

Mixing (Zoo) business with pleasure in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Sally Walker*

Recently on 17 April, CBSG, ISIS and WAZA convened at the chosen site of Buenos Aires to conduct their annual Mid-Year meetings and to get to know Argentine and other South American zoos and zoo personnel better.

CBSG Strategic Committee met at the beautiful Temaikén Zoo by their invitation. During the morning and up to 4 pm we ploughed through the Agenda with a review of the last meeting, the Species Survival Committee Report, and other CBSG committee reports. There was a special presentation on Temaikén's conservation activities.

After a delicious and lavish lunch we met again to cover Task Force Reports, some of which were Branding, Structured Decision-making, *Ex-situ* project prioritization, Conservation Welfare and Corporate Engagement Guidelines. Afterwards we convened in two working groups, Branding and Conservation Welfare. After coffee there were discussions on the Annual meeting, CBSG's next "big idea", working group reports, the Ulie Seal Award and success stories.

At 4 pm we were taken on a mini tour of some of the zoo sections, such as the bird aviary. We marveled at the beautiful layout, naturalistic enclosures, health of the animals and the care taken to construct this beautiful zoo. It was a great day.

The next day was the ISIS meeting which gave a few of us a free day. The government authority over zoos had invited a visit from WAZA to discuss problems and issues of mutual interest so those who had indicated interest attended, Jorg Jungholt, WAZA President; Gerald Dick WAZA Ex. Officer, Dave Morgan, Chair of the Population Management Committee and myself, Associations Chair. After the meeting we were turned over to Paolo, a charming individual who helps zoos with their animal transport, and knew "everything" about Buenos Aires. We had a wonderful experience of how Argentines live. We set out at lunchtime which we thought was noon and were taken to the famous "Fishing Club" of Buenos Aires and learned what lunch was like in this lovely country ... lunch lasts about 5 hours! After lunch we visited the oldest zoo in the country, the Buenos Aires Zoo.



New educational signage inaugurated during WAZA visit to Buenos Aires Zoo



WAZA President and Executive Officer with Temaikén staff



Kids play archeologist at dinosaur display in the Temaikén Zoo

*Founder/Director, Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.
E-mail: sallywalker@zooreach.org



Elephant house at Buenos Aires Zoo

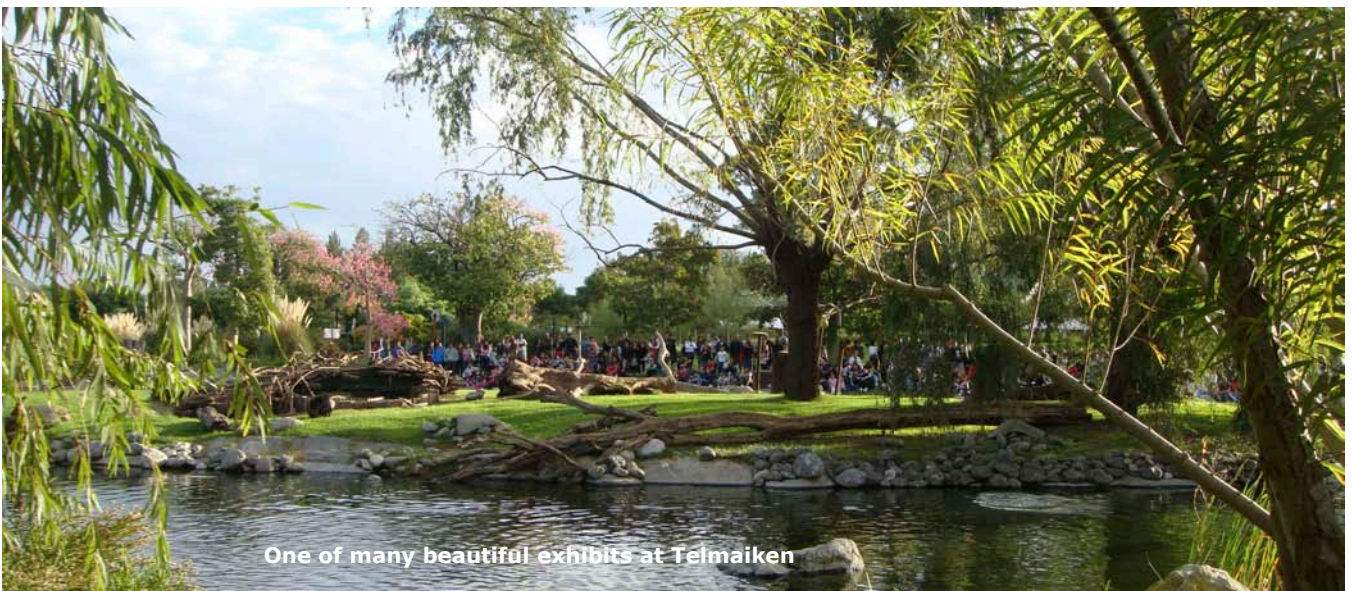
Buenos Aires Zoo reminded me a lot of our Mysore Zoo in India. Even some of the constructions were just the same, like the bandstand where a live band used to entertain visitors to the zoo on Sundays.

The following day was for our Mid-Year WAZA Council Meeting which can't be shared due to its protocol. The day after that we had a WAZA Strategic Workshop where we discussed plans and programmes for the next few years. These two days meetings of WAZA were special as it was the first time for newly elected WAZA President, Dr. Jorg Jungholt, to preside over the meeting.

Argentina is known for its outstanding meat and we probably overdosed on it as it is the best in the world and we ate steak every night. The last day was a tour of the entire Teimakin Zoo where we were so happy to see such a beautifully organized and executed zoo. We were also happy to go some distance away to the zoo's off-site breeding and research centre. The following day we went our separate ways ... home, other meetings and other tours. It was a great way to do business while enjoying every minute. Many thanks to our Argentine hosts.



Argentine culture 5 hour lunches make for great camaraderie



One of many beautiful exhibits at Telmaiken