

## Second Regional CBSG / RSG Meeting held in Lahore, Pakistan

### Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, South Asia

### Reintroduction Specialist Group, South & East Asia



In 2003 the first South Asian Regional CBSG/RSG meeting was conducted, just following the South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (SAZARC) annual conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka. With the idea of establishing a regular tradition, again a CBSG / RSG meeting was organised for the South Asian region in connection with the 5th SAZARC conference, this year in Lahore, Pakistan. The external sponsor for the CBSG / RSG meeting was Chester Zoological and Botanical Gardens, which sponsors the IUCN SSC RSG, South and East Asia Co-Chaired by Sanjay Molur and Sally Walker.

After registration, welcome and introductions, presentations on South Asian Regional activities on behalf of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group and Reintroduction Specialist Group were made by Sanjay Molur and Sally Walker. Sanjay Molur described the scope of RSG South and East Asia as: South Asia with 7 countries, South East Asia with 10 countries and East Asia with 3 countries. He described the goals and activities of RSG S&E Asia as follows : to

- identify re-introduction projects in the region
- network re-introduction practitioners
- compile all releases until date
- segregate scientific/well planned and unscientific releases
- publish a newsletter
- conduct training which would aid understanding of how to plan
- conduct appropriate and correct releases.

He described the different kinds of reintroductions as "some appropriate and effective". Too many typical exercises undertaken in the name of Re-introduction, however, have been for name and fame, excess stock release, animal welfare, Man-animal conflicts, and afforestation. Sanjay described some well meaning reintroductions and called for everyone to familiarise themselves with the Guidelines of the Reintroduction Specialist Group and advised the institutions and agencies accordingly. He suggested "revisiting" reintroduction as described in the first issue of the RSG S&E Newsletter "Reintroduction Redux" which was released at the meeting without fanfare. See [www.zoosprint.org](http://www.zoosprint.org) for a copy.

Sally Walker described the activities of the South Asian CBSG and what made it different from some other CBSG national and regional branches. Essentially this is because the South Asian exercises (tools of CBSG – CAMP, PHVA workshops) are underpinned by organised and systematic taxon and thematic networks such as Invertebrate, Amphibian, Reptile, Chiroptera, Rodent, Insectivore, Lagomorph and Primate and CBSG/RSG itself.

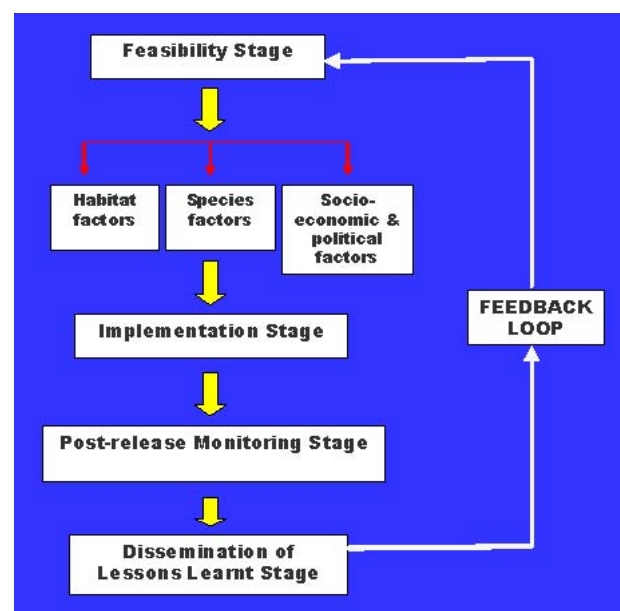
Following tea there was a question session regarding regional Specialist Group activities and subject areas as well as short presentations by participants about national,

institutional or individual problems and potential regarding Conservation Breeding or Reintroduction.

The flights of resource persons, the Chair and Programme Officer of IUCN SSC CBSG and RSG respectively were both delayed so their presentations were postponed for the afternoon and the following day.

