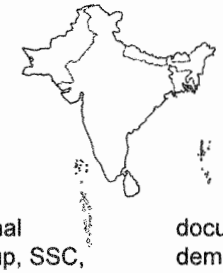
Announcing CBSG, South Asia

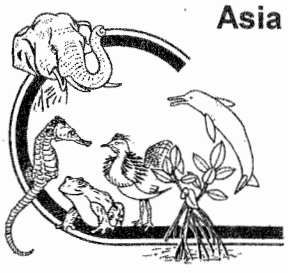
Towards a Regional Conservation Identity

A new initiative of ZOO/CBSG, India

CBSG, SSC, IUCN



CBSG, South Asia



In 1991, Zoo Outreach Organisation initiated a national network of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, SSC, IUCN in response to urging from C.B.S.G. Chairman, U.S. Seal and Program Officer, Thomas J. Foose for more regionalisation of CBSG activities. CBSG, India has shared conservation tools and concepts with many, many conservation activers in India as well as Sri Lanka, and now wishes to expand its reach to all the countries in South Asia. Originally, even in 1991, CBSG, India was envisioned as CBSG, SAARC but it was decided to keep it simple, focus on India first and allowing it to evolve if it worked and a need was found.

During the All-India CAMP workshops, it was noted that assessing species endemic to the political unit which is identified as India was relatively easy but there were problems assessing species which migrated across political borders. Since animals don't bother with politics much, the need for participants from border countries was felt and it was expressed the subsequent exercises to review the status of these different animal groups should include experts from surrounding countries. A need for a CBSG South Asia emerged.

In 1997 a new national CBSG network was started in the South Asian region, e.g., CBSG, Sri Lanka. Although CBSG, Sri Lanka has all the characteristics required for an active network, and the primary impetus came from Sri Lanka, CBSG, India office has played a crucial role in activating, fundraising, arranging training and providing organisation and facilitation for their CAMP workshop for Amphibians and Reptiles in 1998. This and other information we have from discussions and meetings leads to a conclusion that the countries surrounding India, e.g. Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Maldives are potentially interested but require the kind of intensive coordination and "engineering" which went into CBSG, India and would benefit by a sort of "mentor". CBSG, India -- acting as CBSG, South Asia -- will fill this role.

The way it will work :

- A few key individuals have been contacted and invited to join CBSG, South Asia, . . . people who could follow through to help find hosts and organise workshops and training exercises. This group of individuals will be asked to suggest others who need to be linked to one another to build a small core group in each country.

- These individuals, or a representative who agrees to share the material, will be given a variety of documentation from CBSG and CBSG, India to demonstrate the process and product of the CBSG exercises. Briefing books and Reports, Manuals, etc. will be sent to these individuals.

- ZOO's publications will be sent regularly to these individuals with an emphasis on finding South Asian news of interest to both zoo and wildlife personnel throughout the region. In addition, materials both from India as well as other countries which would reinforce the idea of national zoo associations and zoo legislation, standards, etc. will be circulated. ZOO is in the process of archiving this material from more than two dozen countries and has the largest collection to date.

- No country recently has inventoried, assessed or categorised any significant amount of its biodiversity according to the guidelines of the CBD except India. An effort will be made to focus attention on this task, possibily in promoting CAMP workshops by inviting specialists from countries bordering India to Indian CAMP Reviews of the major taxon groups already assessed for India and adding all species occurring in South Asian countries. This is ongoing in taxon networks.

- Visits of CBSG, India personnel for very specific reasons will be undertaken to visit zoos as well as wildlife departments, natural history museums, etc. so that maximum number of specialists can be contacted.

- A meeting will be organised drawing together at least one or two people from each country to set a precedent for an Annual meeting of CBSG, South Asia. This meeting will be attended by Dr. U.S. Seal and at least one other member of CBSG staff and the CBSG, India staff. This meeting will include a training component and hopefully a genuine exercise, such as a CAMP.

- CBSG, South Asia members will be invited to any workshop or training organised in India and an effort will be made to organise training in the countries outside of India as well. Training as well as process workshops will be organised in connection with the Annual Meeting whenever possible.

- The backbone of CBSG South Asia is the combined taxon and disciplinary networks organised under the aupices of ZOO and CBSG, India -- invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, bats, and rodentia. Some of these were first initiated in India and then expanded to South Asia. These kinds of networks, pulling together

academicians, field biologists, taxonomists, wildlife managers, specialisting in a particular taxon group are perhaps the best way to get deep into the scientific community of these countries. Each of these networks produces a newsletter twice yearly which already covers South Asia to a small extent. This is expected to grow with the activity of CBSG South Asia.

- there are also a few specialty networks which have been organised in ZOO and CBSG, India with different results. There is a zoo educator network – the Asian Regional Network of Zoo Educators – which has members in 5 of the 7 South Asian countries. ZOO used to run a very useful veterinary network which was stopped for political reasons at the time but could be re-initiated with South Asia as the focus. There is a great need for a wildlife veterinary network in this region.

- The area covered by the South Asia region has 7 countries, five of which have zoos and one with a breeding centre. Yet, in international meetings, India is the only country which is "represented" despite the fact that Pakistan has zoos, Sri Lanka 1+2, Bangladesh 1 and Nepal 1. Just as South East Asia is a "Region" and has its regional zoo association, so South Asia is a region. One of the most useful potential outcomes for convening CBSG, South Asia is to set the stage for a South Asian Regional Zoo Association which can function as the representative for those countries. Some correspondence and discussion about this has already taken place and it is possible that such an association can be formed at the first meeting by a special working group for that purpose.

- It is hoped that a Working Group for CBSG, South Asia can be organised at the upcoming regional meeting of South Asian countries in New Delhi in March 2000.

- A zoo educator training course is planned for end March-early April which will have a CBSG component in it and be sponsored in part by CBSG South Asia.

About CBSG, SSC, IUCN

The Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) is an international conservation organization dedicated to protecting the world's biodiversity. The diversity of CBSG projects, the range of countries involved, types of documents produced and the depth of assistance given to zoos, SSC and IUCN is staggering. CBSG is in fact, a specialist group of SSC, covering the subject area of conservation breeding and interactive management of threatened species and populations in the wild. CBSG's development of dynamic, interactive workshops, such as PHVA's and CAMP's; CBSG's use of modern management and facilitation techniques has galvanised many a moribund specialist group and conservation organisation into positive action.

The mission of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, SSC, IUCN is "to conserve and establish populations of threatened species through conservation breeding programmes and through intensive protection and management of these plant and animal populations in the wild".

Human populations are rapidly growing and as we utilize the earth's resources to survive, we are destroying and fragmenting many of the world's ecosystems resulting in erosion of global biodiversity at a frightening rate. The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio, 1992) has pointed out that worldwide coordination of conservation efforts is critical to successful biodiversity management. Thus, wildlife and governmental officials world invite CBSG and its national and regional networks to help with their conservation efforts by the use of the effective processes and tools CBSG has developed, such as:

Population and Habitat Viability Assessments (PHVAs)
Population and Habitat Viability Assessment workshops attempt to bring together biologists and other professionals with relevant expertise in a collaborative effort to assess the extinction risk and develop better management strategies for particular endangered species. They focus on a single threatened species and its corresponding habitat. Computer modeling tools, using all available data for the species in question, are utilized for this process. These workshops are held in range countries of species where decisions are made by the corresponding country's wildlife officials.

Conservation Assessment Management Plans (CAMPs)
For most regions of the world, detailed lists of threatened species and habitats are not available. The CAMP process is designed to assess and compile the status and degree of threat of a group of taxa or the taxa of a particular region so that management actions can be developed for species in need. Numerous criteria, including the IUCN Red List Criteria, are examined and presented in this survey and review and the Reports following workshops support setting priorities, as well as management recommendations.

Genome Resource Banking (GRBs)
The "frozen ark" allows scientists to increase the odds of preserving genetic variation in both wild and captive animals.

Training
CBSG has begun to train scientists worldwide in the use of these processes and tools to permit ongoing evaluation of the conservation status of plants and animals in each country where CBSG has served as an advisor.

Communication
Endangered species around the world are going extinct even as their fate is being discussed! CBSG has earned a reputation for its production of timely scientific information in workshop reports detailing the plight of the species and documenting plans and procedures for recovery. These reports are the most current sources of information on threat and conservation priorities in a world where information can mean the difference between extinction and survival.

CBSG is also a conservation information clearinghouse where wildlife scientists around the globe keep CBSG apprised of newsworthy international conservation happenings. CBSG shares the amassed information with zoo and wildlife via a newsletter, CBSG News and a web site << http://www.cbsg.org>>.

Reasons for establishing CBSG activities in the region of South Asia.

-The region of "South Asia" consists of the seven countries and covered by SAARC is a rational biogeographical unit with many species which are endemic to the S. Asian region.

