

World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy-based Action Plan for SAZARC and its institutions



Introduction

The World Association of Zoos and Aquaria WAZA conducted Action Planning Workshops on the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (WAZCS) at their Annual Meeting which was held in Taipei, Taiwan last November 2004.

SAZARC followed suit for the South Asian region and, with the help of Miranda Stevenson, Coordinator of the WAZAC, used the same Workshop Process consisting of the following steps :

- I. Introduction to the Workshop Process
- II. Document Review
- III. Vision and Recommendation Discussion
- IV. Goal Identification
- V. Action Development and Prioritization

The action plans for WAZA, regional associations and individual zoos are not meant to be hierarchical, but for the work do be done where it can be best done and to avoid duplication of effort. The purpose of this exercise was to produce an action plan defining SAZARC regional action steps based on WAZCS, taking their regional characteristics into consideration.

The process called for Facilitators and Recorders. Facilitators' responsibility is to keep the group focused on the task at hand and ensure that everyone who has something to contribute has an opportunity to do so. To achieve this the following Ground Rules were used:

- 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. Document Review enabled the participants to make further comments on the document. Vision recommendations Review ensured that everyone understood the meaning of, the chapter's vision and recommendation(s). Participants then identified their goals for the chapters implementation.

The Action Development and Prioritization was the core of the Action Plan. Action steps can be long- or short-term steps that will help SAZARC to achieve its stated goals. Each action should be "SMART" **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**imely. After review of these working group recommendations, an Action Plan can be drawn up.

Participants of SAZARC conducted their process in two two-hour sessions. Their output follows.

Chapter 6 -- Communication, Marketing and Public Relation for Conservation

Working Group Members -- Abdur Razzaque, Bangladesh; M.M. Qazi, Pakistan; R. K. Sahu, India; Ravi Sharma Aryal, Nepal; M. Rahman, Bangladesh; M.Salim, Bangladesh; Mohd. Fazal, Afghanistan.

Summary

- For effective conservation we have to improve our communication, marketing and public relations (PR)
- For marketing and lobbying we can use family members, friends, media, NGOs and environmentalists, actors, actresses, and other celebrities that will draw attention of the public and create awareness for conservation
- Strong communication, marketing and PR are very much helpful for conservation in our region as a whole, between the countries of the region and in individual countries and institutions.

Vision

- Conservation through co-operation of SAZARC countries

Introduction

- Every year we are losing many species due to different factors, Zoos can play a major role to inform people about these extinctions and their impact.
- Zoos can play a major role to sensitize people for conservation activities taken up by different zoos and wildlife agencies of their own country and other countries institutions also. They can develop a strong sympathy for the Zoos and Wildlife Parks and for their conservation activities on the part of the public.
- Sometime anti-zoo groups create hurdles in the management of zoos and their conservation activities. Strong communication, proper marketing and PR can be helpful in creating better understanding with these groups.

What Zoos can do?

- Zoos can help develop and spread conservation strategies and related activities
- Zoos can help the public and private partnerships for conservation
- Zoos can help in in situ conservation
- Zoos can also provide access to many species of different regions for research and conservation.
- Zoos are the best centers for conservation education
- Zoos can also provide a gene bank to conserve different species of the SAZARC region

New Goals

- Modernization of SAZARC Zoos
- To focus our educational programmes towards conservation
- To strengthen linkages among the zoo community of the region for better conservation
- Exchange of views, ideas, techniques and animals for the

conservation of wildlife

- To create awareness for avoiding illegal trade
- By marketing and PR we can generate enough funds for the sustainability of SAZARC Zoos
- Finance and conservation are not mutually exclusive
- The group calls on SAZARC to recommend that all zoos of the region develop strategies for better communication, marketing and public relations for conservation, to generate funds in order to achieve conservation goals.
- Zoos could be identified as tourism cum conservation places
- Keeper talks could be started in SAZARC Zoos for conveying conservation messages to both literate and illiterate visitors.
- Exhibits must be designed in such a manner that they would be a great attraction to the people with near natural surroundings for the animals

Getting the message across

- We have to design a strategy which could be helpful for fund-raising and communication in all levels of people
- Integrated communication between research institutes, zoos, wildlife parks, policy makers, experts, industrialists, etc. are very important for better marketing
- Animal welfare and wildlife education messages should be spread among the people throughout the South Asian countries.

Languages

- South Asian zoos can spread the conservation message through local languages by using with sculptures, posters and signage
- South Asian zoos should create signage in both national and popularly known international language
- South Asian zoos can publish interesting stories of successful conservation and development of their zoos
- SAZARC, CBSG, RSG training and workshop should be highlighted among the public
- Information dissemination through media should be refined and developed.
- A better relationship between the South Asian countries for conservation, research, education and animal exchange program is desirable.

