

## Conservation Breeding Guidelines Working Group, Part 2 -- for Indonesian zoos (PKBSI)

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### Introduction:

As a result of the economic crisis in the late 1990s many Indonesian zoos have gone through a financial crisis which did not allow them to provide the care for their animals and to develop their zoos according to the standards that they, and the outside world, aspire to. Recently, they and the government of Indonesia, have been under increasing attack from animal welfare organisations. The Indonesian government has requested input from SEAZA and PKBSI on how zoos could and should contribute to conservation. SEAZA and PKBSI have asked CBSG to help them with this. CBSG suggested that since CBSG South Asia has worked on similar issues in their region, this regional team would be best suited to try to take this forward. Independent of this issue, Sally Walker, the convener of CBSG South Asia had already suggested to form a working group on Conservation Breeding Guidelines during the CBSG Annual Meeting (see report from that working group). It was decided to first wait for the outcome of this working group as it was expected that it would address similar issues.

Now that the "Conservation Breeding Guidelines" working group has had its meeting, it is clear that although the working group will address such issues, the group has defined for itself a scope that is broader than the immediate needs of Indonesia. Working towards achievement of the goals if this working group is also going to be a long term process, whereas Indonesia has some immediate needs that need to be addressed.

The current working group, the group on "Conservation planning for Indonesian zoos", will try to clarify the specific needs of PKBSI and will try to identify mechanisms and actions to fill in these needs.

### Current state of affairs:

During the SEAZA board meeting in Singapore in February 2004 nine species were selected as flagship species to link *ex-situ* and *in-situ* conservation activities in the region.

- In addition, PKBSI identified for Indonesian zoos 15 priority species for conservation. There is significant overlap with the list of species identified by SEAZA. For each of these species the zoo and specific staff member responsible for the studbook of the species was identified. A list of the zoos holding each species and the number of individuals of the species in each zoo have been compiled. Criteria used to select these priority species were IUCN Red Data List category (global and regional), is species already in zoos, cultural importance, native species, importance for education etc.

- The Indonesian government has a list of 12 endangered species with high priority for conservation.

- There are currently 29 zoos in PKBSI, of which 10 have undergone an evaluation and have qualified to be a member of SEAZA.

- All Indonesian animals in Indonesian zoos belong to the government. Three government departments are involved in the management of zoo collections: forestry (PHKA), home affairs and science (LIPI). Ever exchange of animals between zoos – including between Indonesian zoos – needs a government licence. For this the government requests the records for the individual in question. There is an interdepartmental committee that evaluates the species' value when animals are exchanged between countries. This committee will also need to approve any guidelines produced or procedures recommended by this working group. It is hoped that in time the PKBSI can gain the confidence of the government so that more of this responsibility can be passed to the zoos.

- None of the PKBSI member zoos are currently a member of ISIS. They technically therefore do not have access to ISIS software. There has been substantial training in the use of SPARKS in the SEAZA region during the past years. However, it is not clear how many of the people that received the training are still in the zoos, or are currently using SPARKS or have access to SPARKS.

- For a few of the 15 priority species records for individual animals in collections have been gathered, sometimes in the form of a studbook. However, the level of completeness of the records is unclear and the records may not be kept on computer or in a form suitable for data analysis (such as in SPARKS).

### Defining the needs:

- The needs addressed during the workshop are in the first instance specifically for PKBSI, but generally also apply to SEAZA as a whole. SEAZA and PKBSI decided to first concentrate on Indonesian zoos and later expand from there.

- Now that PKBSI, SEAZA and the government have identified a list of priority species (among which there is significant overlap), how do we move from here?

- Is there a need for something like Taxon Advisory Groups, a system already in place in other regional zoo organisations?

### What is a Taxon Advisory Group (TAGs)?

It was felt that perhaps what was needed within PKBSI was a management group system equivalent to the Taxon Advisory Groups in AZA or EAZA. In these regional zoo organisations, a Taxon Advisory Group or TAG is a group of people (mostly zoo staff) who are experts in a particular group of species (for example: the Great Ape TAG, Antelope TAG, Deer TAG, Elephant TAG, Falconiformes TAG, Reptile TAG, Terrestrial invertebrate TAG etc).

