

40 Spotted Deer Relocated for Chennai Metro Rail

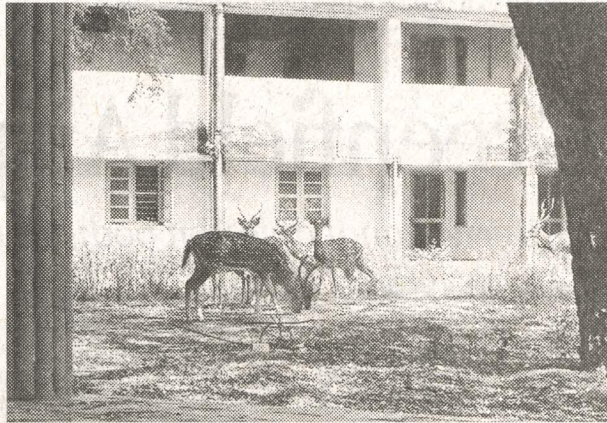
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Chennai: In a major step taken as part of the ongoing Metro Rail construction in the city, the Forest Department had translocated 40 spotted deer or chital from the Poultry Research Station at Nandanam, claiming it to be the first successful change of location of deer in the country.

The deer were translocated to Aringar Anna Zoological Park and Guindy National Park, as a metro railway station was planned at the Nandanam campus. Forest officials claimed that all the 40 were safe in the new environment.

Completing the task in four months from February to May, the forest officials said they began by conducting a survey to study the behaviour of the mammal in the sprawling campus. "Deer have a soft heart and are sensitive. Some even die in fear when taken from one place to another," said S Davidraj, forest range officer.

Closing all the water spots kept for the mammal in the campus, forest officials began the strenuous process of bringing all the deer to one place by clearing the bushes



NEW HOME: File photo of spotted deer at the Poultry Research Station at Nandanam

in the campus and setting up one spot where the deer can quench its thirst. Later, 12-foot-high fencing was laid in six different places with grass, wheat and bran to get the mammal to the spot regularly, forest officials explained.

"We appointed six people for this to get friendly with the mammal. We kept salt lick near the water spot, as it will come back to the same spot once it tastes it and they will like it. The entire procedure was arranged so that it won't get scared when we trap them," the range officer said.

Forest officials said that a

veterinary expert was present throughout to take medical test on the deer, to see if they are healthy. Ambulances and veterinary experts were also present to treat the deer if they got injured during translocation.

In an attempt to trap the mammal, 15 wooden boxes were made and the same grass, wheat and bran were kept inside; the mammal was trapped once it entered the box to eat.

All the 40 deer were translocated to the new place in the similar manner. Officials claimed the last time such a translocation happened was in the late 1990's when over

DID YOU KNOW?

Forest officials said that the spotted deer is the most commonly found member of the deer family in the country. They are mostly seen in large herds and are said to be a favourite prey species for predators like tigers and leopards.

The spotted deer is always on high alert and give out an alarm call when noticing a predator.

They can be seen in jungles as well as in open grasslands where there is presence of water.

150 deer were taken to a new location near Vandalur from the Indian Air Force station, Avadi, but was not successful as many deer either died or escaped. "It is a labourious procedure and we just had to be careful as deer are timid animals and would collapse if they are under stress. Adapting to the new location was not a problem as both the old and the new location were open area," said wildlife warden V Karunapriya.

Scientist Jayashree Venkatesan said that translocation of animals requires a multi-discipline team that has an understanding of the animal.