

**Statement on behalf of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) in reference to the recent conviction of staff of Zoo Magdeburg for the management euthanasia of three hybrid tigers\*\***

*Ex situ* conservation breeding is a core competency of modern zoos and its practice is mandated by the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Species Survival Commission of the IUCN. To this end the regional association members of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) co-ordinate a regional series of conservation breeding programmes for a significant number of threatened and endangered species of animal around the world.

In Europe such cooperative breeding programmes are coordinated by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) within the infrastructure of the European Endangered species Programme (EEP). The definitive rationale of such programmes is aimed at securing the continued existence of such species within functional ecosystems in the wild state by providing a "genetic insurance policy" in the form of viable *ex situ* populations of such species.

However, for *ex situ* populations to function in this manner, the genetic integrity and demographic stability of the populations must be closely managed. This management takes on many forms and can, on occasion, include the euthanasia of individuals. Humane euthanasia, as a component of population management, and based on scientific analysis of the *ex situ* population to ensure its long-term sustainability, is supported by WAZA as a acceptable and applicable option.

The EAZA population of Amur tigers is managed to the highest scientific, conservation and welfare standards. Consequently, WAZA regards the humane euthanasia of the tiger cubs sired by a known hybrid male by the Zoo Magdeburg authorities as being an entirely reasonable and scientifically-supportable action.

WAZA sees the conviction of the three Zoo Magdeburg staff on the premise that humane management euthanasia for conservation purposes is not a "reasonable" course of action to be a repudiation of international consensus on what constitutes best conservation practice.

In light of the fact that the consumptive and terminal use of both wild and domesticated animals for the purposes of food production and recreation is viewed as being acceptable and reasonable in modern society, this judgement can only be regarded as an act of legal and moral hypocrisy.

**Signatories:**

**Dr Mark Penning, President of WAZA**

**Dr Jörg Junhold, President elect and Chairman of the WAZA Marketing Committee**

**Dr Gerald Dick, Executive Director of WAZA**

**Dr Chris West, Chairman of WAZA Ethics and Animal Welfare Committee**

**Prof Dr Heribert Hofer, Chairman of WAZA Science and Veterinary Committee**

**Dr Jo Gipps, Chairman of WAZA Conservation and Sustainability Committee**

**Dave Morgan, Chairman of the WAZA Committee for Population Management**

Gland, June 2010

**\*\* Please see Paragraph 2 page 2 of the magazine editorial by Editor Emeritus and consider. It may be time for all zoos to get practical about euthanasia in appropriate situations.**



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