

## Some historical information about Zoo Associations – all over the World Sally Walker

**Author's note:** *Every once in awhile someone decides there should be a zoo history symposium. This year there was one at Chester Zoo, in collaboration with SHNH and WAZA (see pp. 11-12) and I was asked to deliver a paper on the Development and History of Regional and National Zoo Associations. I agreed. At the same time, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums was putting together a history book for their 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I was asked to write a box item about the Associations Committee which I chair, but, having lived some interesting stories, I asked if I could contribute more about Associations than a box and it was agreed. I started writing and in no time the papers expanded into an encyclopaedic monster with a life of its own. The WAZA chapter was the first deadline so I began cutting out paras and pages early.*

*Cutting material from the WAZA book chapter was very painful but there was a very small word limit. I did it but I didn't like it, yet I still had a presentation to give and a paper to write for Chester Symposium so I thought I could use the material there. As I prepared my presentation the amount of words and material increased until I would need the whole two day symposium to deliver the presentation! This is not the sign of a good writer but of a good collector! More painful cutting. The more I wrote and cut, the more I remembered events in the zoo world that had to do with zoo associations and the more I wrote to others who had been around in those days to check my memory of those events and meetings, resulting in even more material. I got through the presentation at the symposium but I didn't finish on time and made a very poor showing. Discouraged but undeterred, I had one more paper to go and it could be 2500 words. Surely that should be enough. I had two stories to tell about Associations that not everybody knew. I had tried to get them in the WAZA Chapter, the Presentation and then the written paper for the symposium publication. When I counted the words of the written paper for the symposium publication, it was over 10,000. So I never got those stories in the paper. Today after I reviewed Dr. Catherine de Courcy's book for ZOOS' PRINT and wrote a short note about the history symposium at Chester Zoo, I had an epiphany... I could write all the things I couldn't include in my papers and presentations in ZOOS' PRINT! Hence, this article about zoo associations starting from the basics and includes one of my stories which is the most inclusive, e.g., the first global zoo association meeting, held in 1991 at Front Royal, Virginia.*

Currently, there is one truly international zoo association – that is the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, WAZA. WAZA has zoo associations as members along with zoos and related organizations and institutions. There are 24 zoo associations that are Members of WAZA ... they are listed in a Table on page no. 21 with asterisks beside them. The founding dates are in the first column, the country or region and the date of "adhesion" (as they say at WAZA) in the third column. All the other zoo associations listed are not members of WAZA and are marked by the absence of an asterisk. Some of them are not members because they are members of a Regional Association and they feel adequately represented by that, such as the Dutch Zoo Association and EAZA. Others are not association members of WAZA because of the cost of Membership, or cost of attending meetings, or because they feel they can manage without belonging.

While the first zoo associations were forming, they were understandably not as organized as they are today. In 1989 just before this meeting, there were 23 zoo associations, 21 national and 2 genuinely regional zoo associations, e.g. \*EARAZA (Eurasian Regional Association of Zoos & Aquariums) and PAAZAB- (African Association of Zoos & Aquaria). No zoo associations were member of the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens, IUDZG, now WAZA at that time. That is one aspect of this story.

CBSG/SSC/IUCN Captive (now Conservation) Breeding Specialist Group, had been active for a time and had begun to conduct yearly meetings which national and regional zoo association representatives attended, usually the Association Chair or other head. Dr. U. S. Seal (Ulíe), Chairman of CBSG was keen to get the zoo associations involved in conservation by improving the system and science of their breeding of animals. Ulíe had discovered that zoos had no reliable records for the scientific data base he was developing, e.g. the International Species Inventory System ISIS which became the International Species Information System and is now ISIS ZIMS or Zoo Information Management System. The evolution of this single service organisation for zoos represents probably the greatest quantum leap that the zoos had made since the first animal was kept for human viewing. Ulíe designed the record system so that it would be useful for zoos to improve breeding so that there would be less or no inbreeding, which was hurting the zoo populations badly. He wanted to create a cooperative movement among the world's zoos. So associations had this one place to get together and talk about cooperative breeding and other meaningful issues.

