



Conservation Breeding Specialist Group,

S Asia : Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka

Coimbatore, TN, India
November 2005

Newsletter

Afghanistan invited to join SAARC

For some time now, CBSG, South Asia has been using a map of South Asia which includes Afghanistan and “claiming” Afghanistan as part of South Asia and thus our mandate because, as we said, “we wish it to be so” (see report next page and slide below). This has produced satisfying laughter from a variety of audiences listening to presentations in which this arrogant and sassy comment featured.

So, imagine our satisfaction when we heard the news that Afghanistan had been invited to join SAARC, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the very organisation which inspired the name of SAZARC.

Naturally we take credit for this ! SRW

CBSG, South Asia Activity Report

(This report was written for inclusion in the CBSG Annual Meeting Briefing Book, September, 2005).

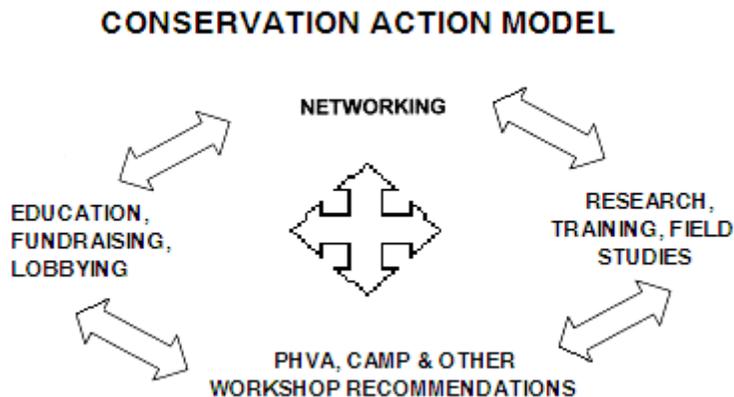
CBSG, South Asia is a regional network which operates in association with the Zoo Outreach Organisation (ZOO) and Wildlife Information Liaison Development (WILD), both of which initiate and coordinate several taxon and disciplinary networks covering South Asia and based on IUCN SSC Specialist Groups. This combination of groupings helps cover many subject areas and actions with a small organisation, minimal funding and much hard work.

It is difficult at times to figure out how to make reports and allocate credit for anything we do without including CBSG, because CBSG tools, processes, vitality, mandate and mission underpin so much of our direction, philosophy and expertise. It is correct to say that CBSG and what it represents as taught and acted by Ulie Seal has been grafted onto our very core, almost since inception in 1985.

Although CBSG, South Asia has 165 members as such, all the members of our other networks (including Reintroduction Specialist Group, South and East Asia, South Asian Zoo Network of International Zoo Educators, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and all the taxon networks associated with IUCN Specialist Groups that we support (invertebrate, amphibian, reptile, bat, non-volant small mammal, and primate are or will be conducting CAMPs, PHVAs, conservation planning, in-house Red List assessments, and use of the output to catalyse field studies, lobbying, and education programmes. Therefore, we consider all of our 1000 plus network members of these 8-9 networks also as members of CBSG South Asia. CBSG South Asia works for all South Asian countries and we include Afghanistan in our South Asian map, because we wish it to be so.



Our suite of organisations and networks have evolved a Conservation Action Model or Blueprint using the CBSG tools, processes and other, compatible skills applied to all conservation activities. The model is dynamic and stochastic and, accordingly, can start at any point and go to any point from any other point. We have illustrated our model borrowing from the well-known Extinction Vortex diagram, although our movement is not one directional to extinction, but multidirectional resulting in continuous expansion and propagation of new ideas and progress. This Report includes all activities in which CBSG tools, processes and compatible skills are used, or which use the output of CBSG processes, or which were initiated by or with the help of Dr. U.S. Seal, late Chair, CBSG.



CBSG, South Asia Activity Report

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 04

3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress, Thailand

17-25 Nov 2004: Sanjay Molur gave invited presentation on the use of the IUCN Red List and CAMP Process in South Asia. Sponsored by SSC, IUCN.

Second Regional CBSG / RSG Meeting held in Lahore, Pakistan, 29-30 November 2004

with Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, South Asia and Reintroduction Specialist Group, South & East Asia. This meeting was attended by Dr. Robert Lacy, Chairman, CBSG, and Dr. Pritpal Soorae, Executive Officer, RSG, who both gave stimulating presentations about CBSG and RSG. Sanjay Molur and Sally Walker representing both groups in South Asia, facilitated the meeting which was attended by 26 Pakistani zoo, wildlife and forestry personnel and an equal number from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. After presentations and discussion with Bob and Mickey, the following topics covering both captive management and reintroduction subject areas were identified for working groups: Policy Issues for Exchange Program in SAZARC Region, Reintroduction In South Asia - General Problems and Possible Solutions, and Reintroduction of Blackbuck in Cholistan Desert. It was decided that the blackbuck reintroduction in Cholistan using the existing semi-wild

population bred at Lal Suhanra National Park should be done after giving due consideration to RSG Guidelines particularly and several points identified by the working group and endorsed by the workshop.

5th Annual South Asian Zoo Association Regional Conference held in Lahore, Pakistan, 1-7 December 2004. This meeting will be reported in detail in the SAZARC Report.

CAMP Workshop for Freshwater Biodiversity of Pakistan held in Islamabad, 13-17 December, 2004.

The second CAMP of an IUCN Biodiversity Programme, Asia task took place in Islamabad, Pakistan after a very successful CAMP for Pakistan Mammals in August 2003. This was the first workshop in a series by a CBSG, South Asia Regional Freshwater Biodiversity Initiative, which hopefully will join the IUNC SSC Global Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment (GFBA) in about 2006. IUCN SSC Freshwater Biodiversity Programme Chair, Will Darwell, gave his blessing for this exercise. The groups prioritised by the IUCN SSC Freshwater Biodiversity Programme were Freshwater fishes, Crustaceans (crabs), Molluscs (snails), and Odonata (dragonflies & Damselflies) and have assessed the following number of species; Fish - 38 endemics, 151 non-endemics; Mollusca - 41; Crabs: 9; Odonata: 59. Sponsored by Chester Zoo, UK; Sea World, USA and IUCN-Pakistan



JANUARY 05

Red List Advisory Group, Venezuela

Sally Walker & Sanjay Molur represented IUCN SSC CBSG and CBSG, South Asian Regional Network at a workshop "Analysis of the Application of IUCN Red List Criteria at a National Level", organised by the NRLAG in Venezuela, 20-26 January 2005. *Sponsors: SM sponsored by IUCN Red List Advisory Group, SW sponsored by Chester Zoo.*

Animal Welfare Fortnightly

ZOO/CBSG South Asia supplied 15 institutions with 2450 packets of welfare and conservation material for two week event celebrated all over India. Daily Life Wildlife and Zoo Patrol specifically for animal welfare but welfare of animals and conservation was linked in Vulture Shock, