

# Technical Presentations on theme of Zoo Legislation, including Standards, Accreditation, Assessment, Inspection, Ethics, Welfare, Conservation, Education, Research, WZACS benchmark, Definitions & CITES

## **Introduction**

*The Ninth Conference of the South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation focused for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year entirely on the need for zoo legis-lation and how to formulate it. A brief review of the history of SAZARC's interest and involvement with zoo legislation appears on page 3 of the section on SAZARC participant working groups and presentations on the subject or an aspect of same.*

*This section covers technical presentations which were delivered in Power Point by Dr. Miranda Stevenson, Director, British and Irish Zoo Association, Kris Vehrs, Exec. Director, American Zoo Association and Mike Jordan, ATMOS.*

*No attempt has been made editorially to turn these ppt presentations into "papers". Instead, the major points in the presentation have been included to remind participants of what they heard as well as to stimulate the interest of other readers. We hope authors and readers will forgive this time saving convention.*

*It is noteworthy that there are two major themes within this topic of zoo legislation and they are conservation (of wildlife) and captive wild animal welfare. Also within this thematic context, zoo associations (regional and national), institutions and individuals are enjoined to abide by the highest principles and ethics. This is of crucial importance for our zoos in South Asia, which had been outside the mainstream of the international zoo "movement", if you will, until the founding of SAZARC. Despite SAZARC annual conferences, monthly publications of international news from WAZA and other zoo associations in ZOOS' PRINT (the magazine published by SAZARC's host Zoo Outreach Organisation), visits to individual zoos within the South Asian countries, training, provision of educational materials either in print or camera ready copy, many of the zoos have not changed so much. Still zoos in South Asia, by and large, are stuck in the old ways in almost every area. Perhaps there has been improvement in the self-image of the zoos, largely due to the fact of their having an Association of their own and its becoming a member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA).*

*WAZA, to its credit, has permitted regional zoo associations from all parts of the world to become members of WAZA even if there are zoos in their region which would not come up to the standard of individual WAZA member zoos. It is an enlightened policy which enables many, many zoos to become more familiar with international standards, zoo ethics in matters of running zoos and caring for animals, and modern zoo management. It also bring these zoos closer to WAZA*

*projects and training opportunities through their regional associations.*

*WAZA is, however, like SAZARC, an association, not a legislative arm. It has influence, as do the associations, through peer pressure and provision of information, education, training, etc. rather than an official legal system. So, it is up to the regional associations and to the movers and shakers in each country to move their government to establish zoo legislation which would provide a standard both for government as well as individual zoos which would lead to improvements of zoos in the regions such that they would qualify for individual WAZA membership.*

*The raison d'être and focus of Zoo Outreach Organisation always has been the improvement of zoos which inspired its organisation of the meeting going on a decade ago which resulted in SAZARC, as well as ZOO's own member as an NGO Affiliate in WAZA. We urge all our zoos to constantly strive for a higher standard in all respects so as to justify our membership in the world's nodal zoo organisation, WAZA. Sally Walker, Editor Emeritus, ZOOS' PRINT & Founder/Director, ZOO and SAZARC.*

## **Zoo Definitions**

Miranda and Kris led a discussion about the importance of definitions. Before zoo legislation is drafted, there needs to be clear agreement on what is intended to be covered by the legislation. For example, there are a number of definitions of what is a zoo. In some cases, zoo legislation has been written which only impacts larger zoos (of a larger spatial size) and/or zoos with larger numbers of animals in the collection.

In other cases, zoo legislation has been written which includes a definition for zoo and a separate definition for a mini-zoo and applies to both zoos and mini-zoos. Also, there are some definitions of a zoo that include the hours of operation such as "open to the public for at least 7 days a year" or open on a regularly scheduled basis. The group discussed the different elements that might be included in the definition of a zoo and the impacts of each element.

A second example that was discussed was the importance of the definition of animal. In some cases, zoo legislation has been written so that it applies to only native species and in other cases it applies to all exotic animals. The group discussed the pros and cons of what animals should be covered by zoo legislation.