Role of Rescue 1122 in Wildlife Welfare in Punjab, Pakistan

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**Recommended Citation**
DOI: https://doi.org/10.35691/JBM.0202.0128

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ROLE OF RESCUE 1122 IN WILDLIFE WELFARE IN PUNJAB, PAKISTAN
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ABSTRACT
Rescue 1122 emergency services in Punjab (Pakistan) also responds to calls when residents feel threatened from wild animals. Emergency calls received between August 2015 and July 2016 recorded 16 arthropod, 25 mammal, 156 bird, 816 reptile and 264 un-identified cases from different parts of the Punjab, which were safely handled and in majority of cases animals were safely released back in nature.

Keywords: Emergency service, snakes, birds, wild animals, Punjab

INTRODUCTION
Rescue 1122 is a public sector department started in 2004 under the Punjab Emergency Service Act 2006 for saving of human life and property in situations of emergencies, including accidents, bomb blast, fire, floods, medical emergencies and rescue people facing threat of wild animal attacks. In the absence of specific organization/department responsible for resolving human-wildlife conflict and welfare of wild animals, the animals entering human settlements/dwellings are rescued by this department. Thus, Rescue 1122 not only saves the life of human beings but also plays a role in rescue and conservation of animal biodiversity. Rescue 1122 centers are located in each major town of the province, at least one in every tehsil headquarter (Rescue1122, n.d.).

Wild animals entering urban areas may react in an unpredictable way, posing danger to human life and property. Rescue 1122 staff tries to capture the wild animals, without harming or killing them and release them into their natural habitat, though the staff is not properly trained in animal capturing and handling and is without proper handling gadgets.

CURRENT STUDY WAS DESIGNED USING PARTICIPATORY MULTI-TECHNIQUE APPROACH FOLLOWING LYNAM ET AL. (2007). THIS INCLUDED ANALYSIS OF POLICIES, RELEVANT REPORTS AND LEGISLATION, INTERVIEW OF LOCALS/ VILLAGERS AND MAPPING INSTANCES OF HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT IN DISTRICTS OF PUNJAB (PAKISTAN), MAINLY FOCUSING ON POISONOUS AND NON-POISONOUS SNAKES. CONFLICTS OF DIFFERENT WILD ANIMALS WITH HUMAN BEINGS WERE ALSO INVESTIGATED.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Data collection
Rescue 1122 Control Rooms located at different district headquarters were visited and record of emergencies received between August 2015 and July 2016 examined. When the rescue unit receives a call, information on the nature and place of emergency was recorded on “Emergency Response Form” (Figure 1). Copies of the forms involving wild animals were collected from the office in-charge of the Control Room (CRI) and the official attending the emergency was interviewed. Photographs was obtained from the audio-video camera (AVC) records and used in identification of the animal species (Figure 2).
RESULTS

Arthropods

A total of 16 (1%) cases of arthropods were reported from Rawalpindi and Khushab districts, including 7 honey bee (6 in Rawalpindi and one in Khushab), 5 scorpion, and 3 wasp attacks. One case of centipede was reported from a house (Figure 3).

Mammals

Centers received 25 cases of mammal from three districts, viz., Rawalpindi, Lahore and Khushab. Monkey attacks were reported in 8 cases, including 3 of Rhesus monkey (Macaca mulatta) in Rawalpindi. Four cases of unidentified monkey attacks in Lahore and one in Khushab were also reported.

Mongoose appeared in 11 cases; 3 from Rawalpindi, one in Lahore and 7 in Faisalabad.

Four cases of wild cats were reported in Rawalpindi and two domestic cats were reported in Lahore. In most of the cases, these cats were entangled with electric wires and other high roof top buildings, when people called 1122 for a rescue (Figure 4).
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Figure 4. Cases of mammals reported from the four districts of Punjab, Pakistan.

Birds

Birds (n=156, 12%) were reported from 20 districts of Punjab, viz., Rawalpindi, Khanewal, Lahore, Hafiz Abad, Mianwali, Bhakhar, Sheikhupura, Layyah, Muzaffargarh, Multan, Khushab, Faisalabad, Jhelum, Bahawalnagar, Narowal, Lodhran, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Jhang and Gujrat (Figure 5).