A TAG is usually composed of a chairman and co-chairman,

the studbook keepers and breeding programme coordinators of species that are part of the taxon in question and representatives from zoos that have a lot of experience or particular expertise in species from this taxon. A TAG often also has advisors which can be called upon to give advice to the TAG members on specific topics, for example a veterinary advisor, nutrition advisor, reproductive advisor etc. One of the tasks of the TAG is to make a regional collection plan for the species in their taxon. The regional collection plan gives zoos in that region guidance on which species are recommended to be kept in zoos of that region and at what level they should be managed.

For example, the EAZA Old World Monkey TAG has to decide which Old World Monkey species are recommended to be kept in EAZA zoos and why, at what level (= how intensively) they should be managed and what the population goal is for each recommended species (= how many individuals of this species do we want/need in EAZA zoos).

In order to make these decisions, the TAG takes into account information such as: the status of the species in the IUCN Red List, priorities, actions and conservation needs formulated by the relevant IUCN/SSC Specialist Group, CITES listing, the number of individuals of the species already present in every zoo region of the world, the educational value of the species, the scientific value of the species, the expertise (or lack thereof) with the husbandry and breeding of the species in captivity etc.

The TAG also assists and evaluates the studbook keepers and breeding programme coordinators of species within their taxon.

- If something like a TAG is what is needed, how do you set up a TAG, how do you coordinate it, how do you get people to work for them, in them and with them?. How do you get people to reply to e-mails?
- Who is in a TAG? The PKBSI starts at a different starting point, for example no SSP like programmes yet. Who would be in the TAGs in PKBSI setting?
- There is a need for some sort of higher management group to help make conservation decisions and management plans for the priority species. Do we need this per species or for all the species together?
- There is a studbook recording and management tool. There are already some people trained in SPARKS. Who is using it?: Bandung for Java Gibbon, Surabaya started for babirusa, Taman Safari for tigers.
- There is a need to get more recent version of SPARKS to the zoos. However, none of the Indonesian zoos is currently a member of ISIS – this is a matter of resources (financial, equipment, trained staff).
- People need to learn WHY they entering data into a computer. We need to illustrate the “garbage in garbage out system”, in other words illustrate the need for good and

complete records (either manually and/or on computer). Also, have people had training in the more biological aspects of population management? People need to realise what the data will be used for and what the consequences are of entering data in a certain way.

- There has been training in record keeping in the region. Dr. Agoramoorthy (Moorthy) has already given guidelines for genetics and demographics etc. But do people still remember? Are the same people that went on the courses still employed by the zoo(s)? Is there a need for refreshment?
- People will only do studbooks and do them well if they enjoy it. It would be good to train the various studbook keepers as a team (for a few days) so they can talk to each other and help each other and start to enjoy the work (during the course and thereafter).

#### **Recommendations:**

- Move PKBSI zoos toward entering data into SPARKS for the 15 priority species in order to be able to analyse the data and eventually make recommendations.
- Organise a training workshop for all the designated studbook keepers in PKBSI to get trained and/or refreshed in SPARKS + organise refreshing in the biological aspects of studbook management and the need for complete records as well as the importance of recording what is known and what is not known and what is assumed – highlighting logic. People should also bring their own data. Perhaps this could be organised through SEAZA.
- Start with the studbooks of those species (from the PKBSI priority list) for which there are already a fair number of individuals living in the zoos and for which there is a fair amount of data and fairly complete records. Get all the studbook keepers to train using these studbooks as training data. Also use some of the good hypothetical studbooks that have been created for teaching in other regions.
- Contact ISIS to identify ways to get SPARKS to the Indonesian zoos even though they are not members of ISIS at this moment in time.

#### **Still to do / discuss / explore:**

- We have so far only talked about the captive breeding side of contributing to conservation. PKBSI is also asking for advice on how to contribute to conservation in the form of *in situ* programme support, education, research etc.

As a first start Jansen Manansan (current chairman of PKBSI and of SEAZA) should obtain a copy of the current draft of the WZACS.

- What can/should be the role of WAZA in this?