Publications

2016 CBSG Annual Meeting Proceedings
The proceedings from the 2016 CBSG Annual Meeting are now available at http://www.cbsg.org/latest-news/cbsg-annual-meeting-proceedings.

The document includes an overview of the meeting, working group reports, and a sample of the many photos taken during the meeting. Many thanks to Africam Safari for being incredible hosts.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2017 CBSG Annual Meeting in Berlin, Germany from 12-15 October 2017.

New Workshop Reports and Summaries

Raffles’ Banded Langur
Workshop Summary
http://www.cbsg.org/content/workshop-summary-raffles-banded-langur

Species Action Plan for the Raffles’ Banded Langur in Malaysia and Singapore
http://www.cbsg.org/content/species-action-plan-conservation-raffles-banded-langur-2016

Chacoan Peccary
Workshop Summary
http://www.cbsg.org/content/workshop-summary-chacoan-peccary
Recent Workshops

Planning Recovery for the Bellinger River Snapping Turtle

The Bellinger River snapping turtle (*Myuchelys georgesi*) is a medium-sized freshwater turtle known only from the Bellinger catchment on the central east coast of Australia. Within the catchment the species is restricted to the Bellinger and possibly Kalang Rivers and is currently listed as Critically Endangered under the Threatened Species Conservation Act New South Wales (1995). In February 2015, a number of *M. georgesi* were found dead and dying in the Bellinger River. An investigation confirmed a disease outbreak extending across the known range of the species, with no other species apparently affected. Population size estimates before the crash ranged from 1500-4500. Recent surveys indicate as few as 200-300 turtles, predominantly juveniles, remain in the river.

Though disease outbreak is widely understood to have precipitated the current extinction crisis in Bellinger River snapping turtles, experts recognize that a range of other factors may have predisposed the species to disease risk, and may prejudice its recovery or pose a future risk to the species should it be successfully recovered.

To discuss these issues and to agree a plan of priority actions for the recovery and conservation of the species, 15 experts from eight organizations gathered in Sydney, Australia from 1-2 November, 2016. The workshop was hosted by Taronga Zoo, organized and funded through the Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW, and facilitated by CBSG Australasia.

The workshop successfully integrated a disease risk analysis (DRA) into a One Plan approach conservation planning framework. The program alternated between working group sessions—in which one group worked specifically on disease and the other on the broader risks to long-term recovery and conservation of the species—and plenary sessions where the results were reported and synthesized. The resulting action plan, which includes disease investigation and mitigation measures, protection and threat mitigation on the river, and captive breeding for release, is currently in review.

Whooping Crane Conservation Planning Update

Our work continues with US and Canadian federal wildlife management authorities on whooping crane recovery planning. The second workshop took us back to Calgary where 25 experts on species biology and conservation met for three days at the Calgary Zoo to continue the population viability analysis (PVA) effort initiated one year earlier. Specifically, participants used this workshop to identify a set of nearly 30 scenarios for evaluation using the PVA modeling tool *Vortex*, with each scenario including one or more of the existing wild whooping crane populations and with explicit linkage to the current captive population. The simulations would help species managers to determine the characteristics of the whooping crane metapopulation—number of subpopulations, abundance of cranes in each subpopulation, extent of demographic and genetic connectivity among subpopulations, etc.—that would be most effective at achieving long-term recovery across the species’ current range.

Through the first six months of 2017, CBSG staff will collaborate with workshop participants to develop detailed input data specifications for each management scenario and to generate the appropriate output from model results. Our plan is to hold a third workshop, this time utilizing a modified PHVA workshop approach, to use the final results of the PVA to guide the development of a scientifically sound species management plan.
Promoting Population Management in Southeast Asian Zoos

Zoos in Southeast Asia reside within a biodiversity hotspot under enormous threat. These zoos care for a myriad of threatened species, yet *ex situ* population management expertise and implementation is not yet well developed in this region. In recognition of this need, the Southeast Asian Zoo Association (SEAZA) has formed a SEAZA Species Management Committee (SSMC) with representatives from each member country to promote effective *ex situ* population management.