Chapter 5 -- Education and training for conservation

Group Members : Ganesh Kumar Dubey (Facilitator); B.A. Daniel (Recorder); Bushra Nisar Khan (Presenter); Renuka Bandaranayake; Mian Muhammad Ajmal; Syed Zafar-Ul-Hassan; Mian M.; Naseem Akhtar; Muhammad Akbar; Azhar Saeed; Maznar imtiaz; Ch Afzal Hussain

Vision

Zoos and aquariums, with their unique base of live animals, their expertise, and their links to field conservation, will be recognized as leaders and mentors in formal and informal education for conservation. The educational role of zoos and aquariums will be socially and culturally relevant, and by influencing people's behaviour and values education will be seen as an important conservation activity. Zoos and aquariums will expand the training of their own staff and others engaged in situ and ex situ work

Recommendations

- An education policy to be framed at the regional and the national level
- Micro-planning on conservation education has to be done at Institutional/state/national level
- Wildlife education should be introduced in the curriculum at school level
- Educational materials should be made available to the zoo and aquarium in regional language
- Zoos and aquariums should interact with educational institutions, media, forest departments, etc. to conduct education more effectively.
- Annual budget provisions for educational activities should be included
- Zoos and aquariums should interact with educational institutions, media, forest department, fisheries, etc. to do the education more effectively.
- Annual budget provisions for educational activities should be included
- Standards for conservation education should be framed
- National, regional, international level training for existing education staff on education and conservation should be given.
- Special education programmes targeting hotspots, threatened species, proposed reintroduction sites, poaching, etc. should be developed
- SAZARC should plan and organize or coordinate workshops and training programmes on conservation education for the region.

Chapter 9 -- Ethics and Welfare

Group members : Dr Jayanthi; Brij Kishor Gupta; Geeta Seshamani; Kartick Satyanarayan; Dr Syed Kazim Hussain; Anwar Hussain Gill; Shafqat Ali

- Euthanasia should be implemented when animals are beyond recovery and suffering
- Population management (control) is to be carried out to avoid production of surplus animals.
- Ref : page 63 of SAZARC Briefing Book (if an animal has to be killed due to management reasons, the institution will ensure that death is quick, painless and as stress free as possible)
- (Ref: page 62 SAZARC Briefing Book) Every effort should be made not to produce surplus animals & consideration should be given to the establishment of "retirement" facilities where post reproductive individuals can live out the remainder of their lives
- Animal Transportation : Guidelines for South Asian Zoos should be developed for surface transport
- Education, Awareness & monitoring of zoo visitors should be done to instill respect for wildlife and insure correct behaviour that is not disturbing or dangerous for the animals. This should involve a planned orientation of zoo visitors.
- Educational shows of wild animals in zoos to follow WAZA guidelines.

Chapter 7 -- Partnerships and Politics

Group Members : Abdur Razzaque Mia, Bangladesh; R.K. Sahu, India; Md. Mafizur Rahman, Bangladesh; Ravi Sharma Aryal, Nepal; Irshad Arshad, Pakistan; Mohd Fazel, Afghanistan; Zafarul Hassan, Pakistan; Salim Iqbal-Bangladesh.

Summary

- The Working Group is in agreement with WAZA but SAZARC so far has not included Aquariums. We should consider inviting aquariums as part of WAZA.
- We have to encourage membership of all zoos in the SAARC region.

Vision

- The vision on regional cooperation should be prioritized

Introduction

- NGOs should be more involved in in situ and ex situ conservation activity in South Asia.
- Each country of SAZARC could sensitize the conservation program with their respective religion and cultural activities.

No Zoo is an island

- SAZARC should be committed to carry out conservation program of SAARC because no country independently can carry out their conservation program without the help of other countries.

Types of Partnerships

- Different zoos have different levels in their standard of management so we could use SAZARC or similar agencies to reach the same level of standards among the SAARC countries zoos
- India is having CZA to guide and assist the zoological garden development programs. Other countries in the region may also have similar types of facilities from their government or from NGOs for the modernization of their respective zoo.

Cooperative Breeding Program

- Cooperative breeding will benefit all the countries by many means like in some countries some of the animals are over-populated while in some countries they are near extinction, for example the Black Buck.
- Cooperative breeding program will also avoid inbreeding and provide secure populations.

Special Linkages

- SAZARC has provided us a vast network, and linkages with many other organizations like WAZA, SEAZA, BIAZA, ARAZPA, CBSG, RSG, etc.
- These linkages are very useful for proper uplifting of zoo management of south Asian countries.

IUCN

- All countries in South Asia have an IUCN office, except India and Maldives.
- SAZARC should continue to interact with the IUCN offices in the various countries of the regions for better coordination.

Influencing policy makers

- Sensitization and lobbying will help us to influence policy makers
- It will also improve country relationships and ultimately animal welfare and wildlife management will also improve
- Influencing policy makers will also assist with our funding problems and expedite the lengthy paper procedures.

Policy and Legislation

- We need to make local, regional and national level policies for the betterment and welfare of captive animals along with proper management of the zoological gardens
- We can use SAZARC, ZOO, CZA, WAZA, SEAZA, etc. and similar organisations for assistance in making our policy and legislations.

Conclusions

- Looking to the numbers of visitors of South Asian zoos we need to sensitize public bureaucrats and policy-makers along with the media about our conservation strategies and policies for the welfare of the animals
- We can utilise SAZARC for developing networks amongst SAARC countries.

