

## World Association of Zoos and Aquariums - WAZA News

*The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums WAZA is the global spokesperson for the "organised" zoos of the world. The term "organised" is meant (at least to this editor) to distinguish zoos of good quality, ethics, actions or zoos with good intent which are under the "wing" of WAZA in some way from zoos which are ad hoc, substandard in quality, ethics and actions. Of the unknown number of zoos (or animal facilities calling themselves zoos or zoo-like facilities) in the world, the number of "organised" as opposed to "ad hoc" zoos is exponentially small. Yet through the energy and intent of the organised zoos through WAZA, a significant positive impact on conservation and even animal welfare has been in process.*

*WAZA has been around in different names for some time. Formerly called the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens IUDZG, since last two or three decades, the Association has grown from baby steps to monolithic strides. It is not easy to review who did what as many zoo directors and related advocates were involved but there is no question that WAZA has established a momentum that grows from strength to strength.*

*One of the major turning points was the establishment of a permanent secretariat (in Bern, Switzerland and soon to move to Gland) and the joining of IUCN and consistent movement to become a major player on the international conservation stage.*

*There is not enough space in this little magazine to review this transformation, nor do we have sufficient information to do so. But a look at some of*

*the current projects of WAZA will give our readers a good idea of the fast track that WAZA is on to make a difference in the wide world of wildlife and environmental conservation. We refer you to the WAZA web site [www.waza.org](http://www.waza.org) where you will find more information. This article is intended as a lure to induce our readers to check out this site regularly. You will learn more about zoos but also that WAZA and the best zoos of the world are involved in the entire spectrum of global conservation activities.*

*Not covered in this issue but something to know in case you are a new or forgetful reader, WAZA is also on the job to address the issue of "ad hoc" zoos. Challenging though it may be, WAZA intends to handle this sensitive issue in a sensitive and coordinated fashion. This was covered extensively in previous issues. WAZA reiterates its intent in this regard in its most recent strategic plan, WAZA Vision and Corporate Strategy: Towards 2020.*

*WAZA is dedicated to catalysing and showcasing the actuality of zoos' commitment to conservation and to assisting all zoos possible to achieve this potential through its regional and national associations.*

*All of the matter in this section comes directly from WAZA's website which everyone with any interest or problem with zoos should consult.*

*Most of the documents highlighted in this article and on the website are downloadable and contain a wealth of information for any conservation conscious reader.*

**Sally Walker, Editor Emeritus**

### 2009 Year of the Gorilla

WAZA joined the 2009 Year of the Gorilla (YoG) as a partner in a joint initiative of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Great Ape Survival Partnership (GRASP).

Under WAZA's auspices more than 100 zoos came together to support of the gorilla campaign. The zoo ambassadors helped to implement WAZA's commitment to promote interest in gorillas and their plight, carry out environmental education and raise funds for field conservation projects. This is not new for the zoos, which have been much involved in conservation of gorillas for decades. They have reintroduced gorillas in Gabon, assisted with P.A. management in Cameroon, Nigeria and Congo and also assisted with development of ecotourism. Dian Fossey herself wrote about modern zoo biology and how zoos bred gorillas successfully.

Zoos in several countries agreed to take part in the United Nations (UN) Year of the Gorilla (YoG) via the official YoG partner, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). These were zoos from two successful coordinated breeding programmes -- 109 of 116 zoos from the American Species Survival Plan (52 zoos keeping 370 gorillas) and (64 zoos keeping 425 gorillas) from the European Endangered Species Programme EEP. After the AZA and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) on 3 December 2008 made a formal agreement of cooperation, the Year of the Gorilla became the first internationally recognised joint conservation effort of its kind.

The YoG website could report many different activities in the zoo community. A number of documents were published...a leaflet, a report on gorilla conservation status and information about WAZA-branded gorilla conservation projects. These were made available on

the WAZA website. An educator manual was developed by WAZA and the International Zoo Educators Association (IZE). Entitled "All About Gorillas" it is available in four languages and has been downloaded several hundred times from the WAZA website.

While gorilla conservation will go on after 2009 with a fresh start and a number of achievements during the YoG effort. See the WAZA website [www.waza.org](http://www.waza.org) and look in the section Conservation and then click on Year of the Gorilla and download the Overview of Activities at the end of the page. In line with this project please read the following short report which is a sort of Case Study of how WAZA and the organised zoo community works.

**Transfer of two western low-land gorillas**, Dated: 2010/01/19

International studbooks provide the information necessary for conservation breeding programmes to make informed decisions regarding the transfer of animals between institutions.

Two western lowland gorillas were transferred from Zurich Zoo in Switzerland to the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa in Pretoria. The two males will join another two males to form a bachelor group there. The decision to transfer the two gorillas is based on advice provided by the European Endangered Species Programme. The information necessary to make such recommendations for conservation breeding is contained in international studbooks, wherein all data relevant to the captive population of a certain species are collected and continuously updated. Currently, 118 active international studbooks for 159 species and/or sub-species are kept under the auspices of WAZA.



