

“Partnering for Sustainable Zoos and Aquariums” at WAZA Conference



Group photo of WAZA conference attendees at the beautiful Prague Zoo

WAZA conducted its 66th Annual Conference as a “global commitment to species conservation”. The conference took place in the exotic city of Prague in Czech Republic. Every year WAZA meets in a different country hosted by a different zoo ... for the most part. A few older and more ambitious zoos have hosted the conference more than once.

WAZA is the unifying organisation for the global zoo and aquarium community. WAZA's slogan is “United for Conservation” ... bringing together its many zoos which have more than 700 million visitors every year. WAZA has different types of members, zoos and aquariums which have passed a rigorous examination to insure their quality, (National Zoo New Delhi, Mysore Zoo, Darjeeling Zoo, National Zoo Sri Lanka and Kathmandu Zoo currently are members) affiliate organisations such as ZOO and CZA, association members such as SAZARC and corporate partners (businesses).

The theme of the 2011 conference was “Partnering for Sustainable Zoos and Aquariums” or how to intensify partnerships for sustaining viable animal populations. Over 200 participants from 40 countries joined the conference. To help discussion 20 participants presented high level papers addressing the future of animal populations and their welfare and conservation, following by working groups, one of which was devoted to the Decade on Biodiversity.

Also this conference provided an opportunity for WAZA to lay out its upcoming objectives :

- Involvement of all WAZA members for the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity
- Commitment of WAZA members to cooperate on the sustainable management of animal populations
- Improvement of ethical standards for the future
- Further WAZA membership focus on Asian countries

Jorg Junhold, who took the office of President for next two years at this conference said: "I trust WAZA is most aware - Improvement of WAZA communication outreach of its role and responsibility to support CBD in the Decade on biodiversity which is a major challenge for both organizations. I am very confident that our community of member zoos and aquariums will make significant contributions to the Decade in the fields of raising awareness of their visitors and effective conservation measures for threatened species".

Some things about WAZA that may interest you on the World Wide Web:

A selection of more than 200 conservation projects of WAZA members can be found on www.waza.org, on the following link: [WAZA conservation projects](#). Many of these are in South Asia.

The education manual on biodiversity "Biodiversity is life", developed by WAZA and IZE (International Zoo Educators) is available on: Biodiversity Manual. You can also read it directly on this link: [Biodiversity Manual.pdf](#). Two people from India worked on it, e.g. B.A. Daniel and Meena Nareshwar.

Attending the conference from South Asia were B.S. Bonal, M.S. Central Zoo Authority India, Sanjay Molur and Sally Walker from ZOO in India and Bhashwara Senaka Gunarathna, Director, National Zoo, Sri Lanka.

Bert de Boer delivered a seminal keynote address which follows this brief introduction. Sanjay and Sally presented papers at the conference which follow this brief introduction.