



Collaboration Among Asian Zoos Working Group

Participants

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Background

This working group was a continuation of a working group convened at last year's 2008 CBSG annual meeting in Adelaide. The original purpose of the working group was to discuss issues relevant to zoos across the various countries and zoo associations in Asia and to promote collaboration among these institutions and associations.

Several factors have contributed to the historical lack of collaboration in the region. These include differences in language, culture, economic status and political status, as well as different visions of zoo management, standards, professional skills, and record keeping. In the past there has been no communication on a regular and frequent basis, and there is no overall zoo association that integrates the conservation activities across the entire region. Asian participants at the 2008 CBSG annual meeting recognized the need for greater collaboration among Asian zoological institutions and the benefits that such collaboration could bring, and sought to promote these through working group discussions.

Limited representation from Asian institutions at the 2009 CBSG meeting partially constrained the scope of this year's working group discussion; however, several topics were discussed and recommendations made to further collaborative efforts in this region.

Proposed Regional Association

SW was asked to summarize a discussion held at the SEAZA annual meeting at Seoul Zoo in August 2009. The SEAZA Board proposed the formation of a new regional zoo association to be called Zoos Asia. The proposal is that this new voluntary association would encompass all regional and national zoo associations within Asia. Such an association would not interfere with the operation of the existing zoo associations but rather would seek to strengthen all Asian zoos and their programs through increased communication and collaboration. Advantages to such an association include the establishment of a secretariat and the expansion of a regional focus beyond Southeast Asia. SEAZA is the primary contact.

Priority Species Collaboration

Last year the working group discussed the goal to identify high priority species for ex situ management within the region and to encourage high quality data (record keeping and analysis) and inter-institutional and inter-regional collaboration for management of these species. The goal for this year is as follows:

GOAL: *Identify the priority species for Asian zoos. To work toward this goal, the group needs to compile a list of priority species and existing studbooks and managed programs for all of the national and regional zoo associations within Asia.*

GOAL: *Identify at least one project for a jointly-held priority species to serve as a model to encourage communication, participation and collaboration.*

It was recognized that some of the progress made over the last year (establishment of an e-Discussion email group and development of a current list of studbook keepers and contact information for Asian zoos) as well as the newly proposed Zoos Asia organization will aid in this effort. KN is establishing a MySite area for Asian zoos on the ISIS portal that will also promote collaboration.

A suggestion was made to focus first on interested countries with functional zoo associations and to expand to others as the effort progresses.

Action: KTH will add the new working group members to the current e-Discussion email group, and will distribute the revised complete list of participants (revised list also given at the end of this report).

Action: KTH will distribute the updated contact information from ISIS (studbook keepers, institution list) to the e-Discussion group and to KN to post on the Zoos Asia MySite.

Action: KN will check to see that people on this list have access to MySite.

Action: ET will send a list of the Asian national and regional zoo associations to the e-Discussion group; KN will post on the Asian zoos MySite; both sites will request that the information be updated and expanded (including contact persons).

Action: Someone (ET, KN, ?) needs to review the participant list and identify any participants who may need translation of email messages and postings; key point persons then need to be identified to translate messages to the local language so that they can be passed on to others in the country.

Action: ET and possibly others will discuss these ideas with Suzanne Gendron (Ocean Park, Hong Kong) and Fanny Lai (Singapore) at WAZA (both unfortunately were not able to join the CBSG working group).

Action: ET will request participants of the e-Discussion group to list to provide information about priority species and current managed breeding programs.

Once data are collected regarding the priority and managed species in the region, one or more species can be selected to develop a collaborative project. The working group discussed several criteria that could help guide the selection of species to focus on first:

Species Criteria

- Asian species
- Easy to manage
- Species of interest to the institutions
- Large enough ex situ population
- Held by multiple regions/associations
- Species of conservation concern
- Avoid species with taxonomy uncertainty, at least initially as a model project
- Potential candidates include the red panda (multiple regions, conservation concern)
- Pangolin is another candidate (but is a difficult species to manage and breed)
- Black bear subspecies also a future candidate; taxonomic uncertainty is an issue, but some DNA samples are available (per DR), which might lend this to be an interesting project.

Initial list of possible contacts in the Asian region (draft)

China	CAZG	Zhong Xie
India	SAZARC/CBSG SA/ZOO	Sally Walker
India	SAZARC	Sarita Jnwali
Indonesia	SEAZA/Taman Safari Indonesia	Jansen Manansang
Japan	JAZA/CBSG Japan/ISIS Japan	Kanako Nishimoto
South Korea	Seoul Grand Park Zoo	Bosook Kim
Hong Kong	Ocean Park Zoo	Suzanne Gendron
Taiwan	TAZA/Taipei Zoo	Eric Tsao
Singapore	Singapore Zoo	Fanny Lai
Thailand	ZPO	Boripat Siriaroonrat



Initial list of national and regional zoo associations in Asia (draft)

China – CAZG: Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens

India – CZA: Central Zoo Authority of India (www.cza.nic.in)

Indonesia – PKBSI: Indonesian Zoological Parks Association

Japan – JAZA: Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums (www.jazga.or.jp)

Malaysia – MAZPA: Malaysian Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria

South Asia – SAZARC: South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (www.zooreach.org)

Southeast Asia – SEAZA: Southeast Asian Zoo Association (www.seaza.org)

Taiwan – TAZA: Taiwan Aquarium and Zoological Parks Association

Thailand – ZPO: Zoological Parks Organization of Thailand (www.zoothailand.org)

Zoos in Need

The issue of needy zoos in Asia was discussed by the group. SW has been working in South Asia for some time to assist in the improvement of zoos and promote zoo legislation focused on standards. India was the first to develop zoo legislation and set up a Central Zoo Authority, which 15 years later has improved many zoos and closed many others when deemed necessary. The WAZA evaluation tool was developed by a working group in WAZA set up to address the issue of zoos needing improvement, and is being used by some zoo associations in a variety of ways. SEAZA has been conducting their own assessments or zoo standards evaluations within Southeast Asian zoos for a number of years.

