



After learning that elephants used in polo are often beaten with sticks and gouged with heavy rods having sharp metal tips, the London-based Guinness World Records Ltd has decided to remove elephant polo records from its iconic book of world records.

Guinness was informed of the treatment meted out to elephants by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) through detailed correspondence.

The organisation has now informed PETA of the decision, Guinness sources today said.

Craig Glenday, editor-in-chief of Guinness World Records wrote, "Having read the correspondence, everyone at Guinness World Records is in agreement that we need to review all our records involving animals and ensure a strong stance on any involving even the hint of cruelty. For this reason, we have agreed to rest, among others, records for elephant polo".

Glenday said the company no longer ratified records pertaining to fox hunting, bullfighting, camel wrestling, and other activities that involve the tormenting and killing of animals.

"By removing all records pertaining to elephant polo, Guinness makes it clear that abusing animals is not something to regard as an 'achievement' but rather something to condemn for the shameful act that it is," PETA Vice-President of International Operations Poorva Joshipura said.

"Elephants belong in the wild, not on polo fields, where they are forced to obey confusing commands under the constant threat of punishment." Besides being beaten, elephants used for polo are reportedly often kept outside in full sun with little shelter or water.

When not being forced to 'play' polo, they are typically kept in chains.

In the letter to Guinness, PETA pointed out that many of the elephants used for polo have been taken from their families in the wild and subjected to a life of chronic physical ailments, social and emotional deprivation and premature death.

It said that the elephants were denied their most basic needs, including the companionship of other elephants and the ability to roam across vast expanses.

Elephants mourn their dead and experience joy, sadness and fear just as humans do. PTI