

# World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy

## Action Planning Workshops

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Iteration of the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy may be the most carefully, consensually and systematically written documents in the history of zoos. The process has taken well over a year and a half and has involved virtually hundreds of people, authoring, coordinating, reviewing, correcting, editing, re-reviewing and now finally approving and finalizing for the last time.

At the WAZA meeting held in Taipei a series of 8 workshops were conducted to review the Strategy for the last time and take comments, criticism and compliments. The objective of the workshops, held 1 – 2 November 2004 were not just to review but to also discuss “action plans” for WAZA, for the regional and national associations and for individual zoos. The goal is for the work of actions plans resulting from the strategy to be done where it could be done best and also to avoid duplication of effort. Thus these workshops were to produce an action plan defining WAZA’s contribution to implementation of the recommendations for the various chapters. In conducting the workshop, the Ground Rules developed and popularized in the conservation community by CBSG were used so that all who participated could be heard and would have confidence that their ideas were taken seriously. Briefly, these rules are:

- All ideas are valid
- Everything is recorded on flip charts
- Everyone participates; no one dominates
- Listen to each other
- Treat each other with respect
- Record differences of opinion but do not allow them to derail the process
- Observe time frames
- Complete draft report by end of meeting

Each group had a recorder to capture the discussion and this article is a summary of some points which came up in the discussions. The design of the workshop was systematic with a specific time allotted to each action, e.g.

— Document Review -10 minutes - document had been approved by WAZA Council but further changes arising at these workshops would be considered by Council in the next two days.

— Vision and Recommendation Discussion 10 min Review, and ensure everyone understands the meaning of, the chapter’s vision and recommendation(s).

— Goal Identification 30 min – this task was to brainstorm and consolidate goals related to implementation of each recommendation.

— Action Development and Prioritization 60 min

The action steps to come out of this part of the workshop were to be small, implementable steps which would help WAZA to achieve its stated goals. Each action was to be ‘SMART’: e.g., Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely.

With these instructions, which have been summarized, the groups began their tasks on the following chapters :

### CHAPTER 2: CONSERVATION OF WILD POPULATIONS

#### VISION

Zoos and aquariums will be an important force for worldwide conservation by their employment or support of field workers active in the conservation of wild animals and their habitats. Zoos and aquariums will make further contributions to conservation in the wild by providing knowledge, skills and resources through initiatives in zoo breeding, translocations and reintroduction, wildlife health, research, training, education and by funding field activities.

General: from the workshop a overarching GOAL emerged – that WAZA prepare a Code of Conduct for field projects (See below No. 4). This would aid the actioning of many of the recommendations. This would include information on what a project should comprise of, reporting structures and methods of evaluation.

Recommendation 1: WZACS calls on all zoos and aquariums to increase their work in support of conservation in the wild in order to achieve an increase of all zoos and aquariums participating in field projects. A series of actions were suggested. This is a summary – these actions will be available in the Proceedings of the WAZA Conference 2004.

Recommendation 2: The WZACS takes the view that zoos and aquariums should focus their conservation proposals and actions within national, local or regional Biodiversity Action Plans and/or similar species recovery programmes, and in areas where these have not been set up or are not effective, their formation should be initiated, supported or strengthened. This is in order to promote Conservation Action Plans at, regional, national and institutional levels and also partnerships with regional and national NGOs and GOs. It is not the main role of WAZA – but the regional and national associations to implement.

Recommendation 3: The WZACS emphasizes that zoos and aquariums must not work independently in reintroduction or translocation programmes but must work with other institutions, and always with the appropriate Government authorities, the relevant IUCN/SSC Specialist Groups, and other governmental and non-governmental conservation agencies, particularly those in the host country and the relevant national or regional zoo association in order to achieve maximum collaboration in reintroduction and translocation programmes between zoos and aquariums and other institutions. It was further recommended that zoos working in a particular country should contact native zoo associations when working in the country.

