

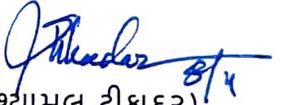
ક્રમાંક: વપસ/ટે.૨૮/બ/૨૦-૨૨ /૨૦૨૧-૨૨
અગ્ર મુખ્ય વન સંરક્ષકશ્રીની કચેરી,
વન્યજીવ શાખા, અરણ્યભવન,
બી-બ્લોક, પ્રથમ માળે, સેક્ટર - ૧૦/એ,
ગુજરાત રાજ્ય, ગાંધીનગર
તા. ૦૪.૨૦૨૧

વિષય: Creation of Snake Rescue Teams

સંદર્ભ: અત્રેના પત્રાંક વપસ/૨૮/બ/૮૭૫૨-૬૮, તા. ૩૦.૦૩.૨૦૨૧

ઉપરોક્ત વિષય અન્વયે જણાવવાનું કે, રાજ્યમાં સાપના રેસ્ક્યુ માટે વ્યવસ્થા ઉભી કરવા સંદર્ભ પત્રથી સુચનાઓ આપવામાં આવેલ છે. તા. ૦૬.૦૪.૨૦૨૧ના રોજ આ બાબતે ક્ષેત્રિય અધિકારીઓ સાથે ચર્ચા દરમ્યાન મળેલ સુચનો ધ્યાને લેતાં અત્રેથી સુચવેલ વ્યવસ્થામાં કેટલાક સુધારા કરવામાં આવે છે. સુધારેલ વ્યવસ્થા અને તેનાથી સંલગ્ન Standard Operating Procedure આ સાથે સામેલ છે. જે મુજબ તમામને લગત કાર્યવાહી કરવા જણાવવામાં આવે છે.

બિડાણ: ઉપર મુજબ


(શ્યામલ ટીકાદર)

અગ્ર મુખ્ય વન સંરક્ષક
વન્યપ્રાણી
ગુજરાત રાજ્ય, ગાંધીનગર

પ્રતિ,

મુખ્ય વન સંરક્ષકશ્રી, તમામ
વન સંરક્ષકશ્રી, તમામ

નકલ રવાના: નિયામકશ્રી, ગીર ફાઉન્ડેશન, ગાંધીનગર તરફ જાણ તથા જરૂરી કાર્યવાહી સારૂ.
નકલ સાદર રવાના: અધિક મુખ્ય સચિવશ્રી, વન અને પર્યાવરણ વિભાગ, નવા સચિવાલય,
ગાંધીનગર તરફ વિદિત થવા સારૂ.

Guideline and Standard Operating Procedure for Snake Rescue and Release in Gujarat

1. Background:

It has been noted that though there are numerous cases of snake rescues across the state, the department as such does not have any robust system to handle the same. Presently, mostly volunteers/ NGOs are engaged in snake rescue in the whole state. Many times they also receive the call directly from the public and undertake the rescue operation. Legally, most of the snakes listed are protected species under various schedules of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. They can not be rescued or handled by anyone except under the authorization of the Chief Wildlife Warden. In addition, while many of these volunteers/ NGOs may be genuine and may not be doing any illegal activity but at times the complaints like using snakes for display, extracting venom, trading, making irrational demands from the residents etc are also received. So, there was a need to create a system of training, certification, authorization, facilitation, monitoring of snake rescuers in the state, to fix a maximum charge for rescues and creation of a protocol of rescue and release of snakes.

2. Legal issues in carrying out snake rescue without authorisation

- i) The legal status of snakes as per the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is as follows:
 - a. **Include in schedule I**
 - a. Pythons (Genus python)
 - a. Indian egg-eating snake (Elachistodon westermanni)
 - b. **Include in Part II of schedule II**
 - a. Checkered keelback (Xenochrophis piscator)
 - a. Dhaman or rat snake (Plyas muscosus)
 - b. Dog-faced water snake (Carbrus rhynchops)
 - c. Indian cobras (all sub-species belonging to genus Naja)
 - d. King cobra (Ophiophagus hannah)
 - e. Oliveaceous keel back (Artaetium schistosum)
 - f. Russel's viper (Vipera ruselli)
 - b. **Included in schedule IV:** All Snakes other than those species listed in Sch I, Pt II or Sch II, Pt II
- ii) As per the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 'Hunting' includes:

