Doing more, doing it differently, doing it more successfully

People involved with CBSG, or any organization concerned with biodiversity, know that the biodiversity crisis is real and it is scary. Even before the revelations of the horrific impacts of chytrid fungus on amphibians, the prospect of other emergent diseases decimating wildlife, and the certainty that climate change will have many direct and indirect impacts that threaten species and ecosystems, it was known that species are being eliminated at an alarming rate, ecological communities are collapsing, and the environmental services that sustain life are being degraded. Most of the world’s governments made a commitment in the Convention on Biodiversity Targets to stop the rapid extinction of species by 2010. However, the reviews conducted before the latest round of the CBD Convention of Parties showed that the rates of extinction for almost all taxonomic groups and in all regions of the world have accelerated, not diminished, since that commitment was made.

Many good and often successful conservation efforts have been undertaken, but as one participant in the CBSG Annual Meeting noted, “we need to do more of the same, and we need to do more of the different.” That is, we need to do far more of what has been shown to be successful, but we also need new approaches to conservation for solving as yet unyielding and new
problems. Our 2010 Annual Meeting in Cologne was an excellent example of doing more of the same, and doing more differently. The working groups revisited some themes that have been foci of our attention for several years — for example, advancing the Amphibian Ark, addressing climate change, and reviewing the IUCN guidelines on the use of ex situ populations for conservation — and we made further progress in each of these areas. We also explored several new issues, themes, and conservation methodologies — including assisted colonization, the Miradi tools for conservation planning, use of virtual participation in the meeting, and planning a Species Conservation Congress. These discussions all benefitted from both the talents and experience of many old friends (long-time participants in the CBSG) and the expertise of colleagues who were new to CBSG (including as Markus Gusset of WAZA, Amielle DeWan of Defenders of Wildlife, B.S. Bonal of the Central Zoo Authority of India, Phil McGowan of the World Pheasant Association, Dave Mallon of the Antelope Specialist Group, and many others).

We need the involvement of many people, with much talent, diverse experience, and many new ideas to achieve success in reducing the rate of loss of biodiversity. CBSG is extremely fortunate to have many members and partners that are able and willing to work creatively and hard for species. We still need to do yet more, and more differently, for conservation, and we will do so in our ongoing work throughout 2011. We look forward to our next exciting annual meeting in Prague, at which we will hear reports of our successes and plan our further initiatives.

Sincerely,

Robert Lacy, Chair
Working Group Summaries
Assisting Zoos in Animal Welfare Working Group

Participants
Session One: Bob Cook, Kristin Leus, Phil McGowan, Gordon McGregor Reid, Dave Morgan, Gloria Svampa, Kathy Traylor-Holzer, Sally Walker, Chris West, Dan Wharton

Session Two: Bryan Carroll, Andrea Fidgett, Georgina Groves, Lydia Kolter, Dave Morgan, Clifford Nxomani, Jackie Ogden, Theo Pagel, Saman Semanayake, Sally Walker

Background
Conservation is sometimes considered antithetical to animal welfare. However, it is an important concern for the zoo community and for field biologists. This group discussed creating standards for welfare in conservation work, and how CBSG can help the conservation community improve.

Action Points in Priority Order
- Define why CBSG should be involved - what our niche is (e.g., our role as a science-based organization).
- Engage with conservation NGOs and animal welfare community to understand what work is going on and where the gaps are.
- Define contexts where welfare and conservation really intersect - where the impact of welfare in conservation lies (reintroduction, culling, moderate management-mountain gorillas receiving vet care).
- IUCN statement on conservation welfare.
- Address cultural differences in welfare - science, regulatory/legal, and society/public opinion.

To read the full working group presentation, visit: [http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/2010_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/welfare.pdf](http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/2010_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/welfare.pdf)

Public Education to Bring About Behavioral Change Working Group

Background
The central mission of CBSG is ‘We save threatened species by increasing the effectiveness of conservation worldwide’. A sub-mission that fell out of this is: we create and disseminate innovative and interdisciplinary science based tools and methodologies. CBSG wanted to know if it was necessary to set up a permanent working group on this topic, which was the main purpose of this group’s discussions.