- Exciting and charismatic projects involving such species, particularly rhinoceros, could be initiated, e.g. rhinoceros, elephant, red panda, fresh water dolphin. Many species of the Western ghats share a range with Sri Lanka which historically formed part of the land area of the subcontinent.

- A need for specialists from bordering countries who can give information about transmigration of species across political borders in PHVA and CAMP workshops for all countries.

- No PHVA or CAMP workshops have been held for any S. Asian country except India and Sri Lanka to date.

- There are a few zoological gardens or breeding centres in most of the South Asian countries other than India which has more than 250 and is a special case.

- South Asian zoos (outside of India) are few and for the most part lack zoo legislation, a professional association, or a systematic means of communication, cooperation and coordination with other zoos and the organised zoo community around the world.

- These countries are relatively small and are not in any mainstream zoo conservation programme in the world.

- There is virtually no organised cooperation even among the countries in the region of South Asia.

- There is some interest in two of these countries in establishing national networks, e.g. Pakistan and Nepal.

Stated objectives of CBSG, South Asia

- ☐ To expand the scope of the Mission of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group by promoting its policies, philosophy, processes and products in South Asia.
- ☐ To highlight the link between zoo and field based activities in conservation, e.g. to promote the scientific methods of holistic, intensive, interactive conservation management in South Asia.
- ☐ To generate interest in CAMP, PHVA, Conservation Planning, Zoo Futures, Zoo Master Planning and Facilitator workshops and where desirable and appropriate conduct them with the help of CBSG, SSC.
- ☐ To create a regional conservation identity by bringing together conservation specialists of the South Asian region.
- ☐ To identify people and projects for information of the SSC taxon based specialist groups.
- ☐ To "engineer" a Regional Zoo Directors Association for South Asia to represent the zoos of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal in CBSG and World Zoo Organisation.

List of Zoos in South Asia (except India)

(Please let us know which ones we missed)*

Pakistan Zoos

Mr. Mansoor Qazi, Director,
Karachi Zoological Gardens and Karachi Safari Park , Karachi Metropolitan Corporation Nishter Road, Karachi 3, Pak.

Mr. Abdul Karim, Director
Marghzar Zoo, City Development Authority
Islamabad, Pak.

Mr. Zohare Ali Shariff, Chief Executive,
Jungle Kingdom, Inside Ayub Park, G.T. Road, Rawalpindi, Pak.

Dr. Arshad Haroon Toosey, Director
Lahore Zoo,
Hahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam
Lahore 54000, Pakistan

Dr. Masood-ul-Haq, Curator,
Bahawalpur Zoological Gardens,
Bahawalpur, Pakistan

Sri Lankan Zoos

Mr. S. Gunasena, Director
Department of National Zoological Gardens
Colombo Zoo & Pinnewala Elephant Orphanage, Anaparika Dharmapata
Nawatha, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka

Nepali Zoos

Mr. R. K. Shrestha, Director
Central Zoo
King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
Jawalakhel, Post Box No.3712
Kathmandu, Nepal

Bangladesh Zoos

Director
Dacca Zoological Garden
Mirpur
Bhaka, Bangladesh

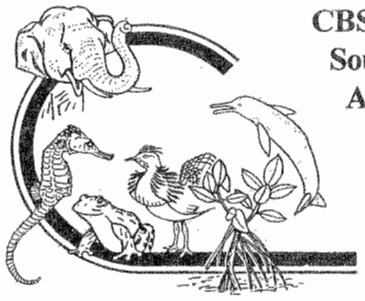
** A 100 acre new zoo is coming up in Hiriwadunne, Sri Lanka. There is a breeding centre for ungulates in Bhutan. There may be breeding centres in Pakistan. More informatin later. Your information is welcome.*

Members so far

From Sri Lanka
Dr. Anslem de Silva, ARROS, CBSG, Sri Lanka
Dr. Rohan Pethiyagoda, Director, Wildlife Heritage Trust

From Nepal
Dr. M.P. Ghimire, Vet at Central Zoo
Dr. B.K. Jha, Sr. Vet at Central Zoo
Dr. Tirtha A. Maskey, Director General, National Parks Dept, Nepal
Dr. Bhaiya Khanal, Natural History Museum, Kathmandu
Ang Phuri Sherpa, Edn Officer, Central Zoo

From Pakistan
Dr. Arshad Toosy, Director, Lahore Zoo
Nadeem Ahmed Siddique, (Ph.D. Student) Advisor, Karachi Zoo
Dr. Haji Lal Khan, Pakistan Forest Institute, Zoological Survey Department, Peshawar



CBSG, South Asia

Draft CBSG South Asia Logo -- what do you think ?