According to Dr. Chris Wemmer, then Associate Director of the Front Royal Conservation Centre, and who was on the newly founded Board of then AAZPA (now AZA), there had been some general discussion then of AAZPA setting an example and playing a leadership role for other zoo associations. The idea was to stimulate other geographic regions to follow the example of a coordinated approach to zoo and aquarium development and advocacy. Chris had been conducting zoo biology training courses and had contacts with the younger leadership of several zoos. Chris and another Front Royal colleague, Rudy Rudran had developed and organized training courses in which AAZPA/AZA zoo curators, vets and wildlife experts were resource persons, organized both in developing regions and at their own breeding centre at Front Royal. It seemed time to get together in a meeting.

In 1988 the AAZPA/AZA Board discussion became a plan for a workshop to encourage zoo associations in other geographic regions. The Front Royal/Smithsonian facility was a breeding center for threatened species with infrastructure for training. With its simple but comfortable 2-bunk rooms and meeting space, it was an ideal venue.

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## Photo Gallery of CBSG and some Indian attendees

**Photo right :**  
CBSG meeting in Copenhagen attended by Jacob Cheeran, B.M. Arora and Pushpa Kumar. Pushpa Kumar joined one of the breeding working groups. Dr. Arora joined the veterinary working group. Dr. Cheeran graciously joined the education working group so that Indian representation would be spread out. Sally Walker took photos and flitted around from group to group. Photo by Sally Walker.



**Photo above:** After some time, first CZA Member Secretary Shri S. C. Sharma attended CBSG and WAZA meetings. Today all Member Secretaries attend every CBSG and WAZA meeting. It has become important and a great step perhaps aided by Kamal Naidu's attendance at the zoo association meeting at Front Royal!

Shown right to left is Marialice Seal (CBSG Chairman's wife), Dr. U. S. Seal (Chairman of CBSG), Shri S. C. Sharma, Member/Secretary of the Central Zoo Authority of India and Sally Walker. Photo Anon.

**Regional and National Associations – Founding date – Country – Joining WAZA date – Email and Website**  
**Members of WAZA are noted with date of joining and an asterisk \***