Key Actions
- CBSG needs to be aware and alerted to ensure that there are always education outputs from various workshops, i.e., integrate this as a process in every workshop.
- It is important to engage children and young people and to use the expertise of those who know how to do this. This expertise should be incorporated from the zoo world, and other organizations, and also by sharing expertise between regional organizations, i.e., ensure processes also take this aspect into account.
- To aid this further a stronger link between IZE and the regional education associations should be found
- Link regional CBSG groups sharing processes and tools that result in educational outcomes.

To read the full working group report, visit: [http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/2010_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/education.pdf](http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/2010_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/education.pdf)
Working Group Summaries

Species Conservation Tools Working Group

Participants
Onnie Byers, Amielle DeWan, Pavla Hejcmanová, Caroline Lees (participated remotely from Australia), David Mal- lon, Philip McGowan, Phil Miller, Claire Mirande, Sanjay Molur, Kristin Leus, Mark Stanley Price, Kathy Traylor-Hol- zer, Jonathan Wilcken

Background
This working group was developed to expose participants to the draft Conservation Planning Tools Table and to provide training in web-based workshop preparation, Miradi, and structured decision-making.

Follow-Up and Next Steps
A number of additional activities were identified to continue work on the conservation planning toolkit as well as the cross-fertilization of the Open Standards/CBSG/and SSC planning approaches. These include:

• Follow up with planning toolkit members to refine definitions.
• Refine selection categories to be more discerning among tools.
• Refine planning language crosswalk. Reach out to SSC planning committee members to clarify details.
• Defenders attend PVA/PHVA.
• CBSG attend Open Standards training.
• Defenders provide Miradi webinar and training for those who were interested.

To read the full working group report, visit:

Species Conservation Congress Working Group

Participants
Jon Ballou, Jeffrey Bonner, Paul Boyle, Bryan Carroll, Bob Cook, John Corder, Danny DeMan, Gerald Dick, Lesley Dickie, Nate Flesness, Jo Gipps, Jenny Gray, Biswajit Guha, Markus Gussset, Heribert Hofer, Bengt Holst, Mike Jordan, Dennis Kelly, Eric Miller, Dave Morgan, Clifford Nxomani, Jackie Ogden, Theo Pagel, Alex Reubel, Mark Stanley Price, Gloria Svampa, Kevin Zippel

The group reviewed in detail the IUCN resolution to consider a Species Congress, and initiated a discussion of some of the broader aspects of a Species Congress.

Final Recommendations
The working group concluded that a World Species Congress is a critically important endeavor. We strongly recommend that the Species Survival Commission endorse and facilitate this Congress. We feel that, with the support and guidance of the SSC, the Congress can maximize participation and lend the Congress maximal legitimacy. We further suggest that the SSC set up a sub-committee to help organize and promote the Congress, as we do not feel that any one Specialist Group has the mandate or wherewithal to accomplish such a far-reaching effort and, further, that using a sub-committee would result in maximizing participation of all the various specialist groups. The working group recommendations were presented at the WAZA Council meeting for their endorsement and approval.

To read the full working group report, visit:
Working Group Summaries

IUCN Ex situ Guidelines Review Working Group

Participants
B.S. Bonal, John Corder, Lesley Dickie, Pavla Hejcmmanova, Uraw Jaudt, Mike Jordan, Lydia Kolter, Antoinette Kotze, Kristin Leus, Aurelio Malo, Mike Maunder, Phil McGowan, David Morgan, Kanako Nishimoto, Frank Rietkerk, Christian Schmidt, Lee Simmons, Christoph Schmitter, Geer Scheres, Yasumasa Tomita, Kathy Traylor-Holzer, William van Lint, Jan Vermeer, Dan Wharton, Waltraut Zimmerman, Kevin Zippel

The current IUCN Technical Guidelines on the Management of Ex situ Populations for Conservation do not provide sufficient clear guidance on IF and WHEN ex situ activities are a beneficial component of an overall conservation strategy for a taxon and, in some cases, can even lead to contradictory interpretations. This working group began the process of revising these guidelines by outlining suggested steps in a more formal, informed, and transparent decision-making process to guide the evaluation of whether individuals should be taken from the wild for the purpose of supporting species conservation. These steps include a status review, definition of purpose and structure of any ex situ program, and feasibility/risk assessment. An initial list of relevant factors or characteristics to consider in this process was identified for each of these steps. Immediately following the CBSG annual meeting, a formal proposal for revision of the guidelines was submitted to the IUCN SSC’s Steering Committee and has been approved. Guidelines revision will proceed in early 2011.