After lunch Pritpal Soorae, had arrived and gave a presentation on the Reintroduction Specialist Group and its work around the world. He also described the RSG Guidelines entitled "Planning Reintroductions" (see graphic below) and focused much attention on this aspect. He commented at the end of his presentation " I would like to thank the organizers of this workshop to allow me the privilege to present some information on re-introductions which are at best difficult, long-term and expensive projects. Hopefully the information presented here will prove to be useful to re-introduction practitioners contemplating reintroductions."

#### Stages of Reintroduction



Bob Lacy gave a presentation on the work of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group. He first showed some slides of dramatic, beautiful and highly threatened species, commenting that they may soon disappear unless dramatic and efficient steps are taken. "Conservation is difficult", he said, "due to the fact that species and ecosystems are threatened by so many processes, such as diverse human activities. Threats are difficult to stop or reverse, and threat interact in complex ways. In attempting to conserve wildlife we run into competing needs, interests, backgrounds, kinds of knowledge, and ideas. In order to bring these needs, interests, ideas, knowledge and

backgrounds together, CBSG works with almost 900 members all over the world in order to bring about positive movement and change for conservation. He described the activities of CBSG as:

- Assisting wildlife agencies and conservation organizations in careful and systematic assessments of conservation problems, leading to solutions that work.
- Assisting zoos in managing their animals in such a way as to be useful to conservation both *in situ* and *ex situ*
- Assisting zoos by providing their expertise to save species in the wild.

Dr. Lacy described the CBSG Workshop Processes which include the elements of Stakeholder participation, Consensus, Common goal, Knowledge in experts' heads, Product owned by participants, and Results considered advisory.

CBSG's Philosophy and Workshop Rules as related in Bob's presentation are that there can be multiple needs, and definitions of the problem, that everyone can participate, that all ideas are valid and worth exploring. There should be transparency – record all assumptions and ideas with reflective listening, respect and valuing each perspective. CBSG provides trained people to act as neutral moderators of the various exercises and processes conducted by CBSG.

He stressed the need for "the best science and the best people". He said "We need good science – tested and validated methods for accomplishing our goals, but even the best science doesn't help unless we work together to make it serve all of our needs. He said that the best people were those who are committed, hard-working, willing to share their knowledge, willing to listen, willing to learn – *e.g. the people at this meeting*. He concluded by saying "Conservation isn't easy – but there are many of the best people who are willing to help ! "

---

### CBSG Equation

**Good Science + Good Process + Good People  
= Conservation Success**

---

#### Working Groups and Reports

**After these presentations, the assembled group formed into working groups and discussed some of the General Problems and Possible Solutions for Reintroduction In S. Asia:**

#### Working group members

*Dr Miranda Stevenson, Facilitator; Md. Abdur Razzaque, Presenter; Dr Md. Salim Iqbal, Recorder; Mr Muhammad Akbar Syed Zagar-ul-Hassan; Aurangzeb Awan; Ravi Sharma Aryal; R.K. Sahu; Mudassir Qazi, Md Mafizur Rahman from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, & UK*

#### The problems were identified as:

1. Habitat destruction: more information is required on the loss of habitat and fragmentation of habitat
2. There is a general lack of knowledge on:
  - a. Data on some species in habitats

b. Techniques for monitoring of species after release

3. Lack of trained staff to carry out reintroductions and what is involved, and lack of public awareness of what reintroduction actually is and what it involves

4. Problems with captive populations

- a. Too many of some species
- b. Inbreeding of captive populations
- c. The sex ratio of zoo populations

5. Confiscated animals and what to do with them

a. Lack of a rescue centre to cope with problems such as confiscated animals

6. Lack of inter-ministerial cooperation – i.e. between departments

7. Pressure from various groups (varies with country):

- a. Judiciary
- b. Political groups
- c. Administrative groups
- d. Various NGOs
- e. Media
- f. Activists and terrorists are a problem in some areas

8. Animal-human conflict is a problem with some species

9. General lack of funds in all areas

10. Lack of knowledge about participation in organisations such as RSG, CBSG, SAZARC which can help in many of these areas

#### Possible solutions to address the above are:

1. Strong laws (but those that can be enforced) and planned afforestation and deforestation programmes – these must involve the participation of the local communities who should be involved in these. (1)

2. Practical training programmes provided by experienced wildlife management experts and also those from the RSG (Reintroduction Specialist Group) and CBSG (Conservation Breeding Specialist Group). (2,3)

3. Increase public awareness through (3):

- a. Education programmes in zoos, schools, colleges and universities
- b. Use of electronic media
- c. Workshops and seminars
- d. Religious leaders

4. Ensure planned breeding in all zoological gardens through managed programmes and (4,3,5,10):

- a. Creation of rescue centres to house surplus or confiscated stock
- b. Increase the number of scientists and participation in CBSG, RSG and SAZARC.