Recommendation 4: The WZACS recognizes that reintroduction and translocation programmes need long-term support in research, time, dedication and money. The WZACS also recognizes that socio-economic and political considerations must guide such programmes. This to be reworded more like a recommendation. The goal of this recommendation would be served better if WAZA prepared a code of conduct for field projects, to include a strategy to allow the local community to take up the project and an evaluation methodology.

Recommendation 5: WZACS applauds those zoos and aquariums that have set up training courses for conservation professionals, and encourages other institutions to consider setting up their own courses or offer assistance to those courses already operating.

Recommendation 6: The WZACS calls on all associations zoos and aquariums, however small or large, to be actively involved in raising funds/securing resources for field conservation.

Recommendation 7: The WZACS advocates that all zoos and aquariums through their regional and national associations and networks endeavour to manage their own sites to encourage and attract threatened wildlife which needs help.

Recommendation 8: The WZACS recommends that regional and national zoo associations devote time and money to devising and implementing methods of assessment of the conservation contributions being made by their members.

This session was led by Lena Linden from Sweden and attended by persons from Central America, England, New Zealand, Spain, South Asia, Germany, South East Asia, Europe, South Africa, and U.S.A.

### **WZACS Chapter 3 Science and Research**

This session was chaired by Heribert Hofer and attended by participants from USA, Africa, England, India, Italy, Russia and France.

Suggested revised vision statement: Our vision is the full integration of zoos and aquariums into the research community and into public consciousness, as serious, respected scientific institutions that make significant contributions and sound scientific decisions for wildlife worldwide.

Recommendations need to change in tone a bit or a note needs to be added to acknowledge that research being referred to here is not necessarily biological but encompasses social science research as well.

Recommendation 1: Record and collate research that members undertake, make accessible, monitor new areas, so that there is a seamless integration of association databases and to better disseminate information about new areas  
WAZA to recognize, support and where needed build pools of international scientific experts with an advisory role to collate work being done and highlight emerging areas of scientific research focus.

Recommendation 2: Zoos encouraged to (individually and collectively) identify, prioritize, and pursue own and collaborative research needs. The importance of the value of broad based (and apparently less relevant) research as well as conservation and welfare focused research tailored to specific zoo needs.  
-- WAZA to identify fields from regional association databases that can be integrated to meet global needs but are expanded upon at the regional level.  
-- WAZA to make a systematic effort to forge connections between zoos and IUCN Specialist Groups. WAZA recognizes the value of basic research and 'blue sky' thinking in making breakthroughs in conservation and other scientifically important areas

Recommendation 3: Promote and use scientific databases and resource banks...Zoological Information Management System of ISIS should be accessible...for all members and promoted as the central scientific database and means of analyzing data. WAZA linked associations should also promote participation in ZIMS

Explain role and potential of valuing research in the widest sense, including educational, social and marketing research. Also, biological research increasingly integrated with social research for *in situ* programs in conservation. Scientific literature should include acknowledgement of zoo as source of animals and data  
Integrate scientific research with education of the public.

Recommendation 4: WZACS urges institutions to review their resources and contribute to the greatest extent and in as many ways as possible to research initiatives (especially those directed to conservation). WAZA to urge all zoos/aquaria to identify a person responsible for the coordination and promotion of research. WAZA should have a database that includes a list of research contact people for each institution.

Recommendation 5: Direct more money to research, collaborate to obtain more external funding. WAZA to include in its research database a field for funding source information; and/or WAZA makes sure that the regional databases include information about funding sources in their databases and that this is available through the regions.

Recommendation 6: "WZACS encourages institutions to analyze and publish its results in peer reviewed scientific journals" and promote them through the compilation and circulation of bibliographies and through short reports and reviews in relevant journals, newsletters and websites.

### **Chapter 5, Education and Training for Conservation**

This workshop was chaired by Julin Henning and attended by persons from Africa, UK, Europe, Australia, Indonesia, China, USA.

Recommendation 1 - The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (WZACS) urges all zoos and aquariums to demonstrate that education is a central part of their reason for being and to provide adequate support and resources to enable this role to be fulfilled.

Recommendation 2 - The WZACS recommends that all regional and national zoo and aquarium associations should develop an education policy for a coordinated approach to education and should provide leadership in the formulation of principles, strategies and minimum education standards  
This is to emphasize that regional associations often have their own documents and that WAZA is also an association of associations.

