

## First Arabian Zoo and Aquarium Meeting in Al Ain

**Delegates from throughout the Arab world and guests from WAZA meet for discussions at Al Ain Zoo to set up a Regional Zoo Association for the Middle East ... an ambitious project!**

On a "magic" day of 12-12-12 over 30 zoo managers from zoos and aquaria from 6 countries in the Middle East and 3 invited guests from zoo associations in different parts of the world gathered to discuss pros and cons of creating a regional zoo association for the middle east and collaborating on different activities and projects.

The delegates and guests were given a tour of the lovely Al Ain Zoo, partly by zoo train and by strolling. The countries included UAE, Qatar, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan and Bahrain for delegates and Europe, USA and South Africa for guest resource persons. A gala dinner that evening at the zoo put all in a mood to work hard the next two days, having had preliminary discussions with one another on topics involving collaboration with a variety of initiatives, e.g. raising standards of animal care and conservation research animal breeding, and education as well as fundraising.



**H.E. Ghanim Al Hajeri, Director General of ZAPIA welcomes guests and delegates on the first day of the meeting.**

The following day H.E. Ghanim Al Hajeri, opened the meeting and introduced guest speakers from different continents: Dr. Gerald Dick, Executive Director of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), Switzerland; Sally Walker, Director of the South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (SAZARC), India; and, Dr. Stephen van der Spuy, Executive Director of African Association of Zoos and Aquaria (PAAZAB) in South Africa. Photo below.



After their presentations, H.E. Ghanim Al Hajeri spoke about Al Ain Zoo, ZAPIA, and then requested all delegates to describe their institutions for the rest of the day. This would provide a solid introduction to the following day's programme of working groups. Member institutions were able to discuss challenges faced and opportunities that could be tackled together. An established network provided enormous potential to overcome these challenges to promote the cause for wildlife preservation and conservation.

Ghanim added that the meeting facilitated open dialogue among zoological institutions across the Arab region. We share a precious cause, he said, and Al Ain Zoo is leading this initiative as part of its ongoing commitment to the highest standards of animal welfare, and towards wildlife conservation and preservation on a greater, regional level. He extended deepest appreciation to guest speakers for sharing invaluable insight, and to regional counterparts for their enthusiastic participation."

ZAPIA is a proud member of WAZA - an organisation committed to promoting animal welfare standards around the globe - and is actively involved in several internationally coordinated conservation projects and works with other like-minded organisations such as Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, The Species Survival Commission, San Diego Zoo, Edinburgh Zoo, World Conservation Union and Species Survival Commission, the Northern Rangelands Trust of Kenya and the Sahara Conservation Fund to conserve and re-introduce threatened arid land species - Arabian Oryx, Scimitar-horned Oryx, giraffes & gazelle.

### **Al Ain Zoo**

*Al Ain Zoo* is a family destination, providing entertainment and learning experiences in a natural outdoor environment. Visitors of all ages discover the zoo's wildlife and enjoy a great day out, packed with fun and adventure, while learning about conservation. They can explore a collection of over 4,300 animals. *Al Ain Zoo* is home to an internationally important conservation programme focusing on the wildlife of the world's arid regions, the zoo is involved in conservation research, captive breeding and propagation and the reintroduction of threatened species to their wild habitats. Collection of desert antelopes is recognized as among the best in the world. *Al Ain Zoo* is a proud member of the World Association of Zoos and

Aquariums (WAZA). Strategic partnerships have been set up with leading zoos, conservation agencies and associations from across the world, including the World Conservation Union and Species Survival Commission, Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, San Diego Zoo, Edinburgh Zoo, the Northern Rangelands Trust of Kenya and the Sahara Conservation Fund.



**Zoo Train transported guests and delegates around the zoo**

*The Zoo* is transforming the area into a new institution dedicated to exhibiting, interpreting and conserving desert wildlife. This sustainable leisure and learning destination, called *Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort*, will provide an extraordinary opportunity for visitors to explore and learn about the desert world and experience a world-class tourist destination.

A more detailed report will be available next issue of *ZPt* in January 2013.  
Editor.

**Bird show at Al Ain Zoo**

