756 from gate collection for admission to the Zoo and Rs. 4,361 from the sale of plants, animals, etc.

Visitors.—The popularity of the institution is steadily on the increase as is to be seen from the great increase in the number of visitors. These have been specially attractive to tourists and foreign visitors. Among the distinguished visitors mention may be made of the President of the Indian Republic Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, the Australian High Commissioner, the Iranian Ambassador and several Ministers of the Central and State Governments.

Library.—Many of the old scientific journals were bound in volumes and made available for reference. A list of Books and Journals obtained during the year is appended.

Natural History Museum

The most noteworthy event of this period was the transfer of the natural history collections kept in the Shankumukham Palace for the last seven and odd years, back to their old home in the Public Gardens. Current duties connected with the up-keep of the collections took up the rest of the time.

The idea in making the original transfer was to provide space for the growing art collections. A new museum for Trivandrum, general in scope and representative of the various aspects of the state was under proposal and the natural history collections were to be exhibited in this building, when it became available. But with hard times ahead, prospects for this museum receded and since the old sea-side palace was unsuitable as a permanent home for the collections, Government ordered their re-transfer to the old Museum building and this was effected in the July of 1950.

Work commenced on the 18th. Two lorries chartered for the purpose and a gang of nearly forty men assisted by the Museum staff did the hauling in 43 trips. On the afternoon of the 26th, the last specimen, a plaster model of a False-killer whale arrived at the museum and was safely installed in place, none the worse for the drenching. The museum was closed for the next four months to make the necessary re-arrangements. On 30th November 1950, it was thrown open, to the Public in the presence of the Hon'ble Minister for Education.

While the natural history museum was located in the Shankumukhom Palace, a special exhibition stressing the usefulness of trees to national prosperity was arranged to synchronise with the Vanamahotsava, inaugurated by the Government of India. The show included specimens of timber, paintings and other exhibits available in the museum. An enlarged model of a cube of wood of approximately 1/100 m.m side was prepared as an additional exhibit by the museum artist. For the instruction of visitors who were curious to know about the plants in bloom at the beach, a small table carrying labelled specimens was also exhibited at this time.

Among the museum's collections was an enlarged model of a bedbug and another of a head louse, both very popular with visitors and often borrowed for exhibitions. A model of a housefly as a companion to these, seemed desirable and the museum artist was on this job until the time of the transfer of the collections to the Public Gardens.

With their return to the old museum building, a redistribution of space became necessary and it was decided to confine the art collections to the central Hall and release the two wings and corridors to natural history as before. Consequently, the sculptures displayed on pedestals and spread out in the building as well as other exhibits and show cases were moved into the Central Hall.

Space still remained a problem with the natural history section and this was met by removing to storage a part of the collections comprising skeletons, index cases and sections of timber, not of direct interest to the average visitor. The display of the models of dolphins and porpoises on the floor of the mammal gallery and of the leathery turtle on an open pedestal with railing all round was the only notable change in the exhibition. For the rest, the work has been mainly in the nature of a general tidying-up, providing scenic backgrounds to show cases as much as possible and labelling.

After the museum was reopened to the Public, there remained hardly anything to do save the day to day cleaning of exhibits and the opportunity was utilized to prepare an index to the mammal collections. A card file listing nearly 600 items was made for this section. Work on a similar index for the bird department is under way.

Parties of students from far and near visited the museum during this period. A statement of visitors is given below.

Men	..	67048
Women	..	49932
Children	..	40263
Total	..	<hr/> 157243 <hr/>

Gardens

General.—Plants from the Gardens were given out for use at Trivandrum for the annual functions of Independence day and Republic day celebrations and for the All India Exhibition conducted by the Corporation. At the request of the Superintendent of the General Hospital, a garden was laid out in the premises of the new pay ward of the General Hospital. At the request of the Special Officer for the Medical College under construction, plans for the formal layout of the grounds for gardens and planting of avenues were prepared. The necessary seedlings and plants for the above purpose were also got ready in the Garden Nursery.

Top Gardens.—Besides routine gardening operations for the upkeep of the various flower beds and shrubs, several changes were made in the distribution of annuals and perennials. The long beds on either side of the road leading from the Museum to the main drive on the eastern side of the building

were planted with assorted cannas. Similarly, the parallel canna beds flanking the footpath from the Band-stand circle to the East Gate, were replanted with annuals. Balsam, Zinnia, Salvia and Cosmos were planted in successive rows on either side of the footpath and the beds were in bloom for a long time.

Reporting of the entire collection of pot plants arranged on the steps of the Museum building and around tree bases in the area of the top gardens was carried out before the commencement of the rains. The roads and footpaths were repaired and kept in good condition throughout the year.

Lower Gardens.—To make the new extended area of the gardens, blend with the old garden, many alterations in the contour and layout had to be made at the boundary of the old area and the new, and traces of the former boundary had to be obliterated. The existing road here was raised and slopes were formed on the sides with earth available as a result of excavating a canal in the acquired area.

