

contribute to field conservation with a partner or partners. The partner(s) can be from another country or region, or from your own country or locality. One of your partners will have to be the existing forest administration due to local legislation and rules. Maybe there is some DFO (Divisional Forest Officer or equivalent) nearby you that has a small project that he can't implement alone. Some of what WZACS says about partnerships for *in situ* conservation can be read on the next page.

The Bhilai Steel Plant Zoo made a policy decision that their zoo's primary mission would be conservation education. After his first CBSG and SAZARC meeting Ganesh Dubey, Superintendent of the zoo, took up a very successful education project involving local trade in wild parrots. Now, tell me THAT doesn't affect wildlife in the wild. The Chennai Snake Park Trust has also made such a commitment to

conservation in education about reptiles. So those zoos are already carrying out the WZACS principles while bigger and richer zoos are sitting around waiting for their animals to breed and an appropriate habitat to materialize.

Over the next few weeks and months, we will be working on a list of ways that ALL zoos can contribute to field conservation meaningfully. We would like to invite contributions of ideas and opinions (either for or against), examples or case studies. Please send your ideas and projects, even projects that you can't do but would like to do. Send to sallyrwalker@aol.com or zooreach@vsnl.com.

Working together with guidance from WZACS and our partners, we can make a difference in long-term and genuine conservation of wildlife in the wild.

Response from Head of International Zoo Programmes, ZSL

Director, SAZARC

Even in such a brief paper you have raised so many issues and I would like to pick up on some and make a few brief general observations.

Firstly I think this is a good approach and using your region of South Asia for test the water will be very useful. There are a good number of zoos there which range in size and support systems and are at different stages of development, if you use the WZACS as defining the targets. They are also in an extremely important area for wildlife and habitats.

I do not get the impression from WZACS that only zoos with a surfeit of resources can undertake *in situ* conservation but it may be harder for zoos that struggle financially and are not exposed to the concept to extract from the document just what they can do to support field conservation.

Bad zoos do reflect on the good zoos wherever they are. One bad zoo can be a tremendous asset to the anti-zoo lobby in any country or region as they then use that as the example of zoos to their readers and potential supporters. This does not have to be in developing countries only. I also think that bad zoos impact on our ability to raise funds, with granting agencies, sponsors, foundations, etc., being distracted by the welfare issues seen in bad zoos, even if they do not apply in good zoos.

Of course it varies in countries and regions, but many zoos in what we would see as "range countries" are run by wildlife agencies, or by cities, states, governments, etc that have responsibility for wildlife. In theory the synergy between these zoos and the conservation efforts should be very effective but often zoos are seen as a drain on resources rather than a tool to help with their work. You mention the partnering potential toward the end of the piece as an example of this and surely this is where the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans should be making that link and clarifying the role of zoos in that country.

One of the key roles of WAZA and the regional zoo associations is to make sure the decision-makers accept and adopt WZACS. This would hopefully stop some of the practices you mention – use of dealers, inbreeding, inappropriate species, etc. Easier said than done, I know, but if we are to make an impact over the long-term we have to achieve this better understanding by those who manage and fund the zoos. Of course we have to make sure that all zoos follow these directions, it is not only zoos in developing countries that show bad practice and that is not out of ignorance or opportunity to do better.

The use of dealers, wild caught animals, animal exchanges (dumping surplus), unnecessary breeding, confiscated animals, etc are tremendous challenges for all zoos. Unwise "reintroductions" are not necessarily activities of zoos only in developing countries. I am sure we can all quote examples of other organisations doing exactly this in many western countries. It will be interesting to see the responses your paper stimulates.

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