To read the full working group report, visit:

Climate Change & Assisted Colonization Working Group

Participants

This working group continues the work done in 2008 and 2009 at CBSG Annual Meetings. In this group, there was discussion of Assisted Colonization, the human-mediated movement of plants or animals into areas of habitat that are outside current or inferred historic range for the conservation purposes of either establishing viable species populations(s) in the face of extinction prospects across the entire current range, and/or the creation of a needed ecosystem function.

To read the full working group report, visit:
Working Group Summaries

Drafting a Vision for Intensively Managed Populations Working Group

Participants
Brad Andrews, Anne Baker, Jonathan Ballou, Paul Boyle, Dalia Conde, Robert Cook, Danny de Man, Nate Flesness, Lewis Green, Markus Gusset, Bengt Holst, Hidemasa Hori, Dennis Kelly, Robert Lacy, Arne Lawrenz, Claire Mirande, Biswajit Guha, Theo Pagel, Alex Rübel, Karin Schwartz, Dan Wharton, Jonathan Wilcken

Background
Intensively Managed Populations (IMPs) are those populations (or individuals thereof) that are reliant on human intervention for survival of that population (or individuals thereof). This group developed a draft vision statement (below) for IMPs, and set goals for a meeting on IMPs that was subsequently held in December 2010.

Intensive population management as part of an integrated and holistic conservation plan results in species living within healthy ecosystems in evolving communities.

The group also created the following statement, which can be used as a preamble to help set the framework for the IMP (ex situ) guidelines.

To preserve biodiversity, the global conservation community commits to providing the level of intervention necessary to prevent the extinction of species. Intensive population management (including, but not limited to management within zoos and aquariums, botanic gardens, other propagation centers, closely managed reserves, and genome banks) is effective when integrated with other conservation measures within an overall species conservation strategy that fully addresses the threats to the species, using the best available science, technology, and practices. We work toward a world in which all species can live within healthy ecosystems as part of evolving communities, without the need for continued human intervention.

To read the full working group report, visit: http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/2010_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/imp_wg.pdf
CBSG Network News

CBSG Australasia

Recent Workshops

- Facilitation Training Course
- Scimitar-horned Oryx Reintroduction Planning
- Mountain Bongo PHVA

The CBSG Australasia network was launched at the 2008 CBSG Annual Meeting, and has since begun conducting workshops in the region as well as assisting in workshops in other regions.

CBSG Australasia is leading efforts to update the Disease Risk Assessment (DRA) Manual, originally published in 2002. An international workshop, hosted by CBSG Australasia and the Auckland Zoo, is planned for April 2011, to begin the process of collaboratively revising the current DRA Manual in collaboration with end-users and subject experts. The aim is to create an updated wildlife DRA resource based on best available science and technology that serves the needs of the global wildlife conservation community and is the centerpiece of a global training program for wildlife conservation professionals.

For a more detailed update on CBSG Australasia activities, visit: http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/200_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/australasia.pdf

CBSG Brasil

Recent Workshop

- Action Plan for the Conservation of Threatened Species of Freshwater Fish and Turtles of the Southern Paraiba River Basin

One of the most exciting aspects of the Paraiba River workshop was the wide diversity of stakeholders (43 participants from 22 different institutions) that were present. Participants had very diverse backgrounds and included government and nongovernmental representatives, researchers, fishermen, representatives from hydroelectric companies, community groups and many more. Discussions were very interesting and the workshop enabled participants to exchange knowledge, experience and establish new partnerships.

