

History and Future of Int'l Congress of Zookeepers -- from their web site www.iczoo.org

The first iteration of an "International Congress on Zookeeping" (ICZ) was generated at a meeting at the American Association of Zoo Keepers' (AAZK) conference, held in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A. in the year 2000, which was itself an international gathering. Representatives included the 7 major regional Associations for professional Zoo Keeping;

- American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK)
- Association of British Wild Animal Keepers (ABWAK)
- Australasian Society of Zoo Keeping (ASZK)
- Asociación Ibérica de Cuidadores de Animales Salvajes (AICAS)
- Association Francophone des Soigneurs Animaliers (ASFA)
- Berufsverband der Zootierpfleger (BdZ)
- Foundation Harpij (De Harpij)

Meeting attendees concluded that a common conference for Zoo Keepers from around the world would improve communication between Zoo Keepers and provide a framework for supporting the development of professional Zoo Keeping in other regions having no such associations. Promoting the development and application of professional animal welfare and husbandry techniques amongst Zoo Keepers would also benefit wild animals in captivity generally and contribute to wildlife conservation as well. So, the first International Congress on Zookeeping was held at Avifauna in Netherlands in 2003 and attended by over 300 Keepers from 27 different countries. All attendees appreciated the variety of workshops, paper presentations and other developmental opportunities available there. In addition, the tours to a number of zoological facilities within the region allowed everybody to view "behind the scenes" and experience some of the most modern practices in animal husbandry, exhibit design, and visitor and education facilities.

ICZ members have continued organising this international congress every 3 years, with the second held in Australia, at the Gold Coast in 2006, and the last in Seattle, USA, in 2009.

Austalian Group 2006

In Australia the Philippine Association (ZAP) and the African association (AAKA) were invited to assist and became members of ICZ. The next aims for ICZ is to develop ICZ association to make new projects beyond organising congress.

Present and Ongoing

Thus ICZ is building a global network of zookeepers and other professionals in the field of wildlife care and conservation. This exchange of experience and knowledge will improve professionalism of zookeepers for the benefit of the animals under their care and promote awareness and actions that will contribute to the preservation of wildlife. Each regional zookeeper association can be a member

and automatically each member of their own association is a member of ICZ.

Reciprocal rights for all members of ICZ include:

- Hosting of ICZ conferences;
- Keeper development - Advancing animal care profession;
- Assist-ing the development of new keeper associations;
- Developing the global network of zoo keepers;
- Conservation

A Steering Committee directs progress of ICZ and helps create a vision for the association, a list of which is below. The need to incorporate the ICZ as a non-profit association is being pursued. By-laws and a constitution have been accepted by the seven founding associations. Conference and paper guidelines were produced, a website created and Membership categories established.

Keeper development and the advancement of the animal care profession are a top priority for the ICZ. The role of the ICZ in helping keepers, especially those in developing countries and those without their own associations has been significant. Perhaps nothing else that has occurred in the last 14 years that has had such a positive effect on the global development and networking of the world's zookeepers. Increased communication, advanced husbandry and the sharing of expertise are the products of the ICZ .

ICZ intends to help develop new keeper associations. As a result of first ICZ conference, keepers in Japan, Philippines and Scandinavia stepped up to form their own associations. This will improve keeper development and animal care in these countries. ICZ constitutions specifically addresses our intent to assist new keeper associations.

ICZ will continue to develop a global network for zookeepers to participate in a global conservation efforts. ICZ wants flagship conservation activity in which the world's keepers can take pride.