No.	Name of Association	Founding dt.	Country	WAZA	E-mail & Website
1	ACOPAZOA (Colombian Association of Zoos & Aquariums)*	1978	Colombia	-	acopazoa@gmail.com www.acopazoa.org
2	AFDPZ (Association Française des Parcs Zoologiques)*	1969	France	2004	rodolphe.delord@zoobeaupal.com www.afdpz.org
3	AIZA (Iberian Association of Zoos & Aquaria)*	1988	Spain	1995	info@aiza.org.es www.aiza.org.es
4	ALPZA (Latin American Zoo & Aquarium Association)*	1990	Chile	-	direccion@alpza.com www.alpza.com
5	AMACZOOA (Mesoamerican & Caribbean Zoos & Aquaria Association)*	1988	Costa Rica	1993	info@fundazoo.org www.amaczooa.org
6	Austrian Zoo Organisation	2001	Austria	-	office@ozo.at www.ozo.at
7	AVZA (Asociacion Venezolana de Parques Zoológicos Y Acuarios)	2004	Venezuela	-	a.v.z.a.2004@gmail.com zoosmeralda@canty.net
8	AZA (Association of Zoos & Aquariums)*	1924	USA	1993	KVehrs@AZA.org www.aza.org
9	AZCARM (Asociacion de Zoológicos, Criaderos y Acuarios de Mexico AC)*	1985	Mexico	2006	fcamacho@africansafari.com.mx www.azcarm.com.mx
10	BIAZA (British & Irish Association of Zoos & Aquariums)*	1966	Gt. Britain	1992	director@biaza.org.uk www.biaza.org.uk
11	CAZA (Canadian Association of Zoological Parks & Aquariums)*	1975	Canada	2008	bpeters@caza.ca www.caza.ca
12	CAZG (Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens)	1985	China	-	
13	Council of Directors of Polish Zoos and Aquariums	1981	Poland	-	topola@doskomp.lodz.pl zoo@zoolodz.pl
14	DAZA (Danish Zoological Gardens & Aquaria)*	1995	Denmark	1993	jlm@kattegatcentret.dk
15	DTG (Deutsche Tierpark-Gesellschaft e.V.)*	1976	Germany	2007	info@deutsche-tierparkgesellschaft.de www.deutsche-tierparkgesellschaft.de
16	Dutch Zoo Association	1966	Netherlands	-	
17	DWV (Deutscher-Wildgehege-Verband e.V.)*	1970	Germany	2006	karl-goernhardt@landkreiskassel.de www.wildgehege-verband.de
18	EARAZA (Eurasian Regional Association of Zoos & Aquariums)*	1988	Russia	2004	vvspitsin@mail.ru www.zoo.ru/moscow
19	EAZA (European Association of Zoos & Aquaria)*	1992	The Netherlands	1992	vvspitsin@mail.ru www.eaza.net
20	FHZ (Federation of Hungarian Zoos)	1983	Hungary	-	jaszoo@vnet.hu www.zoo.hu
21	Indonesian Zoo Association KPBSI	1969	Indonesia	-	pkbsi@hotmail.com
22	IZA (Indian Zoos Association)	1991	India	-	delhizoo@vsnl.net www.czaa.org
23	JAZA (Japanese Association of Zoos & Aquariums)*	1939	Japan	1993	kazutoshi_arai@granvista.co.jp www.jazga.or.jp
24	KAZA (Korea Association of Zoos and Aquariums)	unk	Korea	-	
25	MAZPA (Malaysian Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria)	1996	Malaysia	-	
26	PAAZAB (African Association of Zoos & Aquaria)*	1989	Republic of South Africa	1994	dave.morgan@nzg.ac.za www.paaazab.com
27	SASZ (Swiss Association of Scientific Zoos (Zoosuisse))	1979	Switzerland	-	info@zoo.ch www.zoos.ch
28	SAZA-SDF (Swedish Association of Zoological Parks & Aquaria)*	1991	Sweden	1997	Mats.Hoggren@kolmarden.com www.kolmarden.com
29	SAZARC (South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation)*	2000	India	2004	sallyrwalker@zooreach.org www.zooreach.org
30	SEAZA (South East Asian Zoo Association)*	1990	Malaysia	1992	director@zoonegaramalaysia.my www.seaza.org
31	SNDPZ (Société National des Parcs Zoologiques)*	1975	France	2004	sndpz.zoo@gmail.com www.sndpz.fr
32	TAZA (Taiwan Aquarium and Zoological Parks Association)	1994	Taiwan	-	dwz07@zoo.gov.tw www.zoo.gov.tw
33	UCSZ (Union of Czech & Slovak Zoological Gardens)*	1990	Czech Republic	2002	nejedlo.ucsz@zoo.cz www.zoo.cz
34	UIZA (Italian Union of Zoos & Aquaria)*	1971	Italy	1993	cinzia.sulli@parcoabruzzo.it www.uiza.org
35	VDZ (German Federation of Zoo Directors)*	1887	Switzerland	1992	office@zoodirektoren.de www.zoodirektoren.de
36	ZAA (Zoo Aquarium Association Australasia)*	1990	Australia	1992	martin@zooaquarium.org.au www.zooaquarium.org.au
37	ZPO (Zoological Parks Organisation)	1954	Thailand	-	zpo@zoothailand.org www.zoothailand.org



**Inaugural Session of the first zoo associations meeting. Left to right: Roger Wheater, Michael Robinson, Robert O. Wagner, (at dias) Chris Wemmer. Photo by S. Walker.**



**Above: Robert Wagner, Executive Officer, AAZPA, Roger Wheater, President, IUDZG, and Kamal Naidu, Director, National Zoological Park chatting at coffee break about the way Naidu got to attend the workshop. Details next column.**



**Left: Kamal Naidu and wife Rohini collect workshop materials.**

**Photos on this page by Sally R. Walker.**

**How Kamal Naidu got to attend an International conference.**

An amusing story came out of the meeting, at least amusing to a few of us who had been totally frustrated with the Insin Ministry of Environment's attitude toward foreign travel. The bureaucrats monitoring the various Departments and Ministries (both state and national) were very peculiar about foreign travel. Perhaps this was a perception gleaned from "higher-ups" in the Ministry. It still happens today but not like then. Kamal Naidu got a number of invites when he was Director of National Zoo and also President of the Indian Zoo Directors' Association, but permission to attend was never granted by the Ministry in New Delhi. After a routine transfer back to his department, he decided to make a personal visit to USA on his own funds. So he and his wife, were in the USA at the time of the Workshop.

There had been a delay regarding the invitation which I never understood but the upshot of it was the new Director could not attend this important meeting. The Ministry took this meeting and invitation very seriously and someone in the Ministry who knew that Kamal Naidu was in USA at that moment, got smart and got permission for him to attend officially. Naidu agreed and interrupted his holiday to attend, making many friends and also many jokes about his presence at last!