Recommendation 3 - The WZACS recommends that zoos and aquariums enhance the effectiveness of conservation education by working closely with other education institutions and organizations, and by being involved in formal education curriculum activities, and formal educational programmes designed for all ages and abilities. Should include reference to relevant government departments and ministries

Recommendation 4 - The WZACS strongly encourages all zoos and aquariums to use objective and tested methods of evaluating the effectiveness of their conservation education and training programme.

There appears to be training recommendation missing and it was felt that this was important eg. keeper, vet nurses training

Brainstorming session – What can WAZA do to implement the recommendations The recommendations were thought to cover three main areas;

Policy development:

- WAZA through IZE could be a peer-review body and encourage the publication of educational materials.
- WAZA could encourage best practice and a sharing of policy information.
- WAZA could refer IZE and its individual member educational capacity for advice and peer review.
- WAZA could provide templates and guidelines for education.
- WAZA could be in contact with UNESCO and other world organisations to provide further information for its members.
- WAZA could have a regular concerted education campaign that promotes a single message worldwide and that allows lobbying.(1)  
Cooperation and partnerships between organisations
- WAZA could facilitate links within the zoo community and across regional associations; could contribute to a training programme, such as the IZE scholarships, and include training and exchange schemes, by facilitating links; could raise funding and/or identify sources of funding, for training and scholarships

Evaluating mechanism

- WAZA could encourage the sharing of methods and tools for evaluation which can be shared between associations to prevent reinvention of the wheel.

WAZA could promote education by having an annual award for the best education programme carried out in a WAZA institution

## **WZACS Workshop on Chapter 6, Marketing and Communication**

This workshop chaired by Mark C. Reed, Sedgwick County Zoo and attended by participants from Germany, USA, Hongkong, England, Australia, and Channel Islands.

Vision Statement and Recommendation > points to be considered by Editor for final Edit

- Insert in recommendations: Zoo and Aquarium Associations
- Vision should be aspirational with measurable goals
- Vision: Make zoos and aquariums the most trusted voice for educating the public about animal welfare, care and wildlife issues
- Communication should be based on science and specific expertise of zoos and aquariums.

Goal: Zoos, regional associations and WAZA should speak with one voice. WAZA will define what the integrated communication strategy is.

Note: target audiences of WAZA (currently): International Conventions, Global NGOs, Governments, Regional and National Zoo and Aquarium Associations, Zoos and Aquariums, Media and must also reach Educators/teachers, Young people, Decision makers

- WAZA can
1. Ensure that the strategy consists of a family of common global messages about zoos and conservation.
  2. Include tangible examples which illustrate conservation achievements and challenges for the future.
  3. Communicate principles rather than content, which zoos and aquariums can use to develop their own communications.
  4. Define and identify the common messages and stories that allow zoos and aquariums to speak with one voice on conservation.
  5. Employment of a professional consultant to define target audiences, messages etc., assist in developing action plan.
  6. Identify the audience upon which our resources can produce the greatest impact for conservation.
  7. Lend support to IZE.
  8. Act as a source of information/gateway for specific local, regional and global actions and stories about zoo and aquarium conservation activities, and information about zoos and aquariums and their animals
  9. Use the strapline "United for conservation" > "United for communication".
  10. Identify adequate sources of support to achieve the communication strategy.

## **WZACS Workshop on Chapter 7, Partnerships and Politics**

**This session was chaired by Jo Gipps, Bristol Zoo Gardens and attended by participants from Europe, Thailand, Sweden, Netherlands, South Africa, South Asia, Pan Africa, New Zealand, MesoAmerica, and Indonesia.**

Chair/facilitator stressed that running through WZACS is the idea of cultural sensitivity, that WAZA is a diverse group of countries and that we must ensure that all members are participating in this process. This idea should run through both the document and this workshop.

WZACS is for WAZA, Regional Associations and individual zoos. These are complementary relationships; however the aim of this workshop is to produce a set of actions for WAZA to implement Chapter 7. We have to set out WAZA level actions, but also to identify actions that should be carried out at a regional level.