Recommendations

- SAZARC should be utilised to develop a Conservation Strategy in SAARC countries
- All SAZARC zoos should abide by national and international legislation provisions and policies
- All SAZARC countries should develop a common ethical and technical framework
- SAZARC urges national and regional associations to persuade their government to frame modern zoo legislation for carrying out conservation programs.

Chapter 4 -- Population Management for Conservation



Group Members : Brij Kishor Gupta, Geeta Seshamani, Uzma Khan, Dr. Kazim Hussain, Nasar Hayat, Farooq Bhatti, S. K. Sinha, B. S. Bonal, C. S. Yalakki, Naveed Tariq, Nadeem Qureshi, Nadum Kushan

Recommendations

- Breeding programmes should be regionally cooperative, and should be strengthened.
- Zoos of the South Asian region should attempt to reach a uniform and standard method/technique for breeding to be followed. This can be done through SAZARC
- SAZARC should prioritise species and institutions
- There should be monitoring of non-threatened species for population control.
- Breeding programme of zoos and aquaria should be in terms of objectives, and status and viability of species.

- Objective evaluation of such breeding programmes should be done by a committee of experts constituted for that particular species.
- Breeding programme should be based on sound science and scientific management:
- To meet this requirement, various organisations with expertise need to be involved in the process.
- Information about habitat, conservation status of the species, in-situ sites and socio-economic aspects are also to be considered.
- It is useful to consult WAZA guidelines on the acceptance of seized or confiscated animals before accepting them as these are fully integrated with IUCN SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group guidelines.
- Such guidelines should be brought to the notice of local and national governments in South Asia
- There is a need to address the issue of abandoned and rescued animals in the region.
- South Asian Zoos and aquaria should contribute to the scientific development of population management
- South Asian Zoos should have a coordinated and uniform database at least for highly threatened animals
- A central agency in each country should collaborate with zoos and conservation centres.
- SAZARC zoos should link collection planning with regionally or globally identified conservation priorities working in collaboration with the IUCN SSC Taxon-based Specialist Groups.
- All SAZARC zoos/conservation centres should have a collection plan considering national and regional priorities.
- Intensive networking is required for global and regional integration
- Transferring of genetic material to be completed as quickly as possible and should be done in accordance with regulations and protocols
- Measures should be taken to simplify procedures.



Chapter 3. Science and Research

Group members: Ch. Muhammed Akbar (Recorder); Muhammed Yousaf Pall; Mian Muhammad Ajmal; Ch. Afzal Hussain; Mian Muhammed Naseem Akhtar; Renuka Bandaranayake; Ganesh Kumar Dubey; Muhammed Irshad Arshad; Ashar Saeed Junjua; Muhammed Anwar Mann; Syed Zafar-ul-Hassan

Vision: Our vision for the next decade is the integration of zoos into the research community and into public

consciousness as serious, respected scientific institutions that make significant contributions and sound scientific decisions for wildlife worldwide.

The working group agree to the recommendations given in Science and Research chapter of the WZCS. In addition to these, the group suggests some additional recommendations which have regional importance :

- SAZARC zoos should fix their priorities for research and establish a research cell or unit
- Organize co-operative collaboration research projects at regional level eg. migratory species
- Sufficient funds are not available to carry out advanced research especially in the field of DNA analysis, artificial insemination, embryo transfer techniques etc.
- Modern and well-equipped labs should be established by SAZARC zoos so that all the scientists of the region could carry out research work from various important issues
- A database of wildlife and of zoo biologists must be maintained at SAZARC level to facilitate sharing of their knowledge and their experience
- Barriers on transportation of samples such as blood, animal parts for research purpose within countries should be eased through laws
- While conducting research on Critically Endangered regional species, legal restrictions should be simplified for countries of the region.
- All the results of research work must be published and made available in the SAZARC website (Note : the SAZARC administrative office publishes a peer-reviewed wildlife journal which is already on a website and may be freely availed by SAZARC)
- Census of wildlife should be conducted and results be published in a regional journal such as ZOOS'PRINT magazine or ZOOS'PRINT Journal which has wide circulation among conservationists in the region and around the world
- SAZARC should build up a fund to sponsor research work in the region. Research grants can be applied by any regional zoo

Chapter 8 -- Sustainability

Group Members -- Zafrul Hassan, Pakistan; A.Shakoor Manj, Pakistan; Anwar Hussain Gill, Pakistan; Aurangzeb,, Pakistan ; Mazhar Imtiaz, Pakistan; Rana Shahbaz Khan, Pakistan; Dr Jayanthi, Sri Lanka; Kartick Satyanarayan, India.

- SAZARC to fix a time limit for Zoos to draft their written environmental policies.
- WAZA Recommendations to be followed.
- Waste management (Ref 8.3 page 56)
- Vermiculture, Biogas, use of Solar energy
- Training and Education for Zoo staff
- Zoos to make an expert committee and review implementation on regular basis.
- Explore revenue generation opportunities such as fund raising, sale of merchandise etc.
- Maintain a balance between expenditure and income.