



World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)

UNITED FOR CONSERVATION

Report on WAZA – The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums

Background

The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) was founded in 1946 as the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens (IUDZG). Already in 1950, IUDZG became an INGO Member of IUCN.

Around 1990, a decision was taken to change the character of IUDZG and to become a more professional organisation with a strong focus on conservation. The most visible sign of this change was the first *World Zoo Conservation Strategy* released in 1993. This was followed, in 1995, by the strategy paper *ZOO 2005*. In the following years, a series of policy documents, including a new Code of Ethics and Animal Welfare, were adopted. In 1999, a mandate was given to the WAZA Council to develop a profile for the future. The following year, new by-laws were adopted, which a.o. replaced the previous personal by institutional membership, the name was changed to WAZA, and a new logo was introduced. In 2001, a permanent Executive Office was established in Berne, Switzerland, and Peter Dollinger, previously Director of the Division Permits and Inspections of the Swiss Federal Veterinary Office (CITES Management Authority) became the Association's first full-time Executive Director.

This was followed by a rapid membership growth, the establishment of professional links to International Organisations and Agreements, the development of a new *World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy*, the production of numerous paper publications and the building up of a professional web site.

As of today, WAZA has 248 institution members (aquariums and zoos) in 47 different countries, 22 association members (national or regional zoo and aquarium associations) adding another 1100 institutions to the network, and 12 affiliate members (like-minded organisations, such as zoo educators, zoo veterinarians etc.), and there are four people (3 FPE) working at the office. The Annual Conferences, taking place usually in August or in October are now attended by up to 250 participants. Close to 100 *in-situ* conservation projects implemented or supported by the WAZA Constituency have received the WAZA brand since summer 2004.

Working together with International Conventions

The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (WZACS) strongly recommends that zoo and aquarium partnerships and networks be established or strengthened at local, national, regional and international levels. Obviously, it is up to WAZA as the only global zoo and aquarium organisation to take the lead in building up and strengthening partnerships with

WAZA COUNCIL

international organisations. In global forums, such as Conferences of Parties to international agreements, WAZA is expected to coordinate the activities of delegates from zoo associations as well as those from individual zoos and aquariums.

It should be emphasized that WAZA is not primarily a lobbying organisation but defines itself as an expert organization, philosophically close to IUCN, and that the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy explicitly recommends that WAZA, using the huge pool of scientists it represents, should focus on providing technical and scientific advice with a view to furthering species and habitat conservation, promoting sustainable development and enhancing animal welfare.

Considering the professional background of the WAZA Executive Director and the intense international animal exchange activities of its constitution, it is obvious that CITES was the first of the International Conventions with which WAZA sought a closer cooperation. Since 2002, the association participated in the Animal Committee Meetings and in the COPs, and was active in the Transport Working Group and the *Ex situ – In situ* Working Group. As a matter of fact, WAZA was the only NGO to provide substantial input to the process of examining the relationship of *ex-situ* breeding operations and *in-situ* conservation of the species concerned.

As requested by the CITES Secretariat, WAZA provided articles for *CITES World*, the official CITES Newsletter. WAZA is also one of the very few NGOs making regular contributions to the CITES Sponsored Delegates Project, and was one of the few NGOs and Parties that financially contributed to the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of CITES.

Liaison with the CITES Animals Committee has become closer due to the fact that, since February 2006, the Committee Chair, Dr. Thomas Althaus has a 40 % employment at the WAZA Executive Office.

As from 2004, WAZA began to participate in Meetings of other Conventions: CBD, RAMSAR and CMS. While it was recognized that the CBD will have a considerable impact on the zoo and aquarium community's activities in the long term, and that RAMSAR may become more relevant for WAZA the more our constituency gets involved in *in-situ* conservation activities, we came to the conclusion that currently CMS offers most opportunities for a fruitful cooperation.

WAZA and CMS

The Convention on Migratory Species deals with a number of species and issues which are of relevance to WAZA and where WAZA can provide assistance, including the agreements on water birds, bats, seals, cetaceans, the action plan for Sahelo-Saharan antelopes, six of which fall under the scope of the Convention, and the MOUs on the conservation of Bactrian deer, Siberian crane, great bustard and marine turtles.

The former Executive Secretary, Ulf Müller-Helmbrecht, was invited as keynote speaker to WAZA's 58th Annual Meeting held from November 16 to 20, 2004, at San José, Costa Rica, and he participated in the 2nd Rigi Symposium, a regional meeting of German-speaking zoos in the Alpine Region, where he made a presentation on "*Zoos als Partner von Naturschutzbehörden und Internationalen Übereinkommen.*" On the other hand, WAZA's Executive Director participated in the 8th Conference of the Parties held from November 16 to 25, 2005, at Kampala, Uganda.

Following COP 8, the relationship with between the WAZA Executive Office and the CMS Secretariat (Executive Secretary: Rob Hepworth, Interagency Liaison Officer: Paola Deda), including the Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA, Executive Secretary: Bert Lenten) and the Secretariat of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning

Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of the Saiga Antelope (Lyle Glowka), were intensified.

A formal Partnership Agreement has been drafted, which will be signed by the Executives of both CMS and WAZA on 27 September 2006, and, in a personal capacity, the WAZA Executive Director became a founder member of the NGO "Friends of CMS", which was constituted on October 27, 2005, at Bonn (Germany).

Following discussions with the Federal Environment Office of Switzerland it was agreed that the Swiss Confederation and WAZA will jointly host 7th Meeting of the Technical Committee of the African-European Waterfowl Agreement. The Meeting will take place from 27 October to 1 November 2006 in Berne. Although most of the costs will be borne by the Swiss Government, this implies a certain financial commitment by WAZA, and the Executive Office will accommodate the CMS Secretariat and be responsible for the logistics. In conjunction with AEWA TEC7, WAZA will host also a WIGWAG Meeting.

From 2004 to 2006, WAZA made financial contributions to the following activities of CMS:

- Bactrian deer conservation: 1000 EUROS in 2004.
- Sahelo-Saharan antelopes, Tunisia project (payment to Hannover Zoo): 3000 EUROS in 2004 and 2000 EUROS in 2005.
- Production of information material on invasive waterfowl species: 2000 EUROS in 2005.
- Saiga Antelope Meeting: 3000 USD in 2006.
- AEWA TEC7.

These are not huge amounts of money, however, it has to be recognized that WAZA is a membership organization with almost all revenues coming from the membership fees of our constituency, which means that we always have to operate on a tight budget. More important than what the Executive Office can do for CMS, are contributions of our members e.g. in the fields of crane conservation or the reintroduction and conservation of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes. Together with our Constituency, we look forward to broadening and intensifying our cooperation with CMS and the other agreements and MOUs concluded under the Convention.

**WORLD ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS**

The Executive Director

Peter Dollinger