In order to provide sufficient shade for the animals to be housed in the new paddocks which were constructed in the acquired grounds, seedling of selected, fast growing and beautiful flowering trees were planted at various places inside the enclosures for the animals. Planting of trees was also done along the eastern boundary, near the compound wall.

The construction of a couple of runs for animals, below the Rose garden caused some transplanting of Roses and shrubs on that side. Species of Oleander in different colours, collected from Padmanabhapuram were planted in a row alongside the new wall which separated the run from the rose garden. Several numbers of rose plants were propagated by layering.

Nurseries.—Seedlings required for the flower-beds of the topgardens and rooted cuttings for the shrubberies and herbaceous borders, were raised in the nurseries. Ferns, Orchids, Begonias, Alocasias, Calandinum and Anthrium, kept in the green houses were replanted in their proper seasons. Seedlings of several varieties of plants also were raised. Since many of the *Stevensonia grandifolia* plants planted out in the gardens were found not thriving well, some seedlings of this species were potted into big tubs. It has been found that a plant thus grown to a height of 4 to 5 feet, if transferred to the ground would grow better than those transplanted from pots.

The ferneries are structurally not in desirable condition as the iron frame work has worn out in many places for want of repairs and painting. It is necessary to renovate the whole structure.

Medicinal Gardens.—Of the medicinal plants grown in this area, the majority are herbs and as such they had to be propagated and replanted every season. Perennial shrubs and small trees of known medicinal properties, as much as could be available have been planted amidst the beds of herbs.

Zoo

Visitors.—The total number of men and women who visited the Zoo during the whole year was 203079. The average number of visitors per day was 625, as against 459 during the previous year and the largest number for a single day was 6678. These figures excluded primary school children and children below six years of age who were given free admission as usual.

Many distinguished visitors from outside the State were received during the year and subjects of interest explained to them. All of them were very much impressed by the robust condition of the inmates and the cheerful accommodation given to them amid the slowly ascending slopes and level lawns where breezes keep playing all along.

At the commencement of the year, the number of inmates of the Zoo was 682 comprising 245 mammals 408 birds and 29 reptiles. There was an increase in the number by 88 on account of the births, purchases exchange and a reduction in the number by 79. Thus the number at the end of the year was 691, consisting of 257 mammals 395 birds and 39 Reptiles.

Live stock statistics.—The number of animals born in the Zoo during the year was 52. Excepting the four birds hatched out in the aviary, all the remaining were of mammals such as spotted deer, fourhorned antelope Barbary sheep and other ungulates:

One Arabian baboon, 4 Nilgai Fawns, one fourhorned deer and one barbary sheep are the important additions by birth during this year. There were 11 English Piglings brought forth by two English pigs out of two litters. Surplus stock of animals such as Rabbits, English pigs, pigeons, etc., were disposed off by sale.

Losses due to deaths were comparatively small. There were only 49 deaths most of which were of small mammals, birds and reptiles. A female Himalayan bear died of Syncope due to advanced cirrhosis of the liver. A tiger died as a result of maladies incidental to old age and a male Zebra died due to acute colic followed by pulmonary congestion. Apart from the cases of deaths mentioned above, all other animals preserved good health throughout the year.

Veterinary Services.—Care for the health and prompt veterinary aid that were bestowed to the animals had reduced mortality among animals to the minimum level possible. Improvements to the Zoo dispensary was made by obtaining necessary medicines and medical appliances.

Table showing additions and disposals of animals during the year

Class	No. of animals at the commencement of the year	Additions			Disposals			No. at the end of the year
		Births	Purchase and presentation	Total	Deaths	Sale, exchange, etc.,	Total	
Mammals ..	245	48	7	55	23	20	43	257
Birds ..	408	4	4	8	11	10	21	395
Reptiles ..	29	Nil	25	25	15	Nil	15	39
Total ..	682	52	36	88	49	30	79	691

Conclusion.—There has been all-round progress. Much more is yet to be done to attain the high ideals of service to the Public in the fields of cultural and scientific advancement for which the institutions have been organised and maintained. My thanks are due to every member of the staff for their hearty co-operation and assistance.

R. KESAVAN NAYAR

*Director of Museums and Zoos
Travancore-Cochin State*

APPENDIX I

List of books obtained during the year

Name of Books	Authors or Publishers
1. The Wealth of India—Industrial Products—Part I	
2. " Raw materials—Vol. I	
3. India—a Pictorial Survey.....	Published by Govt. of India,
4. Flowering trees and shrubs in India	D. V. Cowen.
5. Birds.....	Gayel Pickwell.
6. Museums in Modern Life.....	Royal Society of Arts—London.
7. "Zoo Life" Volume I—1946.....	Gale & Polden Ltd., London.
8. Do. " II—1947.....	do.
9. Do. " III—1948.....	do.
10. Do. " IV—1949.....	do.
11. Do. " V—1950.....	do.

APPENDIX II

List of journals in the Reading Room

1. Journal of the Indian Botanical Society.
2. Tropical Agriculturist.
3. Travancore Information.
4. Gardeners' Chronicle.
5. Indian Listener.
6. Current Science.
7. Nature.
8. Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society.
9. Animal Kingdom.
10. Science.
11. Science Progress.

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