

# Asian Zoos Working Group UPDATE

## 2008 CBSG Annual Meeting, Adelaide, Australia

### **Working Group Update: July 2009**

This working group convened in Adelaide 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. Discussion of issues identified the following two major priorities for the group:

- 1) To increase cooperation among the major zoos in Asia; and
- 2) To improve standards, practices and expertise for zoos needing improvement throughout the region.

The following goals and actions were recommended at the 2008 working group session:

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

*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.*

**Progress:** An email discussion group of 27 members has being established, expanded to include some participants who could not attend the 2008 working group session. Included are representatives from China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and India. This group will be encouraged to consider and bring priority species and programs for their regions to the CBSG working group meeting in St. Louis for discussion and collaboration. The e-discussion group can also serve as a forum for discussion of potential training needs and opportunities as well as other relevant issues of collaboration and cooperation within Asia.

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

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

**Progress:** KTH liaised with Xie Zhong and the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens (CAZG) to update and expand information for Chinese zoos in the ISIS institution (mnemonic) database. Additional corrections to the ISIS database for India and Japan have been made through CZA and JAZA contacts. With assistance from Laurie Bingaman Lackey at ISIS, a subset of the current ISIS institution database for the south-central and eastern regions of Asia has been created and distributed to the e-discussion group. Two additional databases have been distributed to the group with contact information for official regional and international studbook keepers as reported to ISIS: one for all studbook keepers living in Asia, and one for all studbooks of Asian animal species. Discussion group members have been requested to send corrections/additions to these databases to LBL at ISIS.

Progress: CBSG has established a MySite section on the CBSG member site of the ISIS portal. In late summer/fall 2009, CBSG members will be required to establish a personal MySite on the portal to renew their membership for the next SSC quadrennium. This will provide the instant ability to search for contacts within the CBSG and ISIS portal by region as well as by other fields such as taxon and expertise. Although the MySite is in English, it will provide a means of initially identifying and connecting Asian colleagues to allow further communication via other methods.

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

Progress: KTH invited Xie Zhong and other CAZG colleagues to attend the CBSG and WAZA meetings. CAZG expressed interest in attending; although they will not be able to attend the 2009 meeting in St. Louis due to lack of available travel funds, Xie Zhong hopes to be able to participate in future CBSG meetings and is a member of the Asian Zoos e-Discussion Group.

*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).*

Progress: Several Asian regional zoo associations are sending representatives to the upcoming Southeast Asia Zoos Association (SEAZA) meeting in August 2009 in Seoul, Korea. Participants including representatives from JAZA (Japan) and CAZG (China) and span 8-10 Asian countries.

*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)*

Progress: The 2008 SEAZA meeting was cancelled; the 2009 SEAZA meeting is scheduled 5-9 August at Seoul Zoo and will be attended by an ISIS representative Kanako Nishimoto and CBSG member Karin Schwartz.

*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)*

Progress: A working group is scheduled at the 2009 CBSG annual meeting in St. Louis, and potential participants have been contacted and invited to attend and to supply national status reports.

**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 international studbook list).*

Progress: A list of the current studbook keepers and species managers in the region has been compiled and distributed to the e-discussion group (see second progress point on page 1). KTH to follow up with the e-discussion group and regional zoo associations to compile a list of coordinated breeding programs and will bring this information to the 2009 working group meeting for further revision and completion.

*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).*

Progress: KTH to bring to e-discussion group for initial discussion; priority species and specific action steps to be discussed by the 2009 working group.

**GOAL:** Improve standards, practices and expertise for zoos needing improvement throughout the region (building upon and expanding both past and current efforts).

*Action: Promote the establishment of national or provincial legislation to provide minimal standards for zoos, including successful examples and WAZA's recent "Zoos Needing Improvement" initiative and tools.*

Progress: There has been much progress with respect to zoo legislation in South Asia, starting with India's groundbreaking Zoo Act (1991) and including Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and, to a lesser extent, Bhutan and Pakistan. This work may serve as a model for other Asian countries.

**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).*

Progress: Formation of the e-discussion group and the MySite on the CBSG section of the ISIS portal will facilitate sharing of various training materials. The CBSG member site on the portal provides one option where a subgroup of CBSG members can post and share materials if they wish. Training materials and publications related to studbook and population management have already been gathered and shared to assist with planned training by JAZA (see below). Some of these materials may be posted on the CBSG member site for wider availability, including training materials used by CBSG and ISIS for recent studbook and population management training in Singapore, Japan and China.

Other progress in relation to training:

Progress: A CBSG workshop on the Conservation Breeding of Endangered Carnivores was held at the Taipei Zoo on 31 October – 2 November 2008. Information was provided on many aspects of veterinary care, reproduction, assisted reproduction, records, and population management, including a half-day mini practice session on using SPARKS. A more comprehensive workshop is in the planning stages, which will focus on the data analysis and conservation action plan development for several priority endangered species in Taiwan *ex situ* facilities.

Progress: Three training courses in animal records (ARKS) were held by CZA and ISIS for Indian zoos in December 2008 through February 2009. Additional training programs for Indian zoo staff included an animal keeping course for zoo supervisors in October 2008, a conservation breeding course for zoo veterinarians in March 2009; a course for laboratory assistants and veterinary compounders in May 2009; a short-term zookeeper training program for two Indian zoos; and *ex situ* conservation breeding workshops for pheasants (November 2008) and amphibians (January 2009).

Progress: CBSG conducted a SPARKS studbook training course for CAZG in Beijing in March 2009. The 31 trainees included almost all of the currently designated regional and international studbook keepers in China; some of these are ongoing studbooks, while others are newly established. Many studbook and population management materials were translated into Mandarin.

Progress: The Japanese zoos are building upon the two studbook/population management training courses conducted in 2008 by CBSG and ISIS, and have 3 training opportunities planned for 2009:

- 1) Population management (studbook) course for studbook keepers at each of the 6 local regional JAZA chapters, conducted by JAZA (August to December 2009).
- 2) Population management workshop in association with the JAZA SSCJ meeting in Kyoto in November 2009 (to review the various training efforts and their application); this will include a ZIMS presentation by ISIS.
- 2) Two regional collection planning workshops in late 2009 (Osaka and Tokyo), hosted by the Tokyo Zoological Parks Society and Osaka Zoo, and with assistance from ARAZPA.

Progress: Plans are underway to provide Japanese and Chinese versions of PMx (the new software replacement for PM2000, expected to be available in late 2009). This will facilitate training and use of this software for *ex situ* population management within JAZA and CAZG.

The Asian Zoos Working Group plans to convene again at the 2009 CBSG annual meeting to continue these discussions and evaluate progress over the next year.