Four cases of eagles were reported, 3 in Gujranwala and one in Hafizabad. Three cases of parrots and 4 cases of black-shoulder kite were reported in Rawalpindi and Khanewal, respectively. House crow cases were reported in the highest numbers (29) in Sargodha, followed by Faisalabad (13) and Rawalpindi (10). One case of dove was reported in Rawalpindi only. Kite (17 cases) was reported from Faisalabad only. Highest number (11) of un-identified bird cases were reported in Khanewal followed by 7 cases reported in Lahore.

Figure 5. Number of cases of birds reported with Rescue 1122 in different districts of Punjab, Pakistan during study period.
Reptiles

Reptiles invited the attention in 23 districts, viz. Hafiz Abad, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Khanewal, Mianwali, Narowal, Sheikhpura, Jhang, Lodhran, Chakwal, Rahim Yar Khan, Faisalabad, Bahawalnagar, Bhakhar, Sargodha, Bahawalpur, Layyah, Rajanpur, Khusab, Muzaffargarh, Gujrat and Multan with 816 (64%) reported cases. The highest number (100) of cases were reported in Sargodha, followed by Gujrat (99) and Multan (87) and the lowest numbers (3) reported in Layyah.

Thirteen lizard cases were reported in Lahore and Gujranwala districts. In other districts, fewer cases were reported. Big lizard (*Varanus* spp.) was reported in highest number from Rawalpindi, followed by Hafiz Abad (3) and Faisalabad (2), while one case each in Lodhran and Khanewal. A single case of Chameleon was reported in Hafiz Abad only, while 11 cases of iguana were reported in Lahore (Figure 7), and 746 cases of snakes from various districts of Punjab (Figure 6; Table 1).
Table 1. List of snake species found in different districts of Punjab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Species (Common name)</th>
<th>Districts of Case Reported</th>
<th>Poisonous/Non-Poisonous</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Area Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Eryx conicus</em> Common Sand boa</td>
<td>Bahawalpur, Jhang, Bahawalnagar, Mianwali, Khushab, Rahim Yar Khan</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Boidae</td>
<td>Sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>Eryx johnii</em> Brown Sand Boa</td>
<td>Mianwali, Khushab, Jhang</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Boidae</td>
<td>Sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Eryx tataricus</em> (Tartary Sand Boa)</td>
<td>Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Rahim Yar Khan, Mianwali, Jhang</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Boidae</td>
<td>Sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>Python molurus</em> (Indian Python)</td>
<td>Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Khushab, Chakwal,</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Boidae</td>
<td>All Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>Amphiesma platyceps</em> (Himalayan Mountain Keel-back)</td>
<td>Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Faisalabad</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Colubridae</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><em>Amphiesma sieboldii</em> Siebold’s Keel-back or Sikkim’s Keel-back</td>
<td>Sahiwal, Dera Ghazi Khan, Pakpattan, Mandi Bahauddin</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Colubridae</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>Boiga trigonata</em> Common Cat-Snake</td>
<td>All districts of Punjab</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Colubridae</td>
<td>All Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><em>Dendrelaphis tristis</em> Common Bronze-back Tree Snake (tree snake)</td>
<td>Rawalpindi, Narowal, Sialkot, Sahiwal, Okara, Dera Ghazi Khan, Lodhran, Mandi Bahauddin,</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Colubridae</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><em>Enhydris pakistanica</em> Pakistan’s Water snake or Sindhi Ditch Snake (water snake)</td>
<td>Khushab, Sargodha, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Okara, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhupura, Hafiz Abad, Bahawalnagar, Kasur, Lodhran, Layyah, Lahore, Multan, Muzaffargarh, Sialkot, Vehari, Toba Tek Singh</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Colubridae</td>
<td>Rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><em>Hemorrhois ravergerieri</em> Mountain Racer</td>
<td>Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Jhelum, Attock, Rajanpur</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Colubridae</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><em>Lycodon aulicus</em> Common Wolf Snake</td>
<td>Chiniot, Faisalabad, Hafiz Abad, Kasur, Lahore, Lodhran, Narowal, Okara, Sahiwal, Sargodha, Sialkot</td>
<td>Non-poisonous</td>
<td>Colubridae</td>
<td>Soft Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Species</td>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>Habitattypes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><em>Lytorhynchus maynardi</em> Maynard’s Awl-headed Sand Snake</td>