Members of the new SSMC became the focus of a population management training workshop conducted by CBSG and hosted by the Taipei Zoo on 23-26 October. Additional participants included studbook keepers and species coordinators in the region. Representatives from Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan spent four days in instruction, practice, and discussion of all aspects of population management, from studbook data collection and analysis to developing program goals and breeding plans. Attendees identified the conservation roles for their focal species as described in the IUCN *ex situ* guidelines. Group discussions outlined the challenges to population management in this region, which were grouped into three categories: data acquisition and quality issues; poor population status and management; and issues related to people and resources. Potential solutions and action steps were identified to begin addressing these challenges.

This training workshop was followed almost immediately by the SEAZA Annual Conference hosted by Taman Safari Indonesia, which allowed SSMC members to move forward quickly with these ideas. The intense discussions in Taipei continued at the conference and provided a valuable catalyst for this new group of professionals to bond as a group, learn together and bounce ideas off of each other, and develop collaborative working relationships that will help advance *ex situ* population management in Southeast Asia.

Sumatran Tiger GSMP Meeting

Critically Endangered in the wild, the Sumatran tiger (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*) is the most genetically unique of the extant tiger subspecies. About 400 Sumatran tigers are managed by five regional zoo programs—PKBSI, EAZA, AZA, ZAA and JAZA—with about one third of these held in zoos in the range country of Indonesia. The WAZA Sumatran Tiger Global Species Management Plan (GSMP) was established in 2008 and has held periodic meetings to discuss population status, needs and recommended actions. CBSG facilitated the most recent GSMP meeting, which was held on 28-29 October at Taman Safari Indonesia near Bogor, Indonesia. Participants included species coordinators and studbook keepers from all five regional programs as well as Indonesian government, NGO, and zoo representatives. CBSG also provides population management support to the GSMP.

Workshop participants identified four conservation roles for the *ex situ* tiger population, outlined progress and issues for each role, and developed goals and actions for the next few years. A primary role is to serve as an assurance population, which was a primary focus of workshop discussions. While the global Sumatran tiger population is genetically diverse, the regional populations will not be genetically viable in the long term without genetic reinforcement and effective population management. Regional populations outside of Indonesia are based on the same founder lines and are inbred. The PKBSI Indonesia population holds genetically important tigers, including 10 wild-caught potential founders that have not yet bred. Breeding genetically valuable tigers in Indonesian zoos will be key to improving the demographic and genetic health of this *ex situ* range country population and will provide options for genetic reinforcement of other regional populations in the future. Workshop recommendations are currently being reviewed by PKBSI and government agencies in Indonesia. These discussions complement similar ongoing activities for three newly established GSMPs for Indonesian species (anoa, babirusa, and banteng).
Chinese White Dolphin Workshop
The number of Chinese white dolphins (*Sousa chinensis*) in the Pearl River Estuary (PRE) is estimated to have declined by 60% over the last ten years due to loss and fragmentation of habitat; pollution; boat, ship and ferry traffic; and the fishing industry. In addition, climate change is likely to influence the ability of the Chinese white dolphins to thrive in the PRE.

In view of the extensive and growing anthropogenic challenges that threaten the species long-term viability, a comprehensive conservation management framework was deemed vital and urgently needed. With funding from the Hong Kong Airport Authority, Ocean Park Conservation Foundation (OPCF) convened a workshop in January to take the first steps towards developing this framework. The 55 participants from 5 countries included academics, scientists, IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group, the fisheries community, NGOs, ecotourism operators, and representatives of government departments and regulatory authorities. Together they identified obstacles that are keeping them from effectively addressing the threats to Chinese white dolphin conservation, and goals and actions for overcoming those obstacles.

The workshop illustrated the effectiveness of one of CBSG’s core principles: stakeholder inclusivity. After the workshop, Dr. Alexander Huang of Shantou University wrote: “I cannot help presenting my deepest thanks and appreciation for you all to host such a successful workshop that really touched and motivated me. To me, the most touched part is the involvement of fishermen representatives and they are willing to talk freely. Above all, their comments really help to revise our minds and impose a novel direction that moves toward an effective direction. In recent years, I’ve frequently read lots of papers on Conservation Biology describing the fact a practical and effective conservation campaign stands on active participation of policy makers and practicers, researchers, NGOs and NPOs, local communities and people, interest stakeholders. This workshop presents actually how the above task can be achieved.”

Suzanne Gendron, Director of OPCF, committed her team to champion the implementation of the actions from the meeting and to convene follow up meetings annually to ensure that stakeholders that progress is made.