Some of the actions recommended during the workshop are already being implemented. A new partnership between a professor from a museum in Rio and staff from CEPTA has been created as a result of the workshop. Less than a month after the workshop, an expedition to inventory the fish species in the upper Paraiba region was run by this new partnership. The action plan will be reviewed annually and progress carefully monitored.

For a more detailed update on CBSG Brasil activities, visit: http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/200_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/brasil.pdf
CBSG Network News

CBSG Europe

Recent Workshops
- Red Panda PHVA
- Facilitation Training Course for EAZA Staff

During the past year CBSG Europe has worked closely with EAZA, CBSG South Asia and other CBSG staff in preparing workshops within and outside Europe, and has worked with EAZA and Kew Gardens to consult on a strategic plan for ex situ conservation programs for European species. The network’s tasks include providing input on global and regional ex situ conservation actions, and the need for strategic approaches and planning for additional ex situ programs within the European Union.

CBSG Europe staff have also assisted in leading workshops in other regions, conducted training sessions, and are actively participating in planning future workshops, such as a Chimpanzee PHVA for Sierra Leone.

For a more detailed update on CBSG Europe activities, visit: http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/2010_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/europe.pdf

CBSG Mesoamerica

Recent Workshops
- Vortex Training Course
- Review of Costa Rican Amphibians on the IUCN Red List

CBSG Mesoamerica continued its work in amphibian conservation by facilitating a workshop to re-evaluate the status of Costa Rican amphibians on the IUCN Red List, and evaluate the goals of the Costa Rican Amphibian Conservation Strategy in light of the status of those species. The group focused on evaluating 81 species, and changed the status of 51 of them. Participants evaluated the progress of the Costa Rican Amphibian Conservation Strategy and committed to completing the remaining actions.

Additional workshops are planned and funding is being sought for work on Costa Rican crocodiles, Cuban cranes, and humpback whales.

For a more detailed update on CBSG Mesoamerica activities, visit: http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/2010_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/mesoamerica.pdf
CBSG Network News

CBSG South Asia

Recent Workshops
- Red Panda PHVA
- Training for Kabul Zoo Staff
- Eastern Himalayas & Western Ghats Freshwater Biodiversity Assessments

CBSG South Asia has continued to spread its message of conservation through education throughout the region, as well as conducting assessments and planning workshops for many native species. Red pandas, Theraphosid spiders, and many species in the Western Ghats region have been focused on in recent months. CBSG South Asia has also worked to provide training for zoo staff, and strengthen regional taxon-based networks such as those for primates and invertebrates in South Asia.

The red panda PHVA workshop was organized by the Government of Nepal, Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Department of Forest, the NTNC, CBSG South Asia and WWF, and facilitated by a joint team of CBSG South Asia and CBSG Europe. Funding was provided by WWF Germany, Rotterdam Zoo and members of the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA). This was one of the first PHVAs to incorporate the visioning component of the IUCN/SSC Species Conservation Strategy approach. The 60 delegates, including representatives of three range countries – Nepal, Bhutan and India – envisioned a future for Red Pandas in Nepal of: “Secure, viable populations distributed in contiguous natural habitat throughout the Himalaya regardless of national boundaries where this flagship species brings benefits to the region and is valued and protected by all stakeholders”.

For a more detailed update on CBSG South Asia activities, visit: [http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/2010_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/south_asia.pdf](http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/2010_Ann_Mtg_Newsletter/south_asia.pdf)

CBSG Southern Africa

CBSG Southern Africa has continued to work with local partners and the Endangered Wildlife Trust to preserve species in the region. They are also developing a global species database, with the goal of providing an online CAMP database for all regional networks to utilize. This database will allow expert taxon groups around the world to input data and view the data provided by other groups, making important data available to researchers everywhere.

Future planned workshops include PHVAs for African lions and East African grey-crowned cranes, as well as a re-assessment of the Red Data List for mammals of South Africa.

