

CBSG UPDATE



Member Announcements

November 2009

CBSG Annual Meeting

Our thanks to all 83 participants for making the 2009 CBSG Annual Meeting a great success. This year's conference included working groups on a variety of current topics, including climate change, species conservation planning, and *ex situ* population management. Watch your email for working group reports, which will be published in the upcoming issue of *CBSG News*. Congratulations to Lena Linden of *Nordens Ark*, winner of the 2009 Ulysses S. Seal Award for Innovation in Conservation.



Recent CBSG Projects

A National Action Plan for Jaguars in Brazil

In November 2009, CBSG Brasil worked with the IUCN Cat Specialist Group to facilitate and model populations at the first Brazilian National Action Plan for Jaguars (*Panthera onca*). The workshop was organized and funded by the Brazilian government, and national and international conservation NGOs. During the workshop, participants adapted parts of the IUCN/SSC handbook for Species Conservation Planning into CBSG's PHVA process. The IUCN Red List Criteria were applied to jaguar populations from different Brazilian biomes and the distribution of jaguars was mapped using various tools. The report is currently being compiled, as is a special issue in the Cat Specialist Group newsletter, to share our approaches to action planning and results with cat conservationists worldwide.



Mapping jaguar distribution

Acropora Coral Conservation/Restoration Workshop

Elkhorn coral (*Acropora palmata*) and staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*) are critical Caribbean reef building species that once formed dense thickets and stands. As a result of multiple anthropogenic and natural impacts, these species have declined 80-99% from their historic population levels, negatively impacting the structure and function of reefs throughout their range. Both species are classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN Red List. In November



42 conservation professionals from five countries came together for a workshop organized by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and facilitated by CBSG.

The major accomplishments of the participants include: drafting the contents of a best practices propagation manual, creating the outline of an outplanting strategy, and agreeing to establish an international coral propagation consortium.

Giant Panda Technical Meeting

Almost eight years have passed since CBSG led the Genetic Management for Giant Pandas *Ex Situ* Workshop in Chengdu, China. Supported by the Smithsonian National Zoo, CBSG has facilitated discussion of population goals and breeding strategies and recommendations at each subsequent giant panda (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*) masterplanning session. Population growth has exceeded expectations, resulting in a demographically and genetically viable population of nearly 300 pandas globally in 50 institutions, an incredible achievement especially in light of the setbacks experienced from the May 2008 earthquake that devastated the Wolong breeding facility. International collaboration and *in situ-ex situ* connections continue to expand to promote development of a comprehensive species management plan for pandas.

At the annual giant panda conference in November 2009 in Chengdu, there was wide recognition of the need to re-focus *ex situ* population management strategies on genetic management and promotion of natural reproductive and



parental care behaviors. CBSG facilitated a discussion among technical committee members and holding institutions to set new population goals and breeding strategies for more intensive genetic management. A new target global population size of 500 pandas is recommended in order to retain 90% gene diversity for 200 years. Multiple purposes were identified for the *ex situ* population, including the likely role as a source of pandas for release. Recommendations included a workshop to assess *in situ* conservation issues such as habitat assessment, disease risk assessment, population status, and exploration of reintroduction strategies.

Population Management Training in Taiwan

As a follow-up to the workshop on Conservation Breeding of Endangered Carnivores held in November 2008, Kathy Traylor-Holzer (CBSG) and Jonathan Ballou (Smithsonian National Zoo) conducted a five-day training course in November at the Taipei Zoo. Topics included studbook development, data analysis, scientific *ex situ* population management principles and tools, species prioritization for management, and administrative aspects of species management coordination. Participants developed hands-on skills through practice exercises using SPARKS and PM2000. This training helps to increase population management understanding and expertise in the region, and provided a framework with which Taipei Zoo and collaborating institutions can develop comprehensive *ex situ* management programs for key species such as pangolins, orangutans and Burmese star tortoises.



Scimitar-Horned Oryx Conservation and Reintroduction Workshop

The scimitar-horned oryx (*Oryx dammah*) native to the Sahelo-Saharan region of Africa is now extinct in the wild. Approximately 700 animals are managed in North American, European and Australasian zoos, and as many as 2000 more are held in semi-captive conditions in the United Arab Emirates. These animals can be valuable additions to the captive source population, but the demographic, genetic and health status of this semi-captive population is currently unknown.

To address these issues, and begin planning the reintroduction of scimitar-horned oryx, the Sahara Conservation Fund invited CBSG to design and facilitate the first of a series of workshops hosted by the Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort, UAE. More than 20 experts in scimitar-horned oryx biology, ecology, captive management, and conservation attended, including representatives from four range countries where reintroduction programs are already underway.

Primary objectives included creating a sense of global community and engagement among stakeholders; identifying the full breadth of issues of concern that may impact the success of the reintroduction effort; and developing of criteria by which we can measure and evaluate the security of the *ex situ* oryx population.

Participants identified projects focused on genetic and veterinary analyses of the UAE semi-captive population, created and used risk assessment tools to evaluate alternative release strategies, and engaged range country authorities that can support new local reintroduction initiatives. Based on the success of this first workshop, two additional meetings have already been requested for 2010 in Algeria and Libya.



Upcoming Meetings

Action Planning for the Paraiba River

In November 2009, CBSG Brasil facilitated a workshop organized to establish goals and key stakeholders for a future action plan to help save endangered species of fish of the Paraiba river. After establishing a threat matrix, six species were identified for consideration. The action planning workshop will take place in late May 2010, and will be sponsored by a government conservation organization and local hydroelectric company.

Tanzanian Chimpanzee Conservation Action Planning Workshop

CBSG is working with the Jane Goodall Institute and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the upcoming Chimpanzee Conservation Action Planning (CAP) workshop to be held in Dar es Salaam on 19-21 January 2010. This workshop will build upon previous TNC CAPs for protected chimp (*Pan troglodytes*) populations in Gombe and Mahale National Parks. TNC will apply its CAP process to develop a national action plan for chimpanzees in Tanzania, including substantial chimp populations that live outside of protected areas. Prior to the CAP workshop, CBSG will conduct a Population Viability Analysis (PVA) in concert with key field researchers, JGI, TNC and other stakeholders to provide a framework for evaluating the viability and significance of protected and non-protected chimp populations under various conditions. This Vortex model will serve as a tool during the CAP workshop to assist participants in assessing various management strategies being considered during the development of the national action plan.

Continuing Projects and Other Announcements

Modeling for Baird's Tapir in Guatemala

In October 2009, Guatemalan biologists Manolo Garcia and Fernando Cabrera worked with CBSG Brasil staff to develop a model to assess the viability of tapirs in Guatemala. Adapting the baseline model created during the 2005 Baird's tapir PHVA in Belize, they began to model different populations in Guatemala. CBSG staff outlined the types of information on landscapes, connectivity, threats and anthropogenic impacts that needs to be collected in order to build a complete model. This work will continue throughout 2010.

First Place Award for CBSG Brasil's Primate PVA Work

CBSG Brasil's Leandro Jerusalinsky attended the I Seminário de Pesquisa e Iniciação Científica do ICMBio. He presented results from the 2008 PVA workshop for Brazilian primates, which won a first place award for work conducted by a government employee. More PVA workshops for endangered species of Brazilian primates are planned for the future by CBSG Brasil.