- a. Capturing, killing, poisoning, snaring and trapping of any wild animal and every attempt to do so.
 - b. Driving any wild animal for any of the purposes specified i.e. trading, commercializing.
 - c. Destroying or taking any parts of the animal or any species.
- iii) Meaning thereby any act of capturing, killing or trapping any snake without explicit authorization is an offence under the act.
 - iv) If the snake is included in schedule-I or part II of schedule-II then the offence shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three years but may extend to seven years and also with fine which shall not be less than ten thousand rupees. If the snake is not included in part II of schedule II then it is included in schedule IV wherein the act is punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine which may extend to twenty-five thousand rupees, or with both:
 - v) So even if the snake rescue is done with noble intention it is an offence if done without proper authorisation.
 - vi) **Hence, it has been decided that henceforth no person, unless formally authorised by the concerned DCF, shall be permitted to carry out snake rescues and shall be booked under the WildLife Protection Act 1972 if found indulging in the same without authorization.**

3. Scope:

Following guidelines/ instructions are being issued after consulting field functionaries and experienced NGOs in this field. These guidelines are specific to activities related to snake rescue and release. They do not cover topics of venom extraction, anti-venom manufacturing, and crimes related to snake and snake venom trade. These subjects are addressed in the Wild Life Protection Act (1972), and such incidents can be dealt with by authorized Forest Officers of the area. The undersigned reserves full right to amend or modify these partially or fully at any time if he so deems fit.

4. Objectives:

- i) To create a system of snake rescues in the state involving volunteers after training, certification and authorisation of the required number of snake rescuers in each district.
- ii) To create standard formats for documentation to be submitted to the forest department

5. Guidelines :

- I) Application to become Volunteer, training and authorisation :

- i) Anyone interested in snake rescue work should apply to the Chief Wildlife Warden online through the following link <http://bit.ly/snake-rescuer-registration> .
 - ii) If found suitable prima facie he will be asked to get training and certification from GEER Foundation, Gandhinagar.
 - iii) The list of these trained and certified snake rescuers will be sent to the circle heads. From the list, the concerned DCFs can then select the required number volunteers as per their need and permit them as per the powers delegated to them vide letter WLC/B/2104-2184 dtd 14/6/2017 and issue I-card in the format attached after following checks:
 - a) DCFs shall ensure that the person has not been directly or indirectly involved in any forest offence.
 - b) They shall also check that the person should have life or accidental insurance of minimum 10 lakhs during the validity period of the I-card.
- II) It is also clarified that mere training and certification does not create any right for the volunteer to be engaged in snake rescue operation. It shall be at the discretion of the concerned DCFs whom and how many to select from the list of the certified volunteers.
- III) The permission/ authorisation for snake rescue operation shall not be given to any organisation, NGOs etc. It is meant only for individuals that also after proper training and certification.
- IV) To maintain uniformity across the state the photo-id card should be issued exactly in the format attached at Annexure-1. No change in it is permitted without permission of the undersigned. The photo-id card shall be considered to be issued with following conditions:
- i) The card holder is authorised for carrying out snake rescue operations in the district mentioned but only under the instruction of the concerned taluka wildlife warden or his authorised person.
 - ii) The snake rescue should be done as per the SOP and using the required equipment. The card holder agrees to carry out the snake rescue operation at his own cost and risk. The forest department will not be liable for any injury or death occurring due to this act.
 - iii) The cardholder is expected to have a minimum of Rs 10 Lakh life insurance/ accidental insurance while carrying out the rescue operation.
 - iv) The card does not create any right to the holder and is property of the forest department and has to be deposited if and when asked by issuing authority.

- v) He will carry out snake rescues only under the instruction of the Taluka Wildlife Warden or his authorised person and as per the SOP decided.
 - vi) If any snake rescuer receives an SOS, he should call the taluka wildlife warden i.e. RFO and only then proceed for the rescue after approval. But in no case he should undertake the snake rescue operation without proper instruction of Taluka Wildlife Warden or his authorised person.
 - vii) If he is found carrying out snake rescues directly without any instruction of concerned Taluka Wildlife Warden, the authorisation shall be revoked and the act shall be treated as per Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
 - viii) He will not be paid any fee for the services from the department and is expected to carry out the rescue operations only for the pure love for wildlife and not treat it as a business. But still, to cover the running costs he may charge up to a maximum of Rs 250/- per snake rescue operation from the caller but without any kind of coercion, provided that he is not being paid by the forest department directly or indirectly for the services. Any complaint on this account may lead to cancellation of the authorisation.
 - ix) The authorisation will be valid only for the limited purpose of snake rescues and will not be valid for any other purpose whatsoever.
 - x) The authorisation will be valid only for a year and may be cancelled by the issuing authority anytime if he is found indulging in any illegal activity like display (including display of pictures / videos on social media) of captured snakes, extracting venom, trading, misusing the authorisation for any other purpose etc.
- V) All the photo-id cards should be numbered and the list of the cards issued, cancelled, re-issued etc should be properly maintained by the concerned DCF.
 - VI) All DCFs shall give work to all the registered snake rescuers equitably as far as possible.
 - VII) On the basis of the performance of the rescuer and the requirement the DCF may reissue the authorisation for a period of maximum one year at a time. The reissuance of the authorisation will be done in the same manner and conditions except that the requirement of training-certification again will not be insisted.
 - VIII) It may also be noted that if some person is working on the rolls of the department (like permanent labour,through some outsourcing agency, through some society etc) then he need not be given any authorisation as he is anyway supposed to undertake the rescue operation under the direct supervision of forest officials. He also can not be allowed to take money directly from the public for a job for which he is already being paid from the department. Such persons can be sent for training and certification though.
 - IX) All the divisions will develop necessary infrastructure to handle the rescue

