

World Association of Zoos and Aquariums - WAZA News

The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums WAZA is the global spokesperson for the "organised" zoos of the world. The term "organised" is meant (at least to this editor) to distinguish zoos of good quality, ethics, actions or zoos with good intent which are under the "wing" of WAZA in some way from zoos which are ad hoc, substandard in quality, ethics and actions. Of the unknown number of zoos (or animal facilities calling themselves zoos or zoo-like facilities) in the world, the number of "organised" as opposed to "ad hoc" zoos is exponentially small. Yet through the energy and intent of the organised zoos through WAZA, a significant positive impact on conservation and even animal welfare has been in process.

WAZA has been around in different names for some time. Formerly called the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens IUDZG, since last two or three decades, the Association has grown from baby steps to monolithic strides. It is not easy to review who did what as many zoo directors and related advocates were involved but there is no question that WAZA has established a momentum that grows from strength to strength.

One of the major turning points was the establishment of a permanent secretariat (in Bern, Switzerland and soon to move to Gland) and the joining of IUCN and consistent movement to become a major player on the international conservation stage.

There is not enough space in this little magazine to review this transformation, nor do we have sufficient information to do so. But a look at some of

the current projects of WAZA will give our readers a good idea of the fast track that WAZA is on to make a difference in the wide world of wildlife and environmental conservation. We refer you to the WAZA web site www.waza.org where you will find more information. This article is intended as a lure to induce our readers to check out this site regularly. You will learn more about zoos but also that WAZA and the best zoos of the world are involved in the entire spectrum of global conservation activities.

Not covered in this issue but something to know in case you are a new or forgetful reader, WAZA is also on the job to address the issue of "ad hoc" zoos. Challenging though it may be, WAZA intends to handle this sensitive issue in a sensitive and coordinated fashion. This was covered extensively in previous issues. WAZA reiterates its intent in this regard in its most recent strategic plan, WAZA Vision and Corporate Strategy: Towards 2020.

WAZA is dedicated to catalysing and showcasing the actuality of zoos' commitment to conservation and to assisting all zoos possible to achieve this potential through its regional and national associations.

All of the matter in this section comes directly from WAZA's website which everyone with any interest or problem with zoos should consult.

Most of the documents highlighted in this article and on the website are downloadable and contain a wealth of information for any conservation conscious reader.

Sally Walker, Editor Emeritus

2009 Year of the Gorilla

WAZA joined the 2009 Year of the Gorilla (YoG) as a partner in a joint initiative of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Great Ape Survival Partnership (GRASP).

Under WAZA's auspices more than 100 zoos came together to support of the gorilla campaign. The zoo ambassadors helped to implement WAZA's commitment to promote interest in gorillas and their plight, carry out environmental education and raise funds for field conservation projects. This is not new for the zoos, which have been much involved in conservation of gorillas for decades. They have reintroduced gorillas in Gabon, assisted with P.A. management in Cameroon, Nigeria and Congo and also assisted with development of ecotourism. Dian Fossey herself wrote about modern zoo biology and how zoos bred gorillas successfully.

Zoos in several countries agreed to take part in the United Nations (UN) Year of the Gorilla (YoG) via the official YoG partner, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). These were zoos from two successful coordinated breeding programmes -- 109 of 116 zoos from the American Species Survival Plan (52 zoos keeping 370 gorillas) and (64 zoos keeping 425 gorillas) from the European Endangered Species Programme EEP. After the AZA and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) on 3 December 2008 made a formal agreement of cooperation, the Year of the Gorilla became the first internationally recognised joint conservation effort of its kind.

