

Report of the WAZA project on *Improving Global Zoo Standards* as introduced to the International Zoo Educator's Association IZE.

Sally Walker

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On 11-14 October 2006 at Pretoria, South Africa and a nearby resort hotel, the WAZA Global Zoo Standards issue was introduced to IZE members at their Bi-annual conference. The first session of the first day, there was a presentation by this writer, similar to the presentations which have been given at every such event to explain how substandard zoos affect conservation of wildlife and virtually all aspects of the good that zoos mean to do. In every instant, however, there changes have been made to the presentation to suit the audience and the theme within the issue that was to be highlighted in each case.

Here, the theme was how the International Zoo Educator Association could help with this new WAZA initiative. Problems were introduced by relating what educational material on the issue had been attempted so far in India and questions whether it would be effective. Do we dare introduce some components of the issue to the public? Reviewing a CBSG Working group on this same topic from several zoo directors' perspective, some of the fears and reservations of upper level staff were explained.

The material aimed at IZE summed up by introducing a Working Group session which was to be held soon after the presentation:
Working group on these issues from educator's perspective.
• Review CBSG working group concerns ref. educating the public on this issue
• Approaches
• Evaluation of material ...methodology
• Discuss how to advise a zoo with problems how to educate without misleading the public
• Should we advise a really bad zoo NOT to try and educate the public ?

The main working group was conducted and the output of their discussions is below as item 1.

In addition to the Working Groups as such, IZE had two sessions of what is called "Open Space" sessions, in which anyone interested can schedule a one hour workshop on any topic of interest to conservation educators. The presentation on zoo standards and education generated two Open Space sessions, one on the topic of evaluating the impact of substandard zoos on public attitudes and the other simply carrying the topic of what IZE's role could be farther. These are items 2. and 3. respectively, below. It was clear by the response to the presentation by many individuals, and the attendance at the working group (1) and the creation of 2 Open Space sessions, that the participants and members of IZE were quite interested in the topic. **Compiled by Sally Walker**

The three I.Z.E. workshops on the role of IZE in addressing needy zoos:

1. Zoos That Need Improvement: Working Group following opening session Presentation entitled "Improving Global Zoo Standards - Does education have a Role ?

Convened by Sally Walker. Facilitator : Barbara Renard

Agenda items (in priority order):

- Approaches to education re: zoo quality (role of conservation educators) (including mentoring zoos for education, and addressing different levels/standards)
- Implications of having zoos that need improvement as IZE members (implications on image of IZE)
- Assessment of the impact of zoos that need improvement (ZTNI) on visitors' attitudes
- Different levels/standards (included above)
- Mentoring zoos for education
- Partnerships with welfare and other organizations

Approaches to conservation education were suggested

I. Audiences:

- a. "Zoos that need improvement" staff
- b. General public
- c. "Zoos that need improvement" visitors
- d. WAZA zoo/aquarium visitors

II. Audience: "Zoos that need improvement" staff

- a. WAZA's approach:
 - i. WAZA will be developing a list of zoos that will be prioritized by:
 1. first, underresourced but interested in improving
 2. second, not interested in improving
 3. The first group will be focused on
 - b. IZE responsibility:
 - i. Ensure resources are provided by IZE regarding educational standards for WAZA mentorship
 - ii. Ensure WAZA mentors are educated on the importance of education as a critical component of the mentoring process
 1. IZE could develop needs assessment for WAZA mentors
 2. IZE could provide laundry list of items mentors might consider sharing or focusing on from an education perspective
 - iii. Could provide guidelines/suggestions for promoting/encouraging community involvement (e.g., bear exhibit idea mentioned below)
 - iv. In each case need to ensure that the institutions themselves are responsible for the work, that mentors are not doing for them
 - v. IZE could send out an invitation to "Zoos that need improvement" ZTNI folks in the first tier re: guidelines to improve their approach to education
 - vi. IZE could provide education training to staff (utilizing existing training programs)
 - vii. Guidelines/training could include the "Five Ws":
 1. Where: how to utilize existing space (e.g., in front of enclosures, under a tree, log seating, rocks)

2. Who: Who is doing the education (keepers, ticket sellers, veterinarians, volunteers)
 3. How/What do you use:
 - a. Signs - ensure accuracy and clear messaging
 - b. Self-guided tours/maps/suggested routes, itineraries/ brochures/leaflets
 4. What: What messages do you share:
 - a. Respecting animals - do not abuse/tease/feed
 - b. Identifying animals
 - c. Conservation status
 - d. Animals are cool
- c. Discussed taking a three tiered approach to education (all of which should be tied to school curriculum)
- i. Learning to love/building the connection
 - ii. Building a deeper understanding
 - iii. Taking action
- III. Audience: General Public: Building awareness and action
- a. Objective: To develop civic responsibility
 - b. Message: We like good zoos that care about animals
 - c. Suggestions:
 - i. Encourage partnerships between regional zoo associations and national/international welfare organizations to promote that "good zoos do good"
- IV. Audience: "Zoos that need improvement" ZTNI visitors
- a. Discussed potential of developing signage that admits that "we are in the process"
 - b. "We care about our animals so we are working to improve their conditions"
 - c. Sign in front of worst exhibit: "Please help us move this bear" - received donations and public support that led to building of new exhibit

Implications of having zoos that need improvement as IZE members (implications on image of IZE)

- I. Currently encourage membership by all in IZE
- II. Agreed that if a zoo/aquarium is interested in IZE membership, that that means they are interested in improving
- III. Membership encourages building of capacity
- IV. We should encourage sponsored institutions to then become mentors for other ZTNI "Zoos that need improvement"
- V. Can encourage free regional IZE organizations (e.g., India's (SAN-IZE approach) to encourage best practices

2. One hour "Open Space workshop"

Assessing the impact of zoos that need improvement on perceptions of animals and of zoos in general

Session Facilitators: Chris Kuhar and Jackie Ogden.
Working group participants : Ruth Rosenberg, Joyce Kwok, May Lok, Chris Kuhar, Anneleise Smillie, John Gardner, Ulla Broderson, Kim Intino, Tom Naiman, Bill Street, Jackie Ogden, Renald Fulconis, Russell Stevens, Rendalo Niebles

Three categories of facilities:

Facilities are OK

Facilities under resourced but want to improve

Facilities under resourced that don't want to improve

WAZA is focusing on moving facilities up the chain from lowest to top levels with the least potential of controversy and

negative impact

Definition of a Zoo that Needs Improvement

- No conservation education or wrong messaging
- Animal welfare is compromised
- Under financed (lack of funds, qualified staff, infrastructure)
- Safety for visitors or staff
- Appropriate acquisition/disposition policies

Research Questions:

1. Impact of animal welfare on zoo visitors
 - a. Age differences? Is the perception of animal facilities age related? Does the perceptual and cognitive ability of a child play into their take-away message?
 - b. Cultural differences? How do the cultural differences impact this perception? (Hindu cultures have different perceptions than English cultures).
 - c. How might we test this? Surveys of zoo visitors to each of these types of facilities. Pictures of these three institutions to non-zoo visitors. First impressions of a zoo and how it relates to perception.
2. What is the public's definition of a zoo? What is the professional definition of a zoo? Are the perceptions of zoos negatively impacted by zoos that need improvement? Impact of safety concerns?
3. What is the effect that education/interpretation has on the perception of zoos/exhibits? Can good interpretation overcome a bad exhibit? Can bad interpretation turn an exhibit bad?
4. What is the impact of shows with different messages?
5. How does the acquisition/disposition of animals impact perception of the zoo? Does the public know how zoos operate? Do they care about game ranch/private disposal?

Action Items:

1. Who are the zoos? How many are there? What kind of zoo are they?
2. Literature search to develop benchmarks on perception of animals.
3. Goals and feasibility of the research questions (outcome)?
4. Chris, Tom, Russell and Renaldo will lead the work group.