It is traditional for CBSG national and regional networks to create their own logo in the same form as the CBSG, SSC logo but with threatened animals from their own country or region. A country logo is not too difficult but a regional symbol, representing several different countries, is a bear ! When we wrote people in the different countries of South Asia for suggestions, we received many different animals/plants. We have tried to create a mix of animals for which some, at least, are common to all or nearly all countries and some endemic to one or more countries. We are happy with the mangrove.

It would be nice to have a group of animals with all of them endemic to South Asia but we could not achieve that so far. This logo, even though it is quite well drawn, is a DRAFT. We can completely re-do it and will do, until most everyone is satisfied. All countries are welcome to contribute suggestions and criticism. The "rules" are that the animals should not be "common" but threatened or troubled in some way; that the animals should be from one or more South Asian country; and that they be drawn in the same style as the CBSG logo.

Want to give it a try. Suggest something. We are open !

CBSG South Asia logo animals
Mammals: Asian Elaphant (*Elephas maximus*) and River Dolphin (generic representing both Gangetic and Indus River Dolphins - *Platanista* sp.)
Bird: Houbara Bustard (*Chlamydotis undulata*)
Amphibian: Bull Frog (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*)
Invertebrate: Indian Ocean Sea Horse (*Hippocampus kuda*)
Mangrove: Avicennia (*Avicennia* sp.)

CBSG, India

The purpose of CBSG, India was to promote the CBSG mission, tools, programmes, and processes at a grass roots level, covering zoos, other breeding facilities as might exist and wildlife field and their officers. The primary objectives were to educate Indian professionals by making available recent literature and activities of CBSG and other relevant specialist groups of SSC as well as modern zoos around the world. The aim was to establish understanding of the link between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, demonstrating a holistic series of activities which could save species and populations with no chance of recovery in the wild without intensive and often interactive management.

Initially the initiative was to cover the seven countries which make up the region previously referred as the "Indian Sub-continent" which is now loosely organised by a quasi-political/economic association called SAARC, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. Subsequently, for reasons of politics, efficiency, economy and experimentation, it was decided to cover India first. Indians seemed to appreciate having a CBSG, India and the enthusiastic response it received is not likely to have come for CBSG, SAARC.

The purpose of CBSG, India being primarily educational, it was possible to include enthusiasts as well as experts but all invitees had some professional connection with zoos or wildlife or forestry. In a short time 400 zoo and wildlife professionals had joined CBSG, India. To fulfill some of the objectives the host organisation ZOO focused more and more of the content of their periodicals toward zoo biology, conservation biology, small population management, and modern zoo management in general.

When an opportunity arose, just one year after the formation of CBSG, India, a PHVA workshop for the Manipur Brow-antlered Deer was held in Mysore and a one day CBSG meeting was conducted before the PHVA. This exercise was invited by the Forest Department, Government of Karnataka. One year later, three PHVA workshops were held, invited by the Forest Departments of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and West Bengal for Lion-tailed Macaque, Asiatic Lion and Indian Rhinoceros respectively.

All of these workshops were funded by foreign zoos. In the next two years two PHVAs were conducted which were funded by the Ministry of Environment (Gharial, 1994) and the Central Zoo Authority (Barasingha, 1995).

In 1995, a medicinal plants NGO required a method of prioritisation for 300 identified species and CBSG began a series of CAMP workshops that year which began with Dr. U.S. Seal facilitating, continued with Dr. Mike Maunder and ended with the local organisers of CBSG, India and the NGO facilitating and conducting the workshops themselves. In 1997, a series of 7 biodiversity prioritisation workshops were conducted by the national network activers and funded by the Biodiversity Support Programme. In 1998 a ground breaking CAMP on non-timber forest products was held funded by the NTFP Federation and the Forest Department of Madhya Pradesh. Several other CAMPs and PHVAs for India are proposed and are awaiting governmental and other funding.

CBSG, Sri Lanka

CBSG, Sri Lanka was founded by Dr. Anslem de Silva. Anslem's initial request was actually more toward a regional unit as he asked if he could conduct activities in Sri Lanka as part of CBSG, India. We suggested he form a national group. We helped Anslem find funding for a CBSG Facilitator Training Course in Jersey, Channel Islands and also for a Sri Lankan Amphibian and Reptile CAMP which he organised very well in December 1998. CBSG, Sri Lanka also has a number of Special Interest Groups .. for invertebrates, fresh water fish, etc. CBSG, Sri Lanka operates under the auspices of ARROS, Association of Reptile Researchers of Sri Lanka.