operations and also create division/ district helpline number and get it included in the online directory of Wildlife Helplines of Gujarat and give wide publicity to the Wildlife Helpline Number of Gujarat i.e. 8320002000 so that public has access to all the helpline numbers of the Forest Department from a single and an online source.

6. SOP to be followed:

I) Before Snake Rescue :

- i) When attending a rescue call, study the situation and identify whether there is a need for rescue at all. Most often, the snake and humans are not under any threat. Usually, the mere appearance of a snake triggers panic in people. Stick around till the snake moves away, safe from any public action.
- ii) Gathering Information :
 - a) Reassure the caller and ask them to calm down
 - b) Immediately inform the department if you cannot attend it so that it can be given to another rescuer.
 - c) Get a description of the snake as well as the area/site where it has been spotted.
 - d) Record the address and nearby, prominent landmark to reduce the time spent looking for the place. The contact details of the caller must be recorded. Try to get the location on whatsapp if possible.
- iii) Briefing the Caller :
 - a) Brief the caller on steps to be taken till the rescue site can be reached
 - b) Ask them to keep track of the snake from a distance, if it's moving
 - c) Emphasize that they should not attempt to kill or capture the snake on their own
 - d) Ask them not to disturb the snake if it's resting.
 - e) Ask them to keep everyone away, except one person who is monitoring the snake.
 - f) Give them an approximate response time.

II) During Actual Rescue :

- i) On site activities :
 - a) Instruct all the people present to clear the area.
 - b) Ensure that proper lighting is available. If needed, arrange for it.

- c) Check handling equipment and relevant accessories and personal protection equipment. Keep all required tools ready before starting the actual restraining procedure
 - d) Make an assessment of the situation and decide whether it is necessary to intervene.
 - e) Capture the snake as per the guidelines.
- ii) The snake should be handled only through proper necessary equipment like (hooks, tongs, tubes and pipes) essential for safe handling.
 - iii) In a scenario wherein the snake is in a conflict situation with danger to its life or danger to the people around it, use safe bagging techniques, learnt during the training, to bag the snake and ventilate. After bagging the snake, put it into a protective case/box for transportation.
 - iv) Special care has to be taken while rescuing snakes that are injured and snakes that might have recently eaten. In such cases, handling must be minimized and a dark towel, pipe or tubing capture method should be used rather than tongs or hooks.
 - v) Work in pairs whenever possible. Try to restrict handling to two instances, once while bagging the snake and the second while releasing it.
 - vi) Concentrate on the rescue at hand and avoid taking videos, talking on the phone or addressing the crowd during the rescue.
 - vii) Keep all onlookers at a safe distance so as to avoid accidents.
 - viii) Speak to the gathered crowd about the snake that was captured, its habitat and its ecology. Explain how people can co-exist with snakes by making simple changes to their immediate surroundings.

III) What to do after rescuing the snake

- i) Snake rescuers should deposit the snake to the Taluka Wildlife Warden or at a place/ person as directed by the Taluka Wildlife Warden along with filled form as per annexure II.
- ii) If the snake is fit for release then do it without delay, within 24 hours of rescue, under the guidance and supervision of the Taluka Wildlife Warden or his designated subordinate.
- iii) If medical treatment is required, it should be administered under the supervision of a registered veterinary doctor.
- iv) The Taluka Wildlife Warden should identify and designate a release site within the local geography. These sites should be changed periodically, with a break of at least 30 days between releases at the same site.
- v) All releases should be made as per the reported activity time of the particular snake. For example, nocturnal snakes should be released at night and snakes that are active during the day should be released in the

daytime. Very high temperatures and harsh sunlight should be avoided during release. Rescued snakes should be released in nature immediately.