Front Royal Conservation Centre was a project of the National Zoo/Smithsonian which hosted the International Zoo Associations Workshop there. Invitees were zoo association representatives and others useful in identifying, promoting and sustaining the kind of activities that would result in better global communication and cooperation for conservation. The Pew Memorial Charitable Trust, AAZPA and Smithsonian Institution sponsored the event. It was originally scheduled for Spring 1988 but had to be postponed. It ultimately took place on 23-25 April 1990.

On 22 April 1990, forty-one reps from zoo associations, zoos and other appropriate organizations gathered at Front Royal, Virginia to discuss how better to enhance collective conservation efforts among the world's zoos. IUDZG (the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens) was represented by its President, Dr. Roger Wheater, Director of Edinburgh Zoo, and other IUDZG members were there in a more local capacity, e.g. Michael Robinson, Director of National Zoo and Charlie Hoessle, Director of St. Louis Zoo. Bert de Boer, then Director of the National Foundation for Research in Zoological Gardens, Netherlands gave a seminal presentation on the need for an international communications set-up for all zoos, and how it might be organized. He acknowledged that he was uncertain how such a target could be achieved given the numbers and cost of postage, little imagining the advent of internet which had the capacity and eventually solved this problem better than any imagining.

The workshop was a truly popular and effective event. Many of the people in attendance got to meet one another for the first time and discuss zoos and cooperation. It was a moving event which caused most of the attendees to tear up with joy. Zoo people have a bond ... it is something like what develops when people are stranded on a desert island or are victims who survived a shipwreck, or hurricane-- they bond with each other! Zoo management also is not easy!

In the discussions and recommendations of the meeting, the IUDZG's role in providing a liaison function for regional national and other zoo organizations in the recent past was acknowledged, and the workshop recommended that IUDZG include within its development the support and evaluation of the communications system. Communications were immediately improved by requesting international zoo organizations, such as IUDZG, IZE, CBSG as well as regional and national zoo associations to circulate their relevant documents to one another. Other topics discussed and included in resolutions were environmental education, training in all relevant fields, support for training, the need for more organized captive breeding programs globally, the need for prioritization of species and spaces, and the need for increased international recognition of the importance of zoos and aquariums. A comprehensive list of all existing zoo associations and like organisations was to be prepared and distributed.

One of the main conclusions of the International Zoo Associations meeting was that a global zoo network should be established for the exchange of information between all zoo associations. IUDZG, which was later renamed the World Zoo Organisation and later the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, however, had almost completed its struggle with membership policy and was close to having a workable outcome. This would result in the extensive

constitutional changes permitting recognized regional and national zoo associations to become Association Members of IUDZG. Then IUDZG itself could be the global network. No one then knew for sure that this would come about, however and there was a contingent who wanted a separate communications network to include IUDZG, CBSG, ISIS and the regional and national associations.

Nonetheless, IUDZG took on the role of liaison and its President, Roger Wheater, sent a Letter to all known Regional and National (zoo) Associations laying out an approach which was intended to result in improved international communications between zoos. The approach was simple, e.g. for each Regional and National Association to circulate their own Association information among all other Associations, including IUDZG, ISIS and CBSG and to circulate information from other Associations to their own members. An address list was attached and the process could begin. Fred Damon, Zoo Liaison on behalf of IUDZG, was asked to monitor the process and also seek a representative from each entity to overview the effectiveness of the communications system.

The impact of the Front Royal meeting had been very significant with attendees feeling enriched at the gathering of associations and to hungering for more, perhaps on a regular basis. Little did they know that an opportunity would emerge in a little over a year, when IUDZG would welcome Regional and National Associations as members. While it took some years to address the issue of the associations, IUDZG did not waste time incorporating zoo associations into its fold after the Front Royal meeting.

In fact it was 30 Sept-3 Oct 1991 at the 46th Annual Conference of IUDZG in Singapore, that the IUDZG working group on constitutional change recommended a dual approach to membership in order to fully represent the world's zoo professional community. One branch of this approach would be the institutional members represented by their Director, and the other would be the regional and national associations. This course of action was accepted by the membership at the IUDZG meeting who agreed that the IUDZG Constitution be modified to accommodate this change.

It took some time for all the regional and national associations to join and to start attending IUDZG/WAZA meetings. People who already attended CBSG found that the extra stay for this meeting was convenient. Now many member Association Chairs attend WAZA along with member zoo directors. They also get together at a closed meeting to discuss global issues that impact associations.

