

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS MEDIA RELEASE — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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OF ZOOS AND
AQUARIUMS**

WAZA - The World Zoo and Aquarium Association Launches Virtual Zoo

What is a tamandua? Is it true that the Californian condor would be extinct by now if zoos hadn't established a conservation breeding programme? Does the giant anteater really eat ants? How is the lion called in isiZulu? Are there migratory butterflies? Do you have any idea what a dibbler is and how a numbat looks like? How many European bison are there in institutions participating in the International Studbook, and how many are there (again) in the wild?

Can the Galapagos giant tortoise really become older than 100 years? Why do zoos keep gorillas and why do they breed Pacific tree snails? What is the size of a fully grown Orinoco crocodile? How many puppies may a litter of African wild dogs comprise? What is the purpose of a zoo keeping American burying beetles? Is it true that kiwis smell their prey rather than see it? These and hundreds of other questions are answered by WAZA's Virtual Zoo on www.waza.org.

On 1st of June www.waza.org, the website of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums has been considerably expanded by the addition of a virtual zoo, informing about animals, both rare and common, visitors may encounter in WAZA member institutions. At the time of opening, the zoo contains 266 species with an emphasis on mammals.

Because WAZA is a global organisation, the collection of the Virtual WAZA Zoo consists of animal species from all parts of the world and includes representatives of a wide range of taxa - from field cricket to gorilla. These are presented in a taxonomic setting - a traditional Zoo with e.g. Primate Complex, Cat House, Bear Pits, Deer Enclosures, Bird House, Aquarium etc., which makes it easier to find a particular species. Each species is presented on a fact sheet which contains several photographs and a distribution map. The scientific name, common names in several languages, and basic information on taxonomy, habitat, population and conservation status are provided. There are boxes containing fun facts, and texts written by some 30 experts giving biological information, reasons why zoos and aquariums keep the species concerned in their custody, and requirements for keeping the animals in human care. The minimum standards quoted are usually those of the Austrian Zoo Ordinance (2005), which is the most recent and most comprehensive legislation in this field. Finally the fact sheets contain links to *in situ* projects displayed in the Conservation section of the WAZA web site, exhibit presentations on the ZOOlex website, and relevant links to external web sites. A zoo is never completed, and also the Virtual WAZA Zoo is constantly under construction. The fact sheets will be permanently updated and several animal groups are that are still in quarantine will be added to the collection. An additional GeoZoo, where the animals will be grouped according to geographic distribution and type of habitat, is under preparation.

For further information please contact : Peter Dollinger, Executive Director, World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, email: director@waza.org

The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) was founded in 1946 in Rotterdam as International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens. It promotes effective stewardship of the natural world by encouraging its members to bring people close to living animals, applying and advancing *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, science and education, and setting standards of excellence in animal welfare and environmental responsibilities. WAZA unifies 222 major zoos and aquariums (institutional members), 23 regional or national federations representing another 1000 zoos and aquariums, and 11 zoo-related organisations. The headquarters of the organisation are located at Berne, Switzerland.



On the website (www.waza.org) left list of topics, click on "Virtual Zoo" and get this below:



Crete Wild Goat
Capra aegagrus cretica



Alpine Ibex
Capra ibex ibex



Japanese Serow
Naemorhaedus crispus



Cyprian Wild Sheep
Ovis orientalis ophion

Then click on the species you want to know about and get this:



Photo of your selection Alpine Ibex *Capra ibex ibex*



Scientific classification

Order: ARTIODACTYLA
Suborder: RUMINANTIA
Family: BOVIDAE
Alpine Ibex (*Capra ibex ibex*)

Distribution map : Range European Alps,
Frequency declining to the East
Habitat: Montane pastures at an altitude of 1,600 -3,200 m
IUCN Red List Status 2004: Lower risk, least concern
CITES: Status Not listed
Wild population: Approx. 30'000
Zoo population: 298 reported to ISIS (2005)

Facts about the Alpine Ibex

Ibex are the most frequent wild bovids of the Alps and related to goats. Most eye-catching are their curved horns. Those of the males can grow up to 1m and weigh as much as 15 kg. Horns grow a lifetime but less with increasing age. An individual's age can be told from the annual rings visible on the back of the horns. Ibex have a compact body on sturdy legs. While males, called bucks, can reach a bodyweight from 80 kg up to 150 kg, goats hardly ever exceed 50 kg. Ibex are strong jumpers and sure-footed climbers. This enables them to move easily in their steep, inaccessible terrain. Living above tree limit, they have a very thick coat and are able to survive even with only sparse nutrition. Males join the female herds in late autumn for the rut season in December/January and depart in early spring. Male bachelor herds form during summer and have a distinct hierarchy, based on age, size and strength. Playful fights occur to clarify this ranking: Bucks rear up on their hind legs before crashing their horns together. During the rut most high-ranking bucks avoid each other, minimizing the number of serious conflicts. After a gestation period of 165-170 days 1 rarely 2 kids are born. Shortly after the fawns are able to follow their mother even in difficult terrain. While sons leave their mother's herd after two years to join bachelor groups, daughters remain. This explains why mostly all female animals in a herd are related to each other.

Conservation : Why do zoos keep the Alpine Ibex ?