IV) What not to do after/during rescuing the snake

- i) Do not Keep live snakes in captivity, except for medical treatment.
- ii) Do not indulge in live snake shows. Any such action will be booked under the relevant clauses of the Wild Life Protection Act (1972).
- iii) Do not unnecessarily handle rescued snakes. Handling puts snakes under more stress and can lead to diseases and in extreme cases death of the reptile.
- iv) Do not indulge in filming of the snake rescue operation or putting it on social media for self projection. Kindly note that it may cause an offence to be booked even against an authorized volunteer.

7. First Aid procedures in case of a venomous snakebite

- a. Immobilise - Keep the snake bite victim calm. Apply a tourniquet.
- b. Keep them still and quiet.
- c. Restrict movement and keep the affected area at or below heart level to reduce the flow of venom.
- d. Remove constricting clothing and jewellery.
- e. Carry the victim to the nearest hospital or **call 108** as soon as possible.
- f. Inform the near and dear ones.

Annexure-1: Format for the photo-I-Card

Front side	
Registered snake rescuer	
Registration number	
Name	
Aadhar card no	
Mobile	
District of operation	Photo with stamp
Blood Group	
Emergency contact number	
Sign and stamp of the Deputy Conservator of Forests	
Back side	
The card holder is authorised for carrying out snake rescue operations in the district mentioned but only under the instruction of the concerned taluka wildlife warden or his authorised person.	
The card is not valid for any other purpose other than specified above.	
The snake rescue should be done as per the SOP and using the required equipment. The card holder agrees to carry out the snake rescue operation at his own cost and risk. The forest department will not be liable for any injury or death occurring due to this act.	
The cardholder is expected to have a minimum of Rs 10 Lakh life insurance/ accidental insurance while carrying out the rescue operation.	
This card does not create any right to the holder and is property of the forest department and has to be deposited if and when asked by issuing authority.	
No charge for the snake rescue operation will be given to the rescuer by the department. But to cover the running costs the card holder may charge up to a maximum of Rs 250/- per snake from the beneficiary but without any kind of coercion.	



Registered Snake Rescuer

Registration No. : _____

Name : _____

Adhar Card No. : _____

Mobile : _____

Blood Group : _____

Dist. of Operation : _____

Emergency contact No. : _____

Photo
Attested
By
Round seal

Sign. & Stamp of the Deputy conservator of Forest



- કાર્ડ ધારકને દર્શાવેલ જીલ્લામાં તાલુકા વાઈલ્ડ લાઈફ વોર્ડન અથવા અધિકૃત વ્યક્તિના નિર્દેશાનુસાર સાપ રેસ્ક્યુ કામગીરી માટે અધિકૃત કરવામાં આવે છે.
- ઉપરોક્ત દર્શાવેલ હેતુ સિવાય અન્ય કોઈ હેતુ માટે આ આઈ-કાર્ડ માન્યતા ધરાવતું નથી.
- સાપ રેસ્ક્યુ કામગીરી જરૂરી સાધનો દ્વારા નિર્વાહિત SOP મુજબ કરવાની રહેશે. વન વિભાગ કોઈપણ પ્રકારની ઈજા કે મૃત્યુ માટે જવાબદાર રહેશે નહીં, કાર્ડ ધારક આ કામગીરી પોતાના ખર્ચે અને જોખમે કરવા સહમત છે.
- કાર્ડ ધારક આ કામગીરી દરમ્યાન ઓછામાં ઓછા ૧૦ લાખ રૂપિયાનો વીમો ધરાવે છે. તેમ માનવામાં આવે છે.
- આ આઈકાર્ડ પર કાર્ડ ધારકનો કોઈ હક્ક પ્રસ્થાપિત થતો નથી. તે વન વિભાગની સંપત્તિ ગણાશે તથા સત્તાધિકારીશ્રીની સૂચના મુજબ તેને જમા કરાવવાનું રહેશે.
- કાર્ડ ધારક લાભાર્થી પાસેથી કોઈ પણ પ્રકારની સખતાઈ વગર પ્રતિ સાપ વધુમાં વધુ રૂ. ૨૫૦ રૂ. મેળવી શકશે. વન વિભાગ દ્વારા આ સેવા માટે સીધી કે આડકતરી રીતે કોઈ ચુકવણી કરવામાં આવતી નથી.

ANNEXURE –II : Snake Rescue & Release Form

Reference No (to be given by the department)	
Date	
Name of the person who called	
Phone No	
Location of the animal	
Latitude (DEC format)	
Longitude (DEC format)	
Amount paid by the caller (max Rs 250 permitted)	
Signature of the caller	
Species	
Size – Adult/juvenile	
Injuries if any	
Medical care needed	
Captivity details if any	
Date and time of rescue	
Date and time of release	
Condition of animal at the time of release	
Rescuer registration number	
Rescuers name	
Signature of the rescuer	
Forest department representative Signature	