Human Animal Conflict - Leopard Castration Issue

What is the issue?

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- In late 2016, two leopards, suspected of being man-eaters were captured in Sariska National Park and transferred to Jaipur zoo.
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- At the Jaipur zoo, both the leopards were castrated.
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- Then in early February, 2017, they both were released back to their habitat.
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Why this action is perplexing?

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- Because, there is **hardly any study that associates the sexual drive of Leopards with their man-eating tendencies.**
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- Studies also warn of the dangers of releasing predators after captivity since the animals have lived through a period of stress.
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- Still, ignoring all the studies, the two Leopards were released just three months after they were captured.
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- In a cage, not only the leopard doesn’t need to hunt for food but also it comes into contact with people who feed it.
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- Researchers say that, if a predator is planned to be released later, then keeping it in captivity with frequent contact with humans is wrong.
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What is the response from the authorities?

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- Rajasthan’s wildlife warden has refuted the reports that said Rajasthan’s forest minister directed the rehabilitation of the leopards.
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- The deputy director of the Sariska said that he had recommended that the man-eaters should be kept in a zoo and decided later about how they should be released.
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- Man-animal conflicts have increased all over the country and there are lot of research on the behaviour of big cats available for study but the **park managers are either unaware of these studies** or are constrained by other reasons to not pay heed to them.
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Source: The Indian Express

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