The YoG website could report many different activities in the zoo community. A number of documents were published...a leaflet, a report on gorilla conservation status and information about WAZA-branded gorilla conservation projects. These were made available on

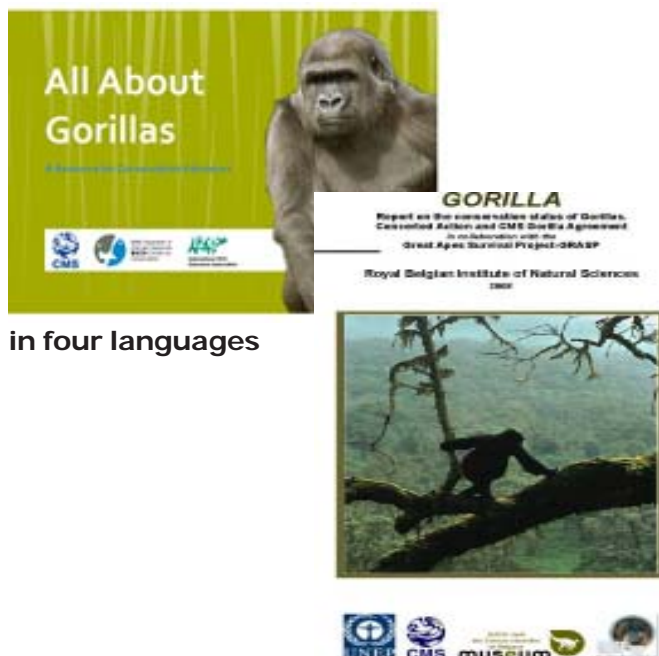
the WAZA website. An educator manual was developed by WAZA and the International Zoo Educators Association (IZE). Entitled "All About Gorillas" it is available in four languages and has been downloaded several hundred times from the WAZA website.

While gorilla conservation will go on after 2009 with a fresh start and a number of achievements during the YoG effort. See the WAZA website www.waza.org and look in the section Conservation and then click on Year of the Gorilla and download the Overview of Activities at the end of the page. In line with this project please read the following short report which is a sort of Case Study of how WAZA and the organised zoo community works.

Transfer of two western low-land gorillas, Dated: 2010/01/19

International studbooks provide the information necessary for conservation breeding programmes to make informed decisions regarding the transfer of animals between institutions.

Two western lowland gorillas were transferred from Zurich Zoo in Switzerland to the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa in Pretoria. The two males will join another two males to form a bachelor group there. The decision to transfer the two gorillas is based on advice provided by the European Endangered Species Programme. The information necessary to make such recommendations for conservation breeding is contained in international studbooks, wherein all data relevant to the captive population of a certain species are collected and continuously updated. Currently, 118 active international studbooks for 159 species and/or sub-species are kept under the auspices of WAZA.



in four languages

2010 Year of Biodiversity

Biodiversity, the variety of life on Earth, is essential to sustaining the living networks and systems that provide us all with health, wealth, food, fuel and the vital services our lives depend on. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has declared 2010 as the UN Year of Biodiversity in recognition of the international target to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss globally. WAZA has been a supporter of the Countdown 2010 initiative of IUCN in support of reaching this goal since 2005. Additionally, WAZA entered an agreement of cooperation with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in support of the UN Year of Biodiversity. WAZA and its members serve as biodiversity ambassadors and focus on conservation as well as on related education and awareness work.

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. Let us reflect on our achievements to safeguard biodiversity and focus on the urgency of our challenge for the future. Now is the time to act.

The main goals of the year are to:

- Enhance public awareness on the importance of conserving biodiversity and on the underlying threats to biodiversity.
- Raise awareness of the accomplishments to save biodiversity by communities and governments and to promote innovative solutions to reduce these threats.
- Call on individuals, organizations and governments to take immediate steps to halt biodiversity loss.
- Initiate dialogue among stakeholders on necessary steps for the post-2010 period.

Downloads from www.waza.org

Documents and presentations for the International Year of Biodiversity: (go to the site, click Conservation then 2010 Year of Biodiversity).

- Powerpoint Presentation with basic information (3mb)
- Implementation Strategy (1mb)
- Official Logo of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (1.43mb)
- WAZA Biodiversity Book Flyer (3mb)
- WAZA/IZE Education Manual (2mb)



Educators ! Have you always wanted to know where to find definitions, educational material, policy statements and statistics? The WAZA/IZE Education Manual is a guide for zoo and aquarium