The zoo associations are all independent and all different despite being the same! There are social, cultural and economic differences. Of the regions and countries from developing areas, such as Asia, South and Central America, Eastern Europe, and Africa almost find that keeping up with the western world is difficult due to the wide variation in the value of their currencies. Thus, there are still some communications problems among regions even though information on how to contact one another is available and the internet makes it all easy. Those Association Chairs who attend WAZA contribute at the Associations meeting but may never do so throughout the year. WAZA is currently making an attempt to bring them closer together by working on some common projects.

## Short History of One Regional Zoo Association, SAZARC

SAZARC, the South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation, has faced the problem of funding by utilizing its host, Zoo Outreach Organisation, to raise funds for membership, travel, conferences fees, etc. from their western colleagues and friends over the years. SAZARC was initiated and founded in 2000 starting with a zoo directors meeting of a few zoo heads from most of the South Asian countries. Everyone who attended was very enthusiastic about having an association and SAZARC was named (the idea of Dr. R.K. Sahu to include "regional cooperation" based on the economic entity of the region) there and then. For the past decade the SAZARC office, based at ZOO HQ has raised funds for all SAZARC conferences from outside the region. Never easy, it has now become extremely difficult to do this. Western zoos consider *in situ* conservation projects the most important project and they want to give any funds to spare to this distinctly conservation-oriented activity.

It is past time for SAZARC to stand on its own but there are obstacles. For one thing, South Asian zoo director's bosses, reflecting the general opinion of bureaucrats at any level or country of the region, will not approve funds for inter-regional air fare, registration, or any other expense to do with leaving their country. They consider any such event no more than a "junket". SAZARC has been rigorous in avoiding any truth in such an accusation by making sure every minute of the day (and often night) is devoted to some serious activity such as training, working groups, etc., leaving any fun and frolic for nighttime. Since first meeting also, SAZARC has added a couple of days before the meeting for concentration on CBSG, the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, South Asia branch and (later) RSG, the Reintroduction Specialist Group, explaining CBSG and RSG principles, isolating appropriate wildlife issues to discuss and participating in Working Groups. We find, despite the seriousness with which we approached this venture, hoping that zoos would benefit by the external and local speakers, working sessions, and exposure to other countries zoos, that there has been no impact at all on the superior officers who hold the purse strings. We ask members to request travel funds from their institution or government but there is no positive response. Now, we are pondering what to do as we can't sustain the costs without help from South Asian zoos and their governments.

Without investment of our own, of money, or time, or work, or sacrifice, human beings don't really see the true value of even the best things. We have to find a way forward.

One of the main ambitions of SAZARC convenor was to create interest and activity towards getting zoo regulation through legislation in all the South Asian countries. India has led the way for the rest of the region and to an extent the world by the seriousness with which they approached the topic in their country. The situation of India was dire : government had not kept up with the proliferation of zoos in the country. They published a list of 44 zoos in 1985 or so and a very few years later Zoo Outreach Organisation and later the Nandankanan Zoological Park and then again Zoo Outreach Organisation published lists of captive animal facilities – zoos, mini zoos, deer parks, etc. – of up to 187. In the meantime, this writer had been writing many articles about the situation of zoos in the country and also visiting

officers and ministers in New Delhi, always with the objective of keeping this issue active.

After some time, the Ministry of Environment took action, conceiving a Zoo Act which demanded a Central Zoo Authority and getting it passed in 1991, and then legal norms and standards in 1992. CZA then advertised in the press and post that all wild animal facilities must report to government and request permission to operate. The number of wild animal facilities that identified themselves over the years were over 450! India actually was able to close over 200 spurious captive animal facilities, a feat that no other country in the world has achieved. SAZARC has focused a great deal on this topic in its meetings and so far Nepal and Bangladesh have formulated zoo legislation which is crawling through their government offices. SAZARC convenor now believes this to be the most useful activity in the long term and will spend the next few years working on the remaining countries in the region which do not have legislation and are not regulated.

Many of the zoo associations in the world have a website. This has been included in the list of zoo associations below. One South Asian zoo personnel may like to check out some of the other countries to see what is being done by zoo associations all over the world. We could also be doing these things if there was more cooperation and enthusiasm for these activities by our zoos and more understanding and cooperation by the governments of these countries.