2010 CBSG Annual Meeting Participants

Africam Safari
Amy Camacho

Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort
Mike Maunder

Amphibian Ark
Kevin Zippel

Apenheul Primate Park
Frank Rietkerk

Auckland Zoo
Jonathan Wilcken

Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Paul Boyle

British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Georgina Groves
Miranda Stevenson

Bristol Zoo Gardens
Bryan Carroll
Jo Gipps
Christoph Schwitzer

CBSG
Onnie Byers
Robert Lacy
Philip Miller
Kathy Traylor-Holzer

IUCN/SSC Antelope Specialist Group
David Mallon

Central Zoo Authority
Bishan Singh Bonal

Chester Zoo
Andrea Fidgett
Gordon McGregor Reid

Chicago Zoological Society
Karin Schwartz
Dan Wharton

Columbus Zoo and Aquarium
Lewis Greene

Conservatoire pour la Protection des Primates
Jan Vermeer

Copenhagen Zoo
Frands Carlsen
Bengt Holst
Kristin Leus

Czech University of Life Sciences
Pavla Hejcmovaná

Defenders of Wildlife
Amielle Devan

Disney’s Animal Kingdom
Jackie Ogden

Endangered Wildlife Trust
Mike Jordan

European Association of Zoos and Aquaria
Danny De Man
Lesley Dickie
William Van Lint

Imperial College
Aurelio Malo

International Crane Foundation
Claire Mirande

International Species Information System
Nate Flesness

Italian Association of Zoos and Aquaria
Gloria Svampa

Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquaria
Kenako Nishimoto

Kamogawa Sea World
Kazutoshi Arai

Kölner Zoo
Olaf Behlert
Lydia Kolter
Bernd Marcarde
Theo Pagel
Alexander Sliwa
Thomas Ziegler
Waltraud Zimmerman

Leibnitz-Institut für Zoo & Wildlife Research
Heribert Hofer
Miriam Brandt

Max Planck Institute
Dalia Conde

National Zoological Gardens of South Africa
Antoinette Kotze
Clifford Nxomani

Nordens Ark
Lena Linden

Ocean Park
Suzanne Gendron

Omaha Zoo Foundation
Lee Simmons

PAAZAB
Dave Morgan

Perth Zoo
Susan Hunt

Prague Zoo
Ivan Rehak

Provincial Environment Authority of the North Western Province, Sri Lanka
Saman Senanayake

Royal Zoological Society of Scotland
Arnaud Desbiez

Saint Louis Zoo
Jeffrey Bonner
Eric Miller

San Diego Zoo
Robert Wiese

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, Inc.
Brad Andrews

Seoul Zoo
Bosook Kim

Smithsonian National Zoological Park
Jonathan Ballou
Dennis Kelly

Toledo Zoo
Anne Baker

University of Edinburgh
Alastair MacDonald

The Wilds
Evan Blumer

Tokyo Zoological Park Society
Hidenaga Mori
Teruyuki Komiyama
Yasumasa Tomita

Twycross Zoo
Suzanne Boardman

WAZA
Gerald Dick
Markus Gusset

Weltvogelpark Walsrode
Geer Scheres

University of Oxford
Mark Stanley Price

Wildlife Conservation Society
Robert Cook

Wildlife Reserves Singapore
Biswajit Guha

World Pheasant Association
Philip McGowan
John Corder

Zoo Dvur Kralouvé
Pavel Moucha

Zoo Frankfurt
Christian Schmidt

Zoo Osnabrück
Ute Magiera

Zoo Outreach Organisation
Sanjoy Molar
Sally Walker

Zoos South Australia
Chris West

Zoo Wuppertal
Arne Lawrenz

Zoo Zürich
Alex Rübel

Zoological Park Organization Bangkok, Thailand
Boripat Siriaraonrat

Zoological Society of London
Fiona Fisken
Paul Pearce-Kelly

Zoos Victoria
Jenny Gray

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British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Chester Zoo
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
Evenson Design Group
Linda Malek
Toledo Zoo