3. One hour "Open Space workshop" : Session Title: Education for Zoos that need improvement: How can we contribute?

Session Leader: Renaud Fulconis . Workshop participants : Renaud Fulconis, Muna Al Dhahari, Zahava Carmeli, Chris Kuhar, Lawrence, Armstrong Mashakiri, James Musinguzi, Dave Naish, Reinaldo Niebles Jackie Ogden

- I. What is a zoo that needs improvement?
 - a. animal welfare standards are compromised (need to address whose standards)
 - b. zoos without conservation education or with really conflicting messages
 - c. zoos without appropriate infrastructure
 - d. lack of staff or lack of well-trained staff
 - e. finance (underresourced)
 - f. lack of knowledge

II. Can we assist these sorts of zoos with education? What about zoos that don't meet these standards but still provide education? How can situations with compromised animal

welfare educate?

- a. if they provide enrichment to compensate for poor spaces?
- b. if they provide communication that says "we care about animals and we know this lion needs a better home. Help provide me a better home."?

III. General consensus that you must first address welfare issues before education can be successful

- a. First step is changing mindset of management - Recognition that WAZA is working on this, but an interest on the part of participations that IZE extend an offer to assist in influencing management of zoos/aquariums that need improvement (some zoos have sufficient resources, but are not being managed appropriately)
 - i. could contact these zoos to share information; communicate available resources, existing associations etc.
 - ii. suggest that IZE provide their expertise in communication strategies to assist WAZA as they are working to improve animal welfare
 1. Can IZE assist in training staff? Can they help to train staff to be empowered? Can they provide natural history training to animal staff? Can these animal staff also be provided with some basic training in interpretation so that they provide appropriate messages?
- b. Second step is providing training to change habits and practices to influence animal husbandry practices before education is focused on
 - i. IZE could assist with helping to develop this animal husbandry training (realizing that educators are not necessarily subject matter experts in husbandry, but do have expertise in developing training programs)
 - ii. IZE could assist in providing tools that promote this training
 1. Videos that could include training
 2. Email list serves to connect people
 3. Improve IZE website to provide resources

4. Provide training on use of program animals
5. Could IZE regional representative promote these efforts? (challenges: these representatives have other jobs)
6. IZE, WAZA and regional associations could promote development of formal, positive relationships with governments, and encourage increased role in developing standards by regional associations, etc.

- c. IZE can provide tools, ideas to encourage community involvement, volunteer support to assist in improving the zoo
- d. After animal welfare needs are addressed, we can then work to promote education, including resources from IZE
 - i. communicate what is available
 - ii. IZE website can improve to provide interpretive tools

IV. Need to also address challenges facing zoos that need improvement (and are working to improve)

- a. how can you feed chimpanzees well when people in the area are starving?

V. Next steps

- a. Have IZE extend offer to WAZA to assist in providing communications expertise to promote improvements in animal husbandry
 - i. Creating training modules and workshops for staff
 - ii. Improving website
 - iii. Developing videos, other training media
- b. Develop task force to assist with this, including increasing communication with directors, promote leadership training, work with regional associations etc.
- c. Develop communications system amongst IZE - email list serve (several possibilities: Could IZE administer such a listserve? If not, AZA is a possibility, as is Fulconis' organization)

NORTH STAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSMITTER GRANT PROGRAM

North Star Science and Technology, LLC and American Bird Conservancy announce the 5th annual North Star Science and Technology Transmitter Grant Program. In the spirit of giving back to the research community that they serve, North Star will award a total of eight (8) satellite transmitters (Argos Platform Transmitter Terminals (PTTs)), to one or two recipients (8 PTTs to one project or 4 PTTs to each of two projects). PTTs are powerful, cutting-edge tools for the study of bird migration that greatly extend the range over which individual birds can be tracked. The program is open to projects throughout the world. Research that contributes to our knowledge of avian biology and that provides data useful for bird conservation, particularly of threatened species, will receive preference in the selection process.

American Bird Conservancy (<http://www.abcbirds.org>) will handle the proposal submission process, review proposals, and select the winning projects.

Please see <http://www.northstarst.com> for more information and proposal guidelines. Deadline for proposals is February 2, 2007. Any further questions about the program can be directed to George E. Wallace, American Bird Conservancy (EM: gwallace@abcbirds.org; PH: 540-253-5780; FX: 540-253-5782).

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