5. Increase of global, regional and national cooperation would help in all areas (4,5,10)

6. Sensitisation and awareness raising of policy makers and others through (6,7):

- a. lobbying
- b. developing strong linkages between agencies such

as the judiciary, political, administrative, NGOs, media and activist/terrorist (although the latter may be difficult!).  
c. IUCN on behalf of RSG, CBSG and SAZARC can play a leading role in the respective countries.

7. Regarding animal – human conflict the following is required (8):

a. Compensation, research, proper funding, awareness raising etc.

8. Overall priority should be given to reintroduction projects which are well planned and funds should be allocated to these (9).

**Another working group discussed the Reintroduction of Blackbuck into Pakistan. Their report is as follows :**  
Reintroduction of Blackbuck into Pakistan with special emphasis on where it follows reintroduction guidelines flow chart?

**1) Is there a need for reintroduction?**

- a) Species survival NO
- b) Restore natural biodiversity YES
- c) Conservation awareness YES
- d) Viable population YES
- e) Political desire YES
- f) Benefits vs potential risks NOT KNOWN
- g) And need further studies particularly on social organisation

**2) Overall assessment**

- a) Habitat suitability YES
- a.i) Prolonged cyclic droughts
- b) Socio economic problems prepare communities
- c) Financial
- d) Legal restrictions NO
- e) Stock suitability NO
  - i) Genetic issues (sources)
  - ii) Need more studies
- f) Veterinary NO
  - i) Need detailed analysis
  - ii) Disease survey in site required
- g) Post release monitoring is not at present planned

**3) Multidisciplinary team NO**

- a) Team
- i) This needs to be addressed WL dept and houbara foundation + WWF (?) + locals
- b) Aims and objectives have not been decided and need to be done in a proposed time frame
- i) Involve local communities
- ii) Peer review

**4) Veterinary Programme NOT DEVELOPED**

- a) Involvement of livestock department
- b) Development of buffer zone
- c) Screening
- d) Education on techniques of disease risk assessment.

**5) Habitat suitability DONE**

- a) Carrying capacity (not known)
- b) Live stock competition
- c) Water holes

**6) Socioeconomic and legal issues DONE**

**7) Release stock suitability**

- a) Veterinary screening – will be done
- b) Vaccination – will be done
- c) Abnormal behaviours NONE
- d) Genetic status
  - i) To be studied
  - ii) Other populations of blackbuck (?)

**8) Transport and final release**

**9) Post release**

- a) Monitoring required
- b) Documentation required
- c) Information dissemination required

**Another working group made recommendations for dealing with surplus stock in the region.**

Recommendations for dealing with surplus stock in South Asia (differs according to country - all suggestions have been listed however):

- Surplus stocks should be sold to the public – Pakistan
- Domestic Animals should be removed – India
- Excess stock to be used for
  - Research
  - As prey
  - For trophy hunting
  - Game farming – controlled hunting
  - Shifted to wildlife centres
  - Exchanged with other zoos
- Capacity building is required
- Need to identify prioritise species for captive/conservation breeding
- Zoos should be responsible
  - Native species
  - Status in the wild
  - Critical stage – *in-situ* impossible so concentrate on *ex-situ*
- Population control measures – e.g. systematic sterilisation
  - Zoos/breeding centres should be linked through the net
- Excess stock for education
- Cull excess stock
- Exchange animals to avoid inbreeding

