

International News Bits

World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy WAZCS Steering Group Meeting held in Bern.

Update on the Foundation Document JG (PJO, MS)

The Editor of the Foundation document, Dr. Peter Olney, Editor of the International Zoo Yearbook, is re-editing and has taken on board all comments received from associations and individuals, from steering group meetings, and from some ideas that came out of the 'Catalysts for Conservation', meeting in February. Where these comments are contradictory he has made judgement. References will not now be in text and all ambiguous words will have been removed, etc. Recommendations will have been added to each chapter so that it becomes a strategy document. It will now follow the style of the previous World Zoo Conservation Strategy of 1993. The recommendations will form the basis of the executive summary.

Once finished PO will send to core group for comment, and then in format for Taiwan. WAZA policy documents have been quoted all the way through. The 'final' text is needed in Taiwan so it has to be finished in September and the final design and printing is scheduled for February/March 2005. The document is not just for WAZA members but for all zoos and aquariums in the world, and it is intended to go to the decision makers of the world. It will be put forward for acceptance at the AGM at WAZA in Taiwan.

Distribution around the World.

An agreement will be taken from National and Regional Association for printing and distribution of the Strategy. There should be more than one copy per zoo. Translation issues will be to be addressed.

IZE Conference to be held in Hong Kong, September 4-9, 2004

The 17th conference of the International Zoo Educator Association (IZEA) will take place in Hong Kong on 4-9 September 2004, organised by Ocean Park, Hong Kong. Some of the meeting will be concurrent with the 12th meeting of the South East Asian Zoo Association.

The IZEA has a scholarship programme for outstanding educators from developing regions. This year the programme has selected the following persons from South Asia :

1. Dr. Kalaichelvan, Education Officer, Bhilai Steel Plants Zoo, India
2. Dr. Rekha Shah, Curator and Edn. Officer, Central Zoo, Nepal
3. Ms. Uzma Khan, Sr. Edn. Officer, WWF & Lahore Zoo, Pakistan
4. Dr. Gigi Joseph, Education Officer, Periyar Tiger Reserve
5. Dr. B.A. Daniel, Scientist, Zoo Outreach Organisation
6. Mr. Mohammed Fazel, Education Officer, Kabul Zoo, Afghanistan

Nick Lindsay of Zoological Society of London reports on Kabul Zoo after two years.

In May 2002 I was able to report at the Federation Annual Meeting in Jersey on my first visit to Kabul Zoo presenting a very troubled picture with a challenging situation. Two years on and three visits later I am delighted to report that there has been significant change at the zoo and progress is being made.

The first year of working with the Municipality of Kabul City and Zoo Management Team was spent attending to the basic needs for the staff, the animals and their facilities e.g., a regular and dependable supply of food, water and electricity etc.. This also gave us time to become more familiar with the site and look to the future requirements.

In the autumn of 2003 three major rebuilding projects were started alongside a rolling Programme of backlog maintenance and general site improvements. This saw the primate island reinstated and enhanced for the growing number of macaque at the zoo, the large bird house repaired with new aviaries added providing excellent space for vultures and eagles, and one of the several hoof stock

paddocks repaired with a new stable for the indigenous gazettes. In addition a new bore hole was dug and the water system repaired or replaced around the whole zoo site, both for irrigation and for the plants and paddocks and as clean drinking water for the animal staff and visitors.

As a bonus, through the British embassy, British forces have been repairing and equipping rooms in the main new building for the Education Department and now includes desks and a DVD player. This has provided a tremendous facility for the new Education Officer and a very solid start has been made to a new school education Programme based at the zoo.

All the development work and the Education Officer post has been made possible through the Kabul Zoo Fund held by North Carolina Zoo and managed by David Jones on behalf of AZA and many other zoo and public donations. Obviously this fund is not limitless and with a second phase development due to start shortly the fund will be exhausted by the end of 2004. We are therefore working with the Municipality to help them develop a sound business plan, taking advantage of the 300,000 plus visitors expected this year and other funding opportunities, which may be available. This will be no easy task but we will do all that we can to see the zoo in a relatively sound position.

Through a local NGO, save the Environment of Afghanistan, we are now working collaboratively with the International Crane foundation on the construction of a wetlands education area at the zoo. This will both improve the facilities for the cranes currently held at the zoo and provide an excellent focus for the story of wetlands conservation in Afghanistan. Hopefully this will be an excellent example of how the zoo can play a role in a wider issue of wildlife conservation in Afghanistan.

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Small Mammal Field Techniques Training and Zoo Management Training to be conducted simultaneously in Pakistan

Pakistan doesn't have a single field biologist studying two of the largest mammal groups, bats and rodents. Participants at a CAMP workshop for Pakistan Mammals conducted by IUCN Pakistan and facilitated by ZOO/CBSG, South Asia indicated their interest in taking up these groups for study, even while they were on other field studies. Now, with funding from Chester Zoo and Bat Conservation International, ZOO and its CCINSA and RILSCINSA networks are organising a field techniques training in Karachi and Islamabad. In Karachi the hosts and collaborators will be the Zoological Survey Department, IUCN Pakistan and the Karachi Zoo. In Islamabad, the Pakistan Museum of Natural History, IUCN Pakistan and ZSD will host the three day workshop which features IUCN SSC Chiroptera S.G. Chair, Dr. Paul Racey, and Dr. Mike Jordan, Curator of Higher Vertebrates, Chester Zoo and rodent specialist and European Chair of Reintroduction Specialist Group.

During the same period, Dr. Harry Schwammer and Dr. Thomas Christian Voracek of Schoenbrunn Zoo, Vienna, Austria will conduct three separate zoo management training workshops in three cities (Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore) for Supervisory level staff and zookeepers. Supervisory level staff will be given technical presentations in the mornings and they will be joined by keepers for demonstrations of various techniques in the afternoon. The hosts are Karachi Zoo and Safari Park, the CDA Islamabad, and the Department of Wildlife and Parks, Punjab. Sanjay Molur will facilitate the field techniques training and Sally Walker will facilitate the zoo training. The Director and Education Officer of the Kabul Zoo, Afghanistan will also attend these zoo trainings if all goes as planned.