In South Asia, much of the problem is administrative rather than financial, with mandatory transfer of high-level staff (directors, veterinarians, curators) and lack of adequate value given to the potential of lower level staff. National legislation regarding zoo standards has been helpful in India, which is an excellent role model for encouraging similar action by other South Asian countries. Financial support through matching schemes for improvements with relevant state governments was given by the Government of India to facilitate improvement.

The group discussed the possibility of bottom-up assistance, such as providing training, education and resources. Basic training (e.g., record keeping, individual animal identification) is one of the most important activities required. Training programs have long been established in India; most recently, three records keeping training sessions were conducted over the past year in India for staff from 40 zoos, 13 of which have already sent data to ISIS. Record keeping training is essential even for non-ISIS member institutions that use alternative record keeping systems, and should include the critical role of accurate records as well as the importance of data security and backups to protect against data loss.

In some cases, zoo staff has only ever seen “bad” zoos, and would benefit from seeing good designs and management. ZooLex is a potential source, but visiting good zoos is very valuable. It would be valuable to have good zoos invite zoo staff from other needy zoos, perhaps hosting a training program to provide an opportunity to see good zoos. As an example, Tama Zoo has a relationship with Sabah to set up a zoo in Sabah. Tama Zoo staff is visiting Sabah and vice versa for training, with a focus on orangutans and exchange of in situ and ex situ information. This type of sister zoo collaborative project especially within the same country can encourage improvements, as language, culture, economy, etc. are similar and the gap between same-country or same-region zoos is not as extreme as with western zoos. New such projects should be established and current ones promoted and developed.

Action: *Establish a committee for identifying needy zoos within the region that want help to improve their standards.*

Action: *Translate the WAZA assessment tool into local Asian languages.*

Action: *Promote zoo standards legislation being initiated by zoos themselves.*

Action: *Provide basic training for staff of needy zoos.*

Action: *Encourage accredited or recognized zoos to invite staff from needy zoos and to host training programs.*



Future Plans

The working group tentatively plans to reconvene at the 2010 CBSG annual meeting provided that members still view such a working group session as valuable at that time. Possible topics include national status reports and review of progress regarding the group's goals and recommended actions, particularly the development of one or more collaborative projects around high priority species.

Asian Zoo e-Discussion Group

1. Eric Tsao, Taipei Zoo, TAIWAN
2. Xie ZHONG, Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens (CAZG), CHINA
3. Xiaohong WANG, CAZG, CHINA
4. Suzanne Gendron, Ocean Park, HONG KONG
5. Kazuyoshi ITOH, Ueno Zoo, JAPAN
6. Kazushi KUWABARA, Hiroshima City Asa Zoological Park, JAPAN
7. Mitsuko MASUI, Yokohama Zoo, JAPAN
8. Akemi NARITA, Yokohama Zoo, JAPAN
9. Kazutoshi TAKAMI, Osaka Municipal Tennoji Zoo, JAPAN
10. Yasumasa TOMITA, Tama Zoo, JAPAN
11. Hidemasa HORI, Ueno Zoo, JAPAN
12. Kanako NISHIMOTO, ISIS, JAPAN
13. BoSook Kim, Seoul Zoo, SOUTH KOREA
14. SeungAee Ma, Seoul Zoo, SOUTH KOREA
15. Fanny Lai, Wildlife Reserves Singapore, SINGAPORE
16. Kumar Pillai, Night Safari, SINGAPORE
17. Biswajit Guha, Singapore Zoo, SINGAPORE
18. Jansen Manansang, Taman Safari Indonesia, INDONESIA
19. Sherman Wong, Taman Safari Indonesia, INDONESIA
20. Boripat Siriaronrat, Zoological Parks Organization of Thailand (ZPO), THAILAND
21. Karn Lekagul, Dusit Zoo, THAILAND
22. Brij R. Sharma, Central Zoo Authority, INDIA
23. Sally Walker, Zoo Outreach Organisation, INDIA
24. Sanjay Molur, Zoo Outreach Organisation, INDIA
25. Gerald Dick, WAZA, SWITZERLAND
26. Kristin Leus, CBSG Europe/EAZA, BELGIUM
27. Christian Schmidt, SWITZERLAND
28. Ivan Rehak, Prague Zoo, CZECH REPUBLIC
29. Jonathan Ballou, Smithsonian National Zoo, USA
30. Nate Flesness, ISIS, USA
31. Kathy Traylor-Holzer, CBSG, USA
32. Nancy Clum, WCS, USA
33. Robert Cook, WCS, USA
34. David Reed, University of Louisville, USA