**Dissemination**

- Involve university students in reintroduction studies, habitat studies, monitoring, veterinary protocol etc.
- Dissemination of reintroduction guidelines and publicise
  - Focused documentaries
  - Press
  - Letters to policy makers
  - Educate government departments pursuant
- Letter to governments (& relevant depts) from the Chair of the RSG
- Participants should circulate RSG information to policy makers
- SAZARC could have national representation
- Incorporation of zoo ethics and reintroduction in school curriculum

- Monitoring of already released animals
- Include wildlife practical training in veterinary courses
- Develop educational programmes on captive breeding and reintroduction for children
- Proceedings of this meeting should be sent to heads of departments
- Proceedings of this meeting should be communicated to IUCN heads in respective countries
- Training to be organised frequently by stakeholders
- IUCN country offices should be encouraged to inform relevant agencies from time to time involving reintroduction of wildlife due to transfer of officials
- Mechanism for developing strong linkage between *ex-situ* and *in-situ* conservation
- Intensive education of policy makers
- Successes and failures sent to superior offices with recommendations

**Another working group made recommendations for the proposed reintroduction of Blackbuck in Cholistan Desert, Pakistan.**

Reintroduction of Blackbuck in Cholistan Desert Pakistan

The blackbuck reintroduction in Cholistan using the existing semi-wild population bred at Lal Suhandra National Park should be done after giving due consideration to the following points :

1. Selection of proper site : The site for starting reintroduction should be selected very carefully. Relatively less-disturbed areas with known historic occurrence of the wild blackbuck population should be given priority over other areas.
2. Causes of extinction : a study should be carried out to define and enlist causes, factors that were responsible for exterminating the species from the area.
3. Mitigation measures: Proper mitigation measures should be adopted to redress all the factor/causes identified through 2 above before attempting reintroduction.
4. Habitat studies: studies should also be carried out to assess habitat requirements and use by blackbuck in Cholistan and the suitability of the habitat patches identified for reintroduction.
5. Studies should also be carried out on the behaviour of the blackbuck, its social structure and reproductive behaviour and proper sex ratio to minimize mate competition and optimize breeding rate.
6. Genetic Diversity: the animals selected for reintroductions should be studied for the diversity in genetic material or gene pool; the selection should be applied to maximize genetic diversity.
7. Health screening : Before releasing animals in the wild they should be screened with respect to their general health also. Only healthy animals should be considered for introduction.
8. Risk assessment for transmission of diseases. The reintroduction attempts always carry risk of transmission of disease from captive to wild ranging animal and *vice versa*. They should be a careful risk assessment with respect to this aspect of animal health care.
9. Protection measures: Before reintroduction there should be an assessment of the need for protecting newly introduced animals and the available resources. If required additional resources should be devoted for this purpose.

10. Pre release pens – pre-release training. As part of the reintroduction strategy pre-release pens should be provided in the reintroduction programme. If necessary, the animals should be actively trained with respect to the required responses to external factors.

**A final working group made recommendations for Policy Issues for Zoo Animal Exchange Program in SAZARC Region**

Policy Issues for Zoo Animal Exchange Program in SAZARC Region :

Working Group members : *Mr. Razzaque, Dr. Sahu, Dr. Jayanti, Dr. Ravi Sharma Aryal, Mr. Mansoor Qazi, Mr. Fazal. Afganistan, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan.*

Problems with reference to Inter-country Movement

- Permits and clearance
- Procedural Delay
  - Between Two zoos
  - Between Local authority
  - National Authority
  - Inter Ministry

-- Legislative – Limitations

- CITES
- Inter- State or inter Provisional political conflicts
- Relationship between the countries
- NGOs Role
- Media/Press/ Civil Society

-- Funds -- Flight/Transportation/Direct Flight/Pressurize facility

- Cargo
- Freight
- Crates
- Trained Staff
- Guarantee Facilities
- Creation of proper enclosures/Habitat

**Solutions For The Problems Identified**

A.To Request the respective Governments to help the cooperative Breeding Exchange Program of SAZARC (Simplify procedure)

- To Expedite paper work
- To sensitize the bureaucrats
- Lobbying
- Building Network animal exchange Program
- Establishment of a committee of SAZARC for