## 2010 Year of Biodiversity

Biodiversity, the variety of life on Earth, is essential to sustaining the living networks and systems that provide us all with health, wealth, food, fuel and the vital services our lives depend on. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has declared 2010 as the UN Year of Biodiversity in recognition of the international target to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss globally. WAZA has been a supporter of the Countdown 2010 initiative of IUCN in support of reaching this goal since 2005. Additionally, WAZA entered an agreement of cooperation with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in support of the UN Year of Biodiversity. WAZA and its members serve as biodiversity ambassadors and focus on conservation as well as on related education and awareness work.

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity. Let us reflect on our achievements to safeguard biodiversity and focus on the urgency of our challenge for the future. Now is the time to act.

### *The main goals of the year are to:*

- Enhance public awareness on the importance of conserving biodiversity and on the underlying threats to biodiversity.
- Raise awareness of the accomplishments to save biodiversity by communities and governments and to promote innovative solutions to reduce these threats.
- Call on individuals, organizations and governments to take immediate steps to halt biodiversity loss.
- Initiate dialogue among stakeholders on necessary steps for the post-2010 period.

### *Downloads from [www.waza.org](http://www.waza.org)*

Documents and presentations for the International Year of Biodiversity: (go to the site, click Conservation then 2010 Year of Biodiversity).

- Powerpoint Presentation with basic information (3mb)
- Implementation Strategy (1mb)
- Official Logo of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (1.43mb)
- WAZA Biodiversity Book Flyer (3mb)
- WAZA/IZE Education Manual (2mb)



**Educators !** Have you always wanted to know where to find definitions, educational material, policy statements and statistics? The WAZA/IZE Education Manual is a guide for zoo and aquarium

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educators, teachers and environmentalists and a resource about biodiversity in support of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity and beyond.

### **Carnivore Campaign via EAZA**

Carnivores are beautiful, charismatic animals. However, beauty and charisma alone are not enough to ensure survival. Carnivores worldwide are confronted with challenges of our making. In Europe, carnivores face two contrasting groups of problems: one arising from an increase in their numbers and the other from a decline. The theme of this campaign, "Living Together", addresses both of these aspects. On the one hand, it means acting to facilitate the survival of threatened and endangered carnivores. On the other, it means learning to live with those species that are increasing in number, encroaching our territory and generating the resumption of some age-old conflicts with human interests. If carnivores are to survive in Europe for future generations to enjoy, we need strategies to integrate their presence into modern life in a crowded continent.

### **Campaign aims**

- to make people conscious of the diversity of wildlife that still survives in their own country;
- to raise public awareness of the expansion in both numbers and range of a number of large carnivore species;
- to draw attention to the way in which our life styles and activities endanger the future of many of our rare and endangered carnivore species;
- to explain why the presence of carnivores is a good indicator of the health of our environment;
- to teach our members and the public that conservation is needed at home and not just in the far flung corners of the earth;
- to raise money in support of specific projects that facilitate "living together".

To find out more about the EAZA European Carnivore Campaign, please visit the campaign's website.

### **2008 Year of the Frog -- leaps into the Year of Biodiversity**

In 2008, the Amphibian Ark led zoos, aquariums and botanical gardens in a globally coordinated public awareness campaign "The Year of the Frog". Each institutional member of WAZA or any of the regional associations of zoos and aquariums was invited to participate in the campaign by organising activities and amphibian displays, and/or using their websites, zoo graphics, education materials and media releases to promote the cause.

The Amphibian Ark is a joint effort of three principal partners: WAZA, the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group and the IUCN/SSC Amphibian Specialist Group. The Amphibian Ark was formed to address the *ex situ* components of the IUCN Amphibian Conservation Action Plan. WAZA currently holds the Chair of the Executive Committee and provides support to the Amphibian

Ark. The Amphibian Ark link is listed under Conservation also. Go to it and click on Amphibian Ark in the text and get the whole AArk website with all its many riches...for learning, for teaching others, for getting involved, for saving amphibians.

*Other useful links on the WAZA website under Conservation*

- World Wetlands Day
- International Studbooks
- Conservation Breeding Programmes
- Environmental Education
- WAZA Conservation Projects
- Conservation Strategies
- Code of Ethics & Animal Welfare

And you can download the WAZA Magazine by clicking Marketing and Media and then Publications.

NOT downloadable but a "must have" for zoos and other institutions. New WAZA Release!

### **Building a Future for Wildlife Zoos and Aquariums Committed to Biodiversity Conservation**

"Building a future for wildlife" is the slogan of the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy. Modern zoos and aquariums are indeed playing an increasingly active and important role in conserving species in their natural habitat. This richly illustrated book provides an overview of the partners, approaches and achievements of the world zoo and aquarium community in wildlife conservation.