$2,000 and above
Albuquerque Biological Park
Allwetterzoo Münster
Auckland Zoological Park
Bristol Zoo Gardens
Copenhagen Zoo
Dallas Zoo
Dickerson Park Zoo
Gladys Porter Zoo
Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Marwell Wildlife
Milwaukee County Zoo
North Carolina Zoological Park
Paignton Zoo
Phoenix Zoo
Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp
Schönbrunner Tiergarten — Zoo Vienna
Sedgwick County Zoo
Taronga Conservation Society Australia
Wassenaaer Wildlife Breeding Centre
Wilhelma Zoo
Zoo and Aquarium Association
Zoo Zürich
Zoologischer Garten Köln

$1,000 and above
Aalborg Zoo
Akron Zoological Park
Audubon Zoo
Calgary Zoological Society
Central Zoo Authority, India
Chester Zoo
Conservatoire pour la Protection des Primates
Cotswold Wildlife Park
Detroit Zoological Society
Everland Zoological Gardens
Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo
Fota Wildlife Park
Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens
Kansas City Zoo
Laurie Bingaman Lockey
Los Angeles Zoo
Nordens Ark
Ocean Park Conservation Foundation
Palm Beach Zoo at Dreher Park
Parco Natura Viva — Garda Zoological Park
Perth Zoo
Philadelphia Zoo
Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium
Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium
Prudence P. Perry
Ringling Bros., Barnum & Bailey
Rotterdam Zoo
Royal Zoological Society Scotland — Edinburgh Zoo
Saitama Children’s Zoo
San Antonio Zoo
Seoul Zoo
Swedish Association of Zoological Parks & Aquaria
Taipei Zoo
The Living Desert

$500 and above
Banham Zoo
Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden
Edward & Marie Plotka
Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo
Givskud Zoo
Jacksonville Zoo & Gardens
Katy & Mike Pelican
Kerzner International North America, Inc.
Knutzenborg Park & Safari
Lisbon Zoo
Little Rock Zoo
Odense Zoo
Oregon Zoo
Ouwehands Dierenpark
Riverbanks Zoological Park & Garden
Wellington Zoo
Wildlife World Zoo
Zoo de la Palmyre

$250 and above
Alice Springs Desert Park
Apenheul Zoo
Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
Bramble Park Zoo
Brandywine Zoo
David Trayler Zoo of Emporia
Ed Asper

$100 and above
African Safari — France
Aquarium of the Bay
Chahinkapa Zoo
Darmstadt Zoo
Elaine Douglass
Lion Country Safari, Inc.
Miami Metrozoo
Safari de Peaugres
Steinhart Aquarium
Steven J. Olson
tourpark — France

$50 and above
Alameda Park Zoo
Miller Park Zoo
Vicki Scheunemann
Stiftung Natur-und Artenschutz in den Tropen

$25 and above
JE Schwolow

$20,000 and above
Minneapolis Zoo

$15,000 and above

$10,000 and above

$5,000 and above

$2,000 and above

$1,000 and above

$500 and above

$250 and above

$100 and above

$50 and above

$25 and above
2010 Ulysses S. Seal Award
Presented to Gordon McGregor Reid by CBSG Chairman Robert Lacy

The Ulysses S. Seal Award for Innovation in Conservation is given each year by the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, but it is regarded very highly not only by CBSG but also by the entire zoo and aquarium community, and by the IUCN Species Survival Commission. Dr. Ulysses S. Seal was the first Chairman of the CBSG, serving from 1979 to 2003. His great passion and talent was his creative thinking about how new science could be most effectively applied to solving the problems of wildlife conservation. His contributions were amplified many times over by his further ability to recognize, encourage, and utilize others who also were making such innovative contributions.

Ulie Seal contributed to conservation in many ways, and it is interesting and inspiring to see the diverse ways that the small cohort of past award recipients helped to achieve conservation. Previous recipients include researchers who have applied their considerable scientific expertise to the needs of conservation – such notable scientists as Georgina Mace and Jon Ballou. Georgina Mace also contributed immeasurably to the work of the IUCN. Nate Flesness has made his contributions through being an organizational leader who brought the zoo community together around data to serve conservation. Frances Westley stepped out of her academic environment to teach us struggling conservationists as well as her students. And the small cohort of prior recipients include some who have been effective champions of the often neglected species of small size but with huge impacts on ecosystems – advocates such as Paul Pearce-Kelly and Sally Walker. Last year’s recipient, Lena Linden, was the first zoo director to receive the U.S. Seal Award, recognizing her success at creating and transforming a zoo into a remarkable conservation organization. Thus, the recipients of the U.S. Seal award have clearly been a remarkable group of scientists, teachers, tool developers, organizational and community leaders, zoo pioneers, and inspiring and tireless advocates for species. And, to be fair to these past awardees, I should note moreover that most of them fit comfortably into several of these categories.