B. Abide by CITES

C. Sensitizes the Politician

D. Use of Diplomats

E. Use of Media

F. Co-ordination through WAZA & SAZARC

G.Convince and positive use of NGOs

H.Sensitize and lobbying through media and along with successful stories of cooperative exchange/breeding programming, SEAZA, WAZA

I. Funds- Transportation- Sensitize the Airlines/Look for Sponsor

J. Sponsors for Raw Material / Govt. Budget

K.Trained staffs through Govt., SAZARC, WAZA and Other Organization

L. Request government sponsors

M. Sponsors, Use allocated money, from budget, use of experts

## “Format for writing a letter”

Further, it was decided by the group to develop a “Format for writing a letter” to senior officials in instances where a decision or order to release animals has been made unwisely or without consulting the IUCN Reintroduction Specialist Group Guidelines, or which was pending. It was noted that such a letter should be tactful and sensitive and, if possible, come from someone of similar rank and reputation as the senior official. The following format was developed to be modified appropriately as the venue and situation required :

To: *Whoever is suitable, such as  
The Secretary  
(concerned) Ministry of (Environment and/or  
Forests, and/or Livestock, Fisheries, Wildlife/etc)*

From: *whomever is suitable*

Sub: *Re-introduction Guidelines*

Dear Sir,

*It is my pleasure to inform you that IUCN / Species Survival Commission has approved Guidelines for Reintroduction by its 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of Council in May, 1995 for conservation of wildlife species. These guidelines are very scientific as well as helpful to prepare future action plans for reintroduction in your country. Following the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroduction will not only improve the chances of long-term success for your project but also provide some protection for your government in the eventuality of a mishap.*

*It is requested that re-introduction proposals of any type (reintroduction, release, introduction, translocation, strengthening, etc.) may extensively be reviewed and after wide consultation across a range of disciplines by your offices before any re-introduction/translocation of species is undertaken.*

*The guidelines cover broad themes pertaining to biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of National resources.*

*I would like to request you to circulate these guidelines to policy makers for reviewing and if these guidelines do not contradict the existing laws of your country please instruct concerned agencies to implement it. A copy of the Guidelines for Reintroduction is enclosed with this letter and you may view all policy documents of the IUCN SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group as well as their newsletters and other papers on their website <http://iucn.org/themes/ssc/sgs/rsg/index.htm>*

*Thanking you for your kind co-operation.*

*Best regards,*

*Sincerely yours*

## Participant List for CBSG / RSG - S. Asia

Robert C. Lacy, Chair,  
IUCN SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group,  
Apple Valley, Minnesota, USA

Pritpal Soorae, Programme Officer  
IUCN SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group, UAE

Umeed Khalid, Conservator, NCCW,  
Islamabad, Pakistan

Ali Hassan Habib, Director General,  
World Wildlife Fund, Lahore, Pakistan

A. Aleem Chaudhary,  
IUCN Islamabad

Muhammad Mansor Qazi, Director,  
Karachi Zoo and Safari Park

Anwar Hussain Gill  
Curator, Bahawalpur Zoo

Muhammed Irshed Arshed  
Assistant Director of WRI Faisalabad

Muhammad Anwar Moan  
Asst. Director, Wildlife

Abdul Qadeer Mehal  
Director, Wildlife Punjab

Raja Muhammad Javed  
Director, Lahore Zoo

Rana Shabbez Khan  
Deputy Director, Wildlife

Syed Zafar Ali Shah  
Deputy Director Wildlife

Mohammed Yousaf Pal  
Deputy Director Wildlife

Mohammad Aliba  
Assistant Director, Wildlife

Riaz Ahmad  
Assistant Director, Wildlife

Uzma Khan, , Conservation Biologist,  
World Wildlife Fund, Lahore, Pakistan

Absan Abdul Ali  
Wildlife Conservationist

Brij Kishore Gupta  
CZA, New Delhi

Sanjay Molur, Chair, Deputy Director  
RSG, South & East Asia / Zoo Outreach Organisation,  
India

Sally Walker, Convenor, Director  
CBSG, South Asia/Zoo Outreach Organisation  
India

R. K. Sahu, Director, Kamla Nehru Zoo,  
Ahmedabad, Gujarat