<td>Rahim Yar Khan, Bhakhar, Jhang</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Semi Desert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><em>Lytorhynchus paradoxus</em> Sind Awl-headed Sand Snake</td>
<td>Bhakhar, Jhang, Rawalpindi, Chakwal</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Margin of Desert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><em>Natrix tessellata</em> Dice Snake</td>
<td>All districts of Punjab</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, All Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><em>Oligodon arnensis</em> Russet Kukri Snake</td>
<td>Rawalpindi, Sahiwal, Sialkot</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Forest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td><em>Oligodon taeniolatus</em> Streaked Kukri Snake</td>
<td>Bahawalnagar, Dera Ghazi Khan Lodhran, Mandi Bahauddin, Multan, Muzaffargarh, Sahiwal, Sialkot.</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Rivers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td><em>Platyceps rhodorachis</em> Kashmir Cliff Racer</td>
<td>Bahawalpur</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Mountain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><em>Platyceps ventromaculatus</em> Sindhi Racer Bengal</td>
<td>All districts of Punjab</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Urban Area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><em>Psammophis condanarus</em> Sand Snake</td>
<td>Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Bhakhar, Jhang, Khanewal, Khushab, Layyah, Mianwali, Rahim Yar Khan,</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Sand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td><em>Psammophis lineolatus</em> Steppe Ribbon Snake</td>
<td>Bahawalpur, Bhakhar, Mianwali, Bahawalnagar, Rahim Yar Khan, Jhang.</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Sand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td><em>Psammophis schokari</em> Afro-Asian Sand Snake</td>
<td>Mianwali, Khushab, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur, Bhakhar.</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Sand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td><em>Pseudocyclophispersicus</em> Dark-headed Dwarf Racer</td>
<td>Mianwali, Khushab, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur, Bhakhar.</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Mountain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td><em>Sibynophis sagittarius</em> Golden Snake</td>
<td>All districts of Punjab</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, All Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td><em>Spalerosophis atriceps</em> Black-headed Royal Snake</td>
<td>Gujarati, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Vehari.</td>
<td>Non-poisonous, Colubridae, Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
27 | *Spalerosophis diadema*  
Eastern Diadem Snake | Bahawalpur | Non-poisonous | Colubridae | Desert
---|---|---|---|---
28 | *Telescopus rhinopoma*  
Desert Cat-Snake | Bahawalpur | Non-poisonous | Colubridae | Desert
29 | *Xenochrophiscersagoaster*  
Dark-bellied Marsh Snake or Painted Keel-back | Vehari, Toba Tek Singh, Sheikhpura, Sargodha, Sahiwal, Pakpattan, Okara, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Kasur, Mandi Bahauddin, Narowal, Lodhran | Non-poisonous | Colubridae | Plain Areas
30 | *Xenochrophis piscator*  
Checkered Keel-back or Asiatic water Snake | Bahawalnagar, D.G Khan, Lodhran, Multan, Muzaffargarh, Okara, Sahiwal, Sialkot | Non-poisonous | Colubridae | Plain areas with sandy areas
31 | *Xenochrophiss anctijohannis*  
St. John’s Keel-back | Rawalpindi | Non-poisonous | Colubridae | Mountain
32 | *Bungarus sindanus*  
North-western Punjab Krait Sindhi Krait | All districts of Punjab | Poisonous | Elapidae | Plain Areas
33 | *Naja naja*  
Indian Cobra | Rawalpindi | Poisonous | Elapidae | Mountain
34 | *Astrotia stokesii*  
Large-headed Sea Snake | All Punjab | Poisonous | Hydrophiidae | Plain Areas
35 | *Microcephalophis cantoris*  
Cantor’s Sea Snake | Jhelum, Gujrat, Mianwali, Chakwal and Rawalpindi | Poisonous | Hydrophiidae | Plain Areas
36 | *Myriopholis macrorhyncha*  
Large-beaked Thread Snake | All districts of Punjab | Non-poisonous | Leptotyphlopidae | Plain Areas
37 | *Ramphotyphlopsbra minus*  
Brahminy Blind Snake | All districts of Punjab | Non-poisonous | Typhlopidae | Plain Areas
38 | *Typhlops diardi*  
Kashmir Blind Snake | All districts of Punjab | Non-poisonous | Typhlopidae | Plain Areas
39 | *Typhlops ductuliformes*  
Slender Blind Snake | Rahim Yar Khan, Layyah, Khanewal, Bhakhar, | Non-poisonous | Typhlopidae | Desert
40 | *Typhlops porrectus*  
Slender Worm Snake | Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Bhakhar, Mianwali, Jhang, Khanewal, Khushab, Layyah, Rahim Yar Khan | Non-poisonous | Typhlopidae | Desert
41 | *Daboia russelli*  
Russell’s Chain Viper | All districts of Punjab | Poisonous | Viperidae | Desert and Sandy areas
UN-IDENTIFIED ANIMALS

