



Asian Zoos Working Group Report

2008 CBSG Annual Meeting, Adelaide, Australia

Participants

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Background

This working group convened for a short session to discuss issues relevant to zoos across the diversity of institutions, countries and zoo associations in Asia. Participants included representatives from India, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia and Japan, and several zoo associations (CZA, JAZA, SEAZA, EAZA) as well as ISIS and CBSG.

Issues

The following issues were identified as impacting the ability of Asian zoos to effectively manage their collections and contribute positively to conservation:

1. Lack of accessible information on collections and programs in Asian zoos
2. Existence of substandard zoos in the region
3. Need for training (various aspects) for zoo staff (e.g., husbandry, education, animal record keeping)
4. Need for education programs (for zoo visitors and for the general public)
5. Lack of involvement in in situ conservation programs
6. Need for funding for education, workshops, and to improve substandard zoos
7. Difficult to communicate across international borders in Asia
8. Need to engage China (not represented in this working group) – the group recognized that there are a lot of contacts within CBSG, western zoos, ISIS for China
9. Lack of knowledge and sharing of plans among countries in region
10. Software language limitations (existing software); this will be better in ZIMS (Japanese and Chinese will be available immediately)
11. Few ISIS members in Asia
12. Zoo directors do not see the value of ISIS membership and record keeping
13. Funds for ISIS membership fee
14. Ineffectiveness of zoo sponsorship programs (in which a large zoo sponsors a small one) – these relationships tend not to work due to limited contact between institutions and changing staff and priorities
15. Jumping into a breeding program too early, without good data and husbandry; this may not be successful and could be detrimental (e.g., hybridization)

These issues were grouped into two priorities for the group:

1. Increase cooperation among the major zoos in Asia.
2. Improve substandard zoos and practices and bring them up to speed (as appropriate).

Actions


The working group discussed concrete steps that could be taken to improve communication and cooperation in the region and to promote good husbandry and practices among Asian zoos. This led to the following recommendations:

GOAL: Improve communication and cooperation among Asian zoos and zoo associations.

Action: *Develop a contact database for Chinese zoo contacts. (KTH to compile).*

Action: *Invite and encourage delegates from China to attend the annual CBSG and WAZA meetings. (KTH to follow-up)*

Action: *Develop a contact database for this region, possibly using the MySite feature on the portal. (NF and KTH will pool contacts)*



Action: Ask regional zoo associations in Asia to invite representatives from the other regional programs to their annual regional meetings. (KTH to follow-up with zoo associations)

Action: Have ISIS and CBSG representatives attend Asian regional zoo association meetings to discuss records and population management. (HS from ISIS possibly to attend 2008 SEAZA meeting in early December 2008; KTH to ask CAZG to invite us)

Action: Convene an Asian zoo working group at the next CBSG meeting to provide a forum to present national status reports and to further discuss issues and progress in the region. (KTH will follow up)

Action: Initiate a discussion group (email or on the portal). Possible uses of this group would be to:

- Identify priority species and programs for the region.
- Share information and improve cooperation.
- Identify needs and opportunities for cooperation and intra-regional training.

GOAL: Encourage the major zoos in the region using ARKS/records to work together on a few key species. EAZA has abundant experience with dealing with different countries and languages and may be able to assist (possibly through the EAZA conservation fund).

GOAL: Make it a priority to have high quality data entered in ARKS by zoos in the region for priority species. Need to identify the priority species across countries/regional associations.

Action: Develop a database of current or planned breeding programs in the region, and bring this to the next CBSG working group meeting. (KTH to check the WAZA SB list)

Action: Select at least 1 priority species and specific zoos involved with that species, and see what can be accomplished in the next year. This may be informative on what needs to be done next to move this goal forward. (KTH to email working group for further discussion)

GOAL: Improve standards, practices and expertise for substandard zoos.

Action: Promote the establishment of national legislation to provide minimal standards for zoos (e.g., India) and possibly also through WAZA.

GOAL: Identify and provide needed training in the region, with emphasis on a bottom up approach. Promote cooperation/exchange of information/training efforts among zoos within the region (not just depend on outside experts for expertise and training).

Action: Exchange training materials with each other in the region, ensuring that these materials end up in the hands of the right people (those who need and use it).

The working group plans to convene again at the 2009 CBSG annual meeting to continue this discussion and evaluate progress over the next year.