Yet, this year’s recipient of the US Seal Award for Innovation in Conservation – Gordon McGregor Reid – fits all of these categories! He is a notable scientist, with numerous scientific publications, and having served even as the President of the Linnaean Society – the place where Darwin and Wallace first presented their work on the origin of species. He has been a leader in the IUCN, leading the Freshwater Fishes Specialist Group – a group that has been so actively that they just added assessments of more than 5000 species to the Red List. He has been a leader in the zoo world, developing Chester Zoo as a model for how a zoo can be successful as a zoo while making major contributions to conservation projects around the world, and also served as WAZA President, being a wonderful contributor to CBSG advisory committees, and as one of the original co-leaders of the Amphibian Ark.
Gordon has been a champion of species that are often neglected by the conservation world – such as the many fresh-water fishes, which, sadly, are in as much trouble globally as are the amphibians. He has also been the champion of people who sometimes feel neglected. When an important conservation project urgently needs more support – whether financial support, wise guidance, or just encouragement – Gordon is the one on whom we have come to rely.

Although Gordon’s personal accomplishments are numerous (even if he keeps them quiet), perhaps his biggest impact has been very similar to the most notable aspect of Ulle Seal’s leadership – which is that he recognizes, encourages, mentors, and supports people who are able and eager to make a difference for species conservation.

To quote from one of Gordon’s nominators:

“To give just a wee example, Gordon Reid’s adoption of many struggling zoo publications over the years have kept them alive and thriving, and his support of new, needed publications have made technical information available to thousands of zoo personnel to improve their expertise and professional relationships.

Chester Zoo’s grants program has saved many a struggling conservation project, and Gordon’s immediate (and quite often un-asked, even) response to myriad “good causes” and emergencies in animal welfare and conservation are well known. Gordon Reid’s generosity goes far beyond offering funds from his institution. Gordon gives immense support to new and small and often neglected causes, putting his own reputation and standing on the line to support individuals and entities in which only he has spotted the value and potential.”

Perhaps Gordon’s insight and devotion to helping struggling conservationists comes from his own background. One of his colleagues wrote to me to relate that when Gordon graduated with his PhD he was unable to secure an appropriate job in the UK at the time. As a consequence he went to Nigeria where he was a lecturer at a remote bush university. He also filled in between by driving delivery trucks in London. As Gordon’s colleague noted: that is what you might call some hardball experience to prepare anybody for success in the biosciences and conservation!

When I started to prepare this presentation, I realized that I had a wee bit of a problem. Gordon has done so much for conservation and zoos and fishes, and he has received so many prestigious honors for his work, that if I even began to catalog them for you I would leave no time for Gordon to respond. I will just note a few special honors that you may not have known about. Along with several honorary PhD degrees, Gordon is also an honorary citizen of Bolivia, he twice was the winner of the Waterlife Cup for excellence in aquarium keeping, he has several species of fish named after him, and a number of species of fish, amphibians, and conservationists probably owe their continued existence to him.

As Gordon’s nomination noted – it is perhaps especially appropriate that he receives this award in the International Year of Biodiversity. His contributions to understanding and protecting biodiversity have been felt in all continents, across diverse and extremely speciose taxa, and he has guided the zoo community, governments, NGOs, field research teams, and academia.
CBSG News is published by the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, Species Survival Commission, IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature. CBSG News is intended to inform CBSG members and other individuals concerned with the conservation of plants and animals, of the activities of CBSG in particular, and the conservation community in general. We are interested in exchanging newsletters and receiving notices of your meetings. Please send contributions or news items to:

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