A total of 264 (21%) un-identified animals were reported in 112 cases in Khanewal of which 10 were birds; 103 cases in Bahawalpur and only one in Khushab. One case of ‘Dod’ (local name) and one case of ‘Sro’ (local name) was reported in Khanewal and 7 in Khushab. Sufficient information was not available whereby the species could had been identified.

Number of cases of animal rescue reported with Rescue 1122 are not directly related to species abundance, level of wild animal invasion into human settlements and/or level of human reaction to wild animals. The service is mainly limited to towns and hence is not concerned with occurrence of such incidences in smaller towns/villages. Since major part of the human population is not aware of possible services of Rescue 1122 with regards to animal threat therefore at many occasions; people mostly handling the situation on their own. It is at rare occasions that the cases are reported to Rescue 1122, only when individual feel threatened, and especially when there is no adult male around.

Calling Rescue 1122 is caused by the lack of general public awareness about animal role in nature and its potentials of harming human, general perception of fear. Higher number of snake cases reported was indicative of general fear of masses about these animals though 7 of 43 species reported from Punjab (Pakistan) are poisonous to human. Look of porcupines creates fear though it does not attack man if left undisturbed. Scorpion, centipede/millipedes, rats, wasp and bees, lizards, mongoose, bats, etc. are generally not reported to Rescue 1122 for their having a lower degree of fear in human populations.

In the absence of proper training, the staff of Rescue 1122 training tries to control/ease out the situation; trying to cause minimum damage to the animal and finding a suitable habitat for its safe release, keeping to...
their person experiences/knowledge. In the absence of professional knowledge about animals and/or their habit/habitat, it is difficult for them to identify a species and may adopt wrong practices in controlling/capturing and/or release of these animals. It may sometimes be a dangerous for the life of the rescue workers. Apt staff training may help in proper analysis of the situation and rightful handling of the animals, while maintaining safety of the workers. This may also be useful in safeguarding some threatened/vulnerable species needing special care.

The present results suggest that although Rescue 1122 is not basically designed to rescue wild animals yet it provides useful service in animal rescue/safety/rehabilitation. This is also a concern of animal welfare. Various conservation programs have been launched for the survival of noteworthy species to balance the natural ecosystem and training Rescue staff may be helpful in success of such programs.

CONCLUSION

The current study suggests that Rescue 1122 is performing a useful role in safeguarding the wild animals trapped in the urban environment, apart from ensuring the public safety. The rescue staff is however not suitably trained for the purpose; which is a security risk for the rescue staff and the animal rescued. The rescue staff needs better training in wildlife rescue and release and the local community needs to be aware of the fuller potentials of Rescue 1122.

REFERENCES


Sajid et al. (2020). Role of Rescue 1122 in Wildlife Welfare