It was suggested that we should talk about and refer to zoos as a 'resource' and that this word should be used somewhere in the text. It was also proposed that external zoos working in habitat countries should not ignore local zoos in the area or region that may be struggling to find money and other resources and are therefore not in the position to carry out similar levels of

conservation work. This was felt by all attendees to be very important. It was also suggested that there should be little criticism of other zoos, within associations, rather than more experienced zoos should offer to assist

### **Vision**

Participants wanted incorporation of the idea that 'experienced' zoos should mentor or assist zoos that are 'less experienced'.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (WZACS) strongly recommends that zoo and aquarium partnerships and networks will be established or strengthened at local, national, regional and international level.
- 2) The WZACS reminds all zoos and aquariums that they must abide by the legislation, ethics and policy that affects conservation and animals welfare.

It was felt that this was perhaps a curious recommendation as zoos could not operate without abiding to legislation. However it was pointed out that some zoos do not abide by all legislative requirements. There was concern that by including this recommendation, this was tacit admission that some zoos were not doing so and could be used against the organised zoo community. It was additionally pointed out that this recommendation also applies to field work and is a good reminder for all involved in conservation work. No change to this recommendation.

- 3) The WZACS maintains that all zoos and aquariums should be or should endeavour to be members of a regional and/or national zoo association. (...and where there are none, zoos should attempt to form one. Most zoos are not presently in associations. It was noted that in the original WZCS document the phrase 'responsible zoos' was used to try and differentiate. General agreement that this was a good recommendation.

- 4) The WZACS recommends that regional and national associations should make every effort to produce and present a conservation conscience appropriate to their culture within their member institutions, and to bring the activities of all their members into a common ethical and technical framework.

- 5) The WZACS urges national and regional associations to persuade their respective governments to improve or create zoo legislation that will help zoos carry out their conservation purpose.
- 6) The WZACS urges those countries that do not have zoo legislation to use and adapt the existing relevant legislation of other countries when formulating their own policies and regulations, and to seek the help of those zoo associations where legislation already exists. (This is to be made more partnership oriented and also that it should be stressed that zoos join 'recognised' national and regional associations.

### **Possible additional recommendation**

A proposed twinning scheme between zoos or associations. WAZA could encourage by making it a recommendation, but also linking zoos through in situ projects. If a more experienced zoo goes to a range state to do a project the links should be zoo – field – zoo. In this recommendation there should be the wording that it is for the 'mutual benefit' of both zoos. It was suggested that these links would be best served through internet links and also that perhaps a web page on the WAZA site could be a way of finding the appropriate zoos to twin with.

What can WAZA do to implement the recommendations of Chapter 7. Partnership recommendations

- WAZA could provide credibility, thereby encouraging individual zoos to join national and regional Associations
- WAZA could sanction/stop substandard zoos by removing them from the association.

- WAZA can communicate effectively what they do and their achievements, and of the benefits of being in an association
- WAZA can establish clear task division between WAZA and regional associations
- WAZA could help or assist in establishing partnerships with non-zoo organisations, governments and other authorities, and that this could work at all levels
- WAZA could influence the fees imposed by regional associations to encourage membership
- WAZA could help national/regional associations draft and implement an ethical conservation policy
- WAZA could talk to governments and or heads of state, in that its status would allow greater access to important figures
- WAZA could actively recruit members
- WAZA could increase web-based forms of communication
- WAZA could adopt a 'twin' zoo scheme
- WAZA could review the zoo/welfare/conservation legislation
- WAZA could help regional association zoos to join which encourages regional associations
- WAZA could stimulate the development of regional associations and have an active membership policy

#### Legislation recommendations

- WAZA could apply membership sanction
- WAZA could encourage work with offending zoos
- WAZA could work through regional associations
- WAZA could be a resource-conduit and link-maker in regards to legislation
- WAZA could encourage adherence to international treaties e.g. CITES
- WAZA could define what a 'responsible' zoo is
- WAZA, as a global organisation, could apply influence to governments
- WAZA could collate a database of national and international zoo-related legislation (including those regarding welfare and conservation)

### CHAPTER 8: SUSTAINABILITY

VISION : All zoos and aquariums will work towards sustainability and reduce their 'environmental footprint. They will use natural resources in a way that does not lead to their decline thus meeting the needs of the present without compromising future generations. All zoos will provide examples to visitors of how they can 'green their lifestyles.

