

International Zoo Educators Association



International Zoo Educators
www.izea.net
18th Biennial Conference

IZE Conference 2006

October 9 – 14
Pretoria

Excellent keynote speakers, outstanding paper presentations and dynamic open space sessions were all a part of the exciting 2006 International Zoo Educators Conference. The IZE association funded eleven conservation educators from around the world to attend. A compelling view of the state of international conservation education was presented by the 120 delegates in attendance from Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, Australia/New Zealand and Europe. It was clear from the papers and open space discussions that conservation educators are engaged in sustainable development practices, innovative programming and evaluation strategies. The conference program and open space summaries, below, identify the conservation topics of primary concern.

A short report on SANIZE participation at the International Zoo Educators Conference R. Marimuthu*

Every two years, conservation educators from zoos, aquariums and nature reserves around the world assemble for the IZE conference. It is always an exciting moment to meet, learn, and form collaborative relationships with colleagues from different cultural and conservation contexts. This year it was held in Africa, hosted by the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa, Pretoria, October 9-14, 2006. For the first two days the conference was held at National Zoo. The rest of the conference was held at Emerald Casino Resort & Safari at Vanderbijlpark.

There were about 110 participants from more than 30 countries who participated in this conference including five from South Asia. The theme of the Conference was related to United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD).

Registration began on 9 October at Manhattan Hotel. That night an ice breaker was held at the residence of National Zoological Gardens Executive Director, Willie Labuschagne. On 10th October the opening session began in the Education Centre of the zoo. Willie Labuschagne, Chris Peters, President of IZE, Prof. Sospeter Muhngo, Director, International Council for Scientific Unions, Beverley

Damone, Executive Director, South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement spoke at the inaugural session.

The Inaugural was followed by an inspiring keynote address by Dr. Bert de Boer, President of the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums entitled "The greatest challenge for zoos" which is reprinted later in this issue.

Tom Naiman, Director of International Programmes at Bronx Zoo, introduced the conference program as moderator for the first conference session. Over several sessions from 10-13th October there were 48 papers presented, five workshops, seven poster presentations and an open space session was held. IZE had proposed that participants submit on a variety of themes:

1. Zoo Education for Sustainable development
2. What's new in Zoo and Aquarium education?
3. The role of evaluation in successful conservation education programs
4. Making an impact: adolescents and other key audiences
5. Working with communities in and around protected areas
6. Case studies in Zoo and Aquarium education

Five workshops were held on the following topics by the:

1. "The WAZA initiative to engage poorly maintained zoos: A discussion of the IZE's role. Sally Walker, Zoo Outreach Organisation, India
2. "Save the Rhino School Programme-Training for the Rhino Ranger" by Louise Matschke. Johannesburg Zoological Gardens, South Africa
3. "Effective exhibit design 101" by Joyce Kwok, Terrace Tang & Christine Wong, Ocean Park, Hong Kong
4. "Promoting caring attitudes towards animals in visitors: Formulating a plan of action for conservation educators" by Kathy Lehnhardt, Disney's Animal Kingdom, USA
5. "How people learn: Education theory for conservation educators" by Ian Signer, Wildlife Conservation Society, USA

On 13th October, the business meeting of IZE was held. The meeting endorsed a new administrative body of the council: Stephn McKeown, Chester Zoo, President; Tom Naiman, Bronx Zoo, President-Elect; Chris Peters is Outgoing President. Sally Walker was selected as the Regional Representative for the newly official region in IZE, South Asia and Joyce Kwok, Ocean Park, Hong Kong, North and South East Asia. Other regional representatives were also appointed or continued. The meeting endorsed amendments in memorandum of the association. They were to state more strongly the role of conservation in the objectives of the association and to increase funds to the developing regional associations from US\$500 to US\$1000 which were agreed unanimously by the membership.

* **Education Officer, Zoo Outreach Organisation
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The next IZE biennial conference will be held at Adelaide in Australia. John Gardner of Adelaide zoo gave a presentation about the facilities at the Adelaide for hosting this conference in 2008. The closing address was given by Stephen McKeown, the new president.

South Asian Network participation

R. Marimuthu, Education Officer, Zoo Outreach Organisation, India sponsored by IZE.

Gawsia W. Chowdhury, Programme Officer, Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh sponsored by IZE

Arun Narsingh Rana, Education Assistant, Central Zoo, Nepal sponsored by IZE

Dammika Malsinghe, Deputy Director, National Zoo, Sri Lanka sponsored by ZOO and SAZARC.