Even though *Capra ibex ibex* is not threatened nowadays, the species is still kept in many zoos. When firearms came up, the Ibex was hunted almost to its extinction. Horns were treasured trophies, ground horns and the blood of the animals were believed good remedy for many different diseases ("Ibex Pharmacy"). Only about 100 animals survived in Gran Paradiso (Italy) because King Victor Emanuell II kept them for his own pleasure (hunting!) and protected them by a game keeper from poaching. As the King wasn't willing to sell ibex to breed, some animals were smuggled to Switzerland. This was the beginning of a successful breeding. All today living ibex originate from these few founder animals. Some of them were brought into different zoos to breed and their offspring were resettled in the Alps later on - a process that continues until today.

Husbandry : How the Alpine Ibex should be kept ?

Alpine ibex are social animals and should be kept in groups consisting of several adult males and females and their offspring, or in bachelor groups. For up to 10 adults an outdoor enclosure of at least 500 m² is required, which should be enlarged by 50 m² per each additional adult. There should also be a smaller enclosure for temporarily separating individual animals as may be required. There must be some shelter protecting from rain, wind and sun which must be large enough to accommodate all animals, but the animals are cold resistant and no closed stable is required, although a stable may be useful for trapping individual animals. Climbing opportunities must be provided by natural rocks or

artificial rockwork. Marly limestone (*mergel*) is an ideal substrate for covering the soil. In case of sand-covered or natural soil there should be paving the feeding sites and around the shelter.

Ibex are selective grazers/browsers. They should be fed on a diet of good hay, grass, branches in leaves, coniferous branches, pellets and mineral salt.

Fact sheet compiled by Carmen Herzog, Wildpark Langenberg, CH-8135 Langnau a. A., 20.12.05
Photographs by courtesy of (1-4) Peter Dollinger, taken at Niederhorn (Bernese Oberland) and Les Angles Wildlife Park (France)

Did you know ...

... that during summertime ibex - just like humans — take a "siesta" at Lunchtime. They forage mainly in the morning and the afternoon. During winter season- as the days are short - the ibex hardly rest during the day but are forced to spend all day foraging for cushion plants and dry grass that they dig out of the snow. Additionally ruminating helps them to extract more nutrients and digest the meagre food.

Useful links to ibex via the World Wide Web
Useful Links — click on these on the website and gets lots of information on the species you have selected, like this :

[Ultimate Ungulate Page](#)

[Ibex Reintroduction Projects](#)

[In situ Projects](#)

[Ibexes for the Rauris Valley, Austria Reintroducing ibexes into the Eastern Alps, Austria](#)
[Ibexes for the Giulian Prealps, Italy](#)

Exhibits on ZOOlex

If you click on this in the website you will go to a site which has exhibits of the species you have selected, how the exhibit was constructed, pictures of the species in the exhibit, etc. Like this :



SO ...

Visit the Animals at WAZA's Virtual Zoo

At the virtual WAZA Zoo we would like to inform you about animals, both rare and common, you may encounter in our member institutions. For each species or genus presented we provide several pictures, common and scientific names, basic data on distribution, including a map, habitat, population and conservation status, biological information, reasons why zoos and aquariums keep the species concerned in their custody, requirements for keeping the animals in human care (the minimum standards quoted are usually those of the Austrian Zoo Ordinance (2005), which is the most recent and most comprehensive legislation in this field), as well as links to in situ projects displayed in the Conservation section of this home page, exhibit presentations on ZOOlex, and relevant links to external web sites.

Because WAZA is a global organisation, the collection of our virtual WAZA Zoo consists of animal species from all parts of the world and includes representatives of a wide range of taxa – from jellyfish to gorilla. These are presented in a traditional taxonomic setting – a Zoo with e.g. Primate Complex, Cat House, Bear Pits, Deer Enclosures, Bird House, etc., which makes it easier to find a particular species. A GeoZoo where the animals will be grouped according to geographic distribution and habitat types, is under preparation. A zoo is never completed, and also our virtual WAZA Zoo is constantly under construction. Some animal groups are still in quarantine. Institutions of the wider WAZA Network are therefore welcome to contribute to assist in the further development of the Zoo.

About zoos and aquariums

Zoos and aquariums have in their custody animals belonging to a wide range of wild species as well as to a number of domestic breeds. The size of the collections of individual institutions ranges from a few to more than 1500 species. Information on the size of the collections of WAZA member institutions are to be found on our Zoos & Aquariums of the World Section. Although zoos and aquariums have to rely on gate fees and other income to maintain their operation, the majority of the zoos and aquariums of the WAZA Network are not profit-oriented but keep animals primarily for the following purposes:

- ◆ To allow people living far from nature to enjoy the beauty of and close encounters with animals, thus motivating the visitors to care about animals and the conservation of biodiversity.
- ◆ To educate people about the biology, behaviour, ecology and conservation needs of animals.
- ◆ To collect information and to allow for scientific research on animals, which may be crucial for the survival of wild populations.
- ◆ To maintain conservation breeding operations with a view of keeping reserve populations in human care and eventually having animals available for reintroduction purposes.

DID YOU KNOW: that more than 600 million people visit the real zoos and aquaria of the WAZA Network each year?



Left :
Ibex in the enclosure

Below:
Visitor in Northerly hide



Above:
Young Ibex



Left: Ibex do what comes naturally on sandstone hills in the exhibit