Comments: change "provide examples" to "illustrate"  
Add a sentence to the end of the vision from ,future generations replacing the last sentence. All zoos will serve as leaders by example in instituting green practices in all aspects of their operations and demonstrate methods for visitors to enact sustainable lifestyles.

Guidelines which can be translated into more local resource packs. The overall Recommendation from this workshop is that WAZA prepares Guidelines which consist of a generic policy with an audit process and development cycle.

#### WAZAs Goals Relative to Recommendations:

1. to achieve the highest possible level of adoption by all zoos and aquariums of measures and activities that help sustain natural resources
2. to achieve maximum formulation of environment policies and under taking of environmental audits by all zoos and aquariums
3. to achieve maximum effect by setting an example, of sustainable environmental practices which will result in changed social attitudes and behaviour.

Recommendation 1. The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (WZACS) strongly recommends that all zoos and aquariums adopt measures and activities that help sustain natural resources.

Goal: have the least impact of zoos and aquariums on natural resources. In order to achieve this management standards and systems must be defined and promoted and monitoring established to track performance. By (Actions):

1. Identifying existing models that set relevant standards and management systems (ISO 14001) and derive a generic zoo/aquarium template.
2. Selecting examples of 'best practice' or transferable technology/practices/systems and share them, with WAZA endorsement, via websites, publications, meetings etc.
3. Encourage active management so that accountable individuals group and track performance against agreed standards and report to institutional, regional and other networks and work towards continuous improvement.
4. In order to coordinate a WAZA exercise to promote sustainability and green practices and report on progress and enable external promotion and provide support to regional/institutional colleagues – a WAZA body needs to take specific responsibility. The discrete identify and clear mandate of such a body or committee within the WAZA structure must reflect the vital importance of having and demonstrating a sustainable philosophy. This body will ensure all actions are followed through.

Recommendation 2: The WZACS recommends that all zoos and aquariums have a written environmental policy and undertake environmental audits.

GOAL: all zoos/aquariums must have an environmental policy and, as part of this policy, conduct regular audits which are open to independent validation. By:

1. A generic policy to be drafted as a base document / model for all zoos and aquariums (ISO 14001, zoos and other institutions can also provide reference models). Drafting to be done by designated individuals and/or a constituted WAZA body with sustainability responsibility.
2. A generic audit to be drafted and made available (G). This should include a process and cycle for reporting and allowing for WAZA oversight.

Recommendation III: The WZACS urges all zoos and aquariums to practice environmental sustainability, for by showing by example how sustainability can be achieved, social attitudes and behaviour can be changed; zoos and aquariums can thus be shown to be contributing to the conservation of entire ecosystems.

GOAL: change public / social attitudes and behaviour in the area of sustainability, through illustration of practical ways of sustaining natural resources. By

1. Local intersection: i.e. the promotion of relevant lifestyle options and the use of external communication media to demonstrate zoo / aquarium best environmental practice (to complement the WAZA marketing committee activities).
2. To establish a feedback mechanism to determine how successful the presentation of sustainability messages by zoos / aquariums actually is.
3. Establishing close links with relevant other organisations and networks to achieve leadership and advocacy. WAZA can co-ordinate this at a global level and support regional local initiatives.
4. To encourage zoos / aquariums to become integrated in encouraging sustainable initiatives in their local communities
5. To review WAZA's own internal standards and practices with a view to demonstrating less impact on natural resources. This is to include a consideration of travel and transport, conference venues, recycling (e.g. paper).

Note from Editor : These working group notes have been edited more to give readers an idea of how to process work than for strict inclusion of everything and exactitude. The WAZCS will be published at some point in the spring at different points all over the world. SAZARC in South Asia will publish and distribute the document in South Asia.