Sally Walker, Zoo Outreach Organisation, sponsored by Columbus Zoological Gardens, Ohio.

All of them individually presented papers on their work which are abridged below:

Sally Walker presented a paper on "The Role of IZE and Zoo Educators in the WAZA initiative to engage poorly maintained Zoos". She talked about how poorly maintained zoos contribute to extinction rather than conservation in the long term. She related issues that were discussed by a working group at CBSG and WAZA meetings for the last two years. She discussed role of IZE and zoo educators in this WAZA issue calling on educators to address the issue in such a way as to create understanding and right action to assist these zoos to improve on the part of public and the zoo themselves. In the next day the topic was discussed in the workshop session which is printed later in this issue.

Marimuthu presented a paper on "Teachers for Tiger follow-ups in India and Bangladesh". It is a collaborative project of Zoo Outreach Organisation and Wildlife Conservation Society, USA. In his presentation he gave an overview about "Teachers for Tigers" programme in India and Bangladesh. The total number of workshops and number of participants were attended in these workshops in both countries. In continuation to these he talked about the evaluations-materials and methods which he used and the outcomes. Also he talked about the refresher courses conducted for these participants in different places. Further he continued with how he linked school curriculum with Teachers for Tigers manual with some examples.

Gawsia Chowdhury presented a paper on "Teachers for Tigers: a training programme for educators". She talked about Bangladesh Teachers for Tigers programme which was organised by Zoo Outreach Organisation with the collaboration Wildlife Conservation Society and her organisation Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, three workshops were held one at the Dhaka Zoo, one at Dhaka City and another one at Sunderbans. 100 participants took part in these three workshops. She mentioned how the workshop helped among Bangladesh participants. She talked very extensively about the refresher course which was held at Dhaka zoo for the participants of the three workshops.

Dammika Malsinghe

Dammika presented a paper on "Mobile exhibition units in Department of Zoological Gardens, Sri Lanka. She talked

about various ongoing education activities at her zoo and Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage. She explained about her two mobile exhibition units and it consists of variety of educational devices such as skeletons, horns, preserved animals, guides on feather, shell, nutrition, egg & insect, information boards. Generally, graduates and well trained zoo staffs are go with these mobile units to give lecture on various animal related topics and also to explain about the education items on the mobile unit.

Arun Narsingh Rana

Arun has presented a paper on "Central Zoo: A platform for conservation education". In this he highlighted the conservation education activities of the Central Zoo, Nepal and how they use the zoo as a platform for conservation education programmes. He further talked about King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC)-a NGO and autonomous environmental organisation which manages the Nepal zoo. The zoo has two types of education programs. They are membership - based programs and visitors - on - demand programs. The membership - based programs has 17,000 Friends of Zoo (FOZ) members which includes school students. They network 150 in Kathmandu and have established 40 eco clubs in the schools.

Distribution of education materials

Zoo Outreach Organization's education materials are very popular among conservation educators around the world now-a-days. The director and other staffs always carry lot of educational items for distribution wherever they go to attend some meetings, conferences etc., For the IZE conference we carried about 25 kgs of different education items to supply to the delegates. The materials were displayed during the conference and items enthusiastically picked up by participants.

Personal experience of IZE Conference by some participants from South Asia

Rengasamy Marimuthu, Education officer, Zoo Outreach Organisation, India

I first came to know about International zoo educator's conference from the Taronga zoo conference in 1992. After that I learned a lot about IZE activities, their regional organizations through our organization as we were the Regional Representative for Asia (ARNIZE) and now for South Asian Region (SANIZE). In the beginning, there was little representation from developing countries because it involves so much of money to attend this conference. But now, because of IZE sponsorship more members are participating in all IZE conferences. It was my long time wish to participate in any one of the IZE conference. But it came true because of my Director, Ms. Sally Walker, who nominated me and supports me all the times.

In June 2006, when I was attending Conservation Educator's Fellowship program at the Bronx Zoo, USA, Tom Naiman, informed me my application for grant was accepted by the IZE board. Really I was flabbergasted on hearing this news. After that the same day when I saw the mail from Chris Peter the joy burgeoned again. When I saw the list of 12 sponsored delegates from different developing countries, I thought that really IZE was doing a great job for these countries with the intention to show their hard work in the International arena and ultimately get recognition for their work.