The book's main focus is on 25 conservation success stories from around the globe, portraying the many ways in which zoos and aquariums are committed to biodiversity conservation. One goal is to raise awareness of the global accomplishments to save biodiversity.

**Proceeds of sales of this book are donated to biodiversity conservation projects worldwide.**

You can order from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) & [www.filander.de](http://www.filander.de) or in book stores: ISBN 978-3-033-02234-8

World Association of Zoos and Aquariums  
**WAZA** | United for Conservation

## Building a Future for Wildlife

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**Buy one now!**  
29.90 €  
45 US\$

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United Nations declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity. It is to raise awareness of the global challenges to save biodiversity.

## Biodiversity, Climate Change, CBSG and WAZA

The Year of Biodiversity may be a damp squib unless the issue of Climate Change gets equal attention. Climate change has been named as the culprit in some of the most significant species, whole taxon group and ecosystem declines. Now, there are scientific projects which report statistics other scientific facts which underpin many of these claims. As research continues, no doubt more and more claims will be proven as scientific fact.

Until that happens, however, we who are involved in Climate Change education and awareness projects must be careful about claims. Speaking only for myself, I have encountered the most amazing resistance to climate change among some of my associates in USA (You will understand why I will not name them!). My reading of that situation is that most of these people are in denial ... psychologically it is easier to deny what we do not want to be true, either because we fear its consequences or because we can't live with guilt.

Be that as it may, climate change is an daunting issue and the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group CBSG and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums WAZA have been "on it" for some years. Every year for the past maybe five years, there has been a CBSG working group (usually a 2-day one) at the Annual Meeting. Paul Pearce-Kelly, Curator at the Zoological Society of London and well-known entomologist and conservationist was the first in our community to truly raise the alarm and literally force all of us to take note.

From the first working group CBSG sent a message to WAZA with a draft statement of interest to be followed up, which WAZA has done by sending their own message at a critical time that is the recent, rather disappointing Copenhagen Climate Change conference which was held 7-18 December 2009. The Statement, which was signed by Directors of Zoos and other influential zoo personnel, the text of which message read:

### **An urgent message to world leaders.**

Through our organisations, we, directors of the international zoo and aquarium community, collectively engage with and educate 600 million visitors each year, and conduct extensive conservation activities in the wild and in our zoos and aquariums.

We send an urgent message to world leaders, stressing the extreme gravity of the climate change threat facing wildlife and natural systems.

An agreement in Copenhagen to reduce atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> to the safe level of <350 ppm is the only way to give the international conservation community a real chance to manage the negative effects of climate change on the natural world. Through concerted and immediate action, this target

is achievable. To avoid potentially catastrophic consequences for humanity and wildlife, it is essential.

CBSG and WAZA, joining hands to address this difficult challenge, have formed a Climate Change Task Force as a joining response to the extreme gravity of the climate change threat facing wildlife and natural systems. The terms of reference are:

- Catalysing our community's engagement with the urgency of the climate change threat (including our own staff, partners, visitors and outreach constituencies from children through to world leaders).
- Improving our technical response ability and capacity (including clarifying impact on our species and programmes, producing briefing and engagement materials and optimising our information dissemination networks etc).

The Task Force is being championed by Bob Lacy and Gordon McGregor Reid with invited colleagues: Suzanne Boardman, Onnie Byers, Frands Carlsen, Amy Camacho, Bob Cook, Gerald Dick, Lesley Dickie, Claudia Gili, Jo Gipps, Heribert Hofer, David Jones, Jorg Junghold, Bob Lacy, Caroline Lees, Gordon McGregor Reid, Stephen Mckeown, Phil Miller, Mark Penning, Sally Walker and chaired by Paul Pearce-Kelly.

The intention is that the steering group will liaise with a wider corresponding group, most likely to include WAZA regional association heads (or representatives) and the same for CBSG regional networks.

As Paul Pearce-Kelly comments, "our task is nothing if not challenging - as demonstrated by the inadequate outcome of COP-15 which hardly referenced biodiversity impacts or the key role that natural systems have to play in keeping us this side of runaway climate change. However, our zoo community is uniquely placed to play a key role in meeting this challenge with our extensive public reach combined with the technical developments realised over the last couple of years which makes us a powerful force working to avoid catastrophic climate change, while there is yet time."

The Task Force will generate regional, national and institutional ideas and projects so that everyone in the zoo community who wants to act can do so in concert with others and thereby strengthen our work. Paul has recommended this biodiversity and climate change database ([www.bioclimate.org](http://www.bioclimate.org)) or Bioclimate which has thousands of relevant references. Also recommended the book 'Storms of my Grandchildren' James Hansen's book, an authoritative briefing on the urgency of the situation.