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Successful management of a traumatic shoulder wound in a rescued barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*) at Veterinary Hospital Narharpur, Chhattisgarh, India: A case report

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Abstract

Wild ungulates frequently suffer traumatic injuries due to habitat fragmentation, road accidents, predator encounters, wire entanglement and increasing human-wildlife interactions. An adult male Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*) weighing approximately 18–20 kg was rescued by the Forest Department and presented to Veterinary Hospital Narharpur, Chhattisgarh, with a traumatic wound over the left shoulder region. Clinical examination revealed a deep lacerated wound involving skin and subcutaneous tissues with inflammation, pain and mild hemorrhage. The wound was managed through thorough cleansing, debridement, antiseptic dressing, systemic antibiotic therapy, anti-inflammatory medication and supportive treatment. Regular wound dressing at 48-hour intervals resulted in progressive granulation tissue formation and wound contraction. Complete healing was achieved within 21 days without complications. The animal regained normal activity and feeding behaviour and was subsequently declared fit for release into its natural habitat. This report highlights the importance of timely veterinary intervention and systematic wound management in successful wildlife rehabilitation.

Keywords: Barking deer, *Muntiacus muntjak*, wildlife rescue, traumatic wound, wildlife rehabilitation, wound management

Introduction

The Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*), also known as the Indian Muntjac, is one of the most widely distributed cervids in South and Southeast Asia. In India, the species inhabits forests, scrublands and forest-agricultural interfaces. Increasing anthropogenic pressure, habitat fragmentation and expansion of transportation networks have resulted in a growing incidence of traumatic injuries in free-ranging wildlife.

Traumatic wounds represent a common clinical condition encountered in rescued wild ungulates. Such injuries are frequently associated with hemorrhage, contamination, stress-induced immunosuppression and secondary bacterial infection. Prompt diagnosis and appropriate treatment are essential for ensuring survival and successful rehabilitation.

The present report describes the successful management of a traumatic shoulder wound in a rescued Barking Deer presented to Veterinary Hospital Narharpur, District Kanker, Chhattisgarh.

Case History

An adult male Barking Deer weighing approximately 18–20 kg was rescued by local forest personnel from a forest-fringe area of Kanker district and transported to Veterinary Hospital Narharpur for treatment.

According to the rescue team, the animal had sustained trauma, possibly due to collision with a fence or accidental injury during escape through dense vegetation. Upon presentation, the deer was alert but stressed and exhibited reluctance to move.

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Clinical Examination

Physical examination revealed:

- Mild depression and dehydration
- Deep traumatic laceration over the left shoulder/scapular region
- Moderate hemorrhage and tissue inflammation
- Exposure of subcutaneous tissues
- Pain upon palpation
- Mild swelling around the wound margins

Physiological parameters remained within acceptable limits

- **Rectal temperature:** 101.5°F
- **Heart rate:** 78 beats/minute
- **Respiratory rate:** 28 breaths/minute

No evidence of fracture, neurological impairment or thoracic involvement was detected.

Treatment and Management

The animal was manually restrained with assistance from Forest Department personnel and veterinary staff.

Wound Preparation

The wound region was clipped and thoroughly irrigated using sterile normal saline to remove debris and contaminants. Necrotic tissues were carefully debrided and the wound cavity was flushed with diluted povidone iodine solution.

Medical Therapy

The following therapeutic regimen was administered:

- Ceftriaxone @ 25 mg/kg IM once daily for 5 days
- Meloxicam @ 0.2 mg/kg IM once daily for 3 days
- Chlorpheniramine maleate @ 0.5 mg/kg IM once daily for 3 days
- Multivitamin supplementation
- Supportive fluid therapy as required

Follow-Up Wound Care

The wound was dressed every 48 hours using antiseptic dressing materials. Wound healing was monitored through periodic clinical examination.

Results

Marked reduction in inflammation and exudation was observed within seven days of treatment.

By Day 10

- Healthy granulation tissue developed
- No evidence of secondary infection was observed
- Wound margins showed contraction

By Day 15

- Significant epithelialization occurred
- Pain and swelling were absent

By Day 21

- Complete wound closure was achieved
- Hair regrowth was initiated
- Normal feeding and locomotor behaviour were restored

Following final assessment, the animal was certified fit for release into its natural habitat under supervision of the Forest Department.

Discussion

Traumatic injuries in free-ranging cervids are frequently associated with environmental hazards and increasing human interference. Effective wound management in wildlife presents unique challenges because stress, handling difficulties and delayed presentation can compromise healing. Successful wound management requires adequate cleansing, removal of devitalized tissue, prevention of bacterial contamination and control of inflammation. Broad-spectrum antimicrobials such as ceftriaxone are widely employed in wildlife medicine because of their effectiveness against common wound pathogens. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, including meloxicam, provide analgesia and reduce inflammatory responses that may delay tissue repair.

The favourable clinical outcome observed in the present case was primarily attributable to early intervention, proper debridement, infection control and regular wound dressing. Similar successful outcomes have been documented in rescued cervids and other wild ungulates receiving prompt veterinary attention.



Fig 1: Rescued Barking Deer presented at Veterinary Hospital Narharpur

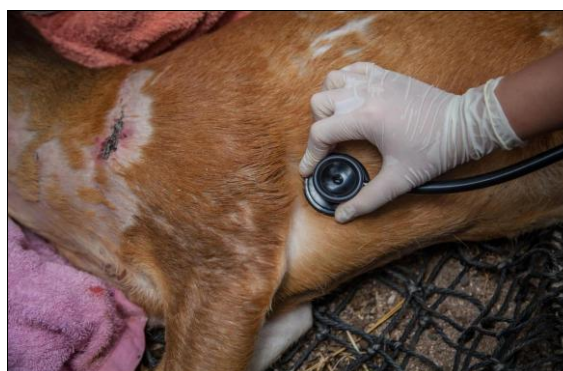


Fig 2: Clinical examination and wound assessment of the Barking Deer



Fig 3: Traumatic wound over the left shoulder region at initial presentation

Conclusion

The present case demonstrates that systematic wound management, antimicrobial therapy and supportive care can result in complete recovery of traumatic wounds in Barking Deer. Close coordination between veterinary professionals and forest authorities remains essential for successful rescue, treatment and rehabilitation of injured wildlife.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding publication of this manuscript.

Ethical Statement

The animal was rescued and treated under the supervision of competent veterinary authorities and Forest Department officials. All procedures were performed in accordance with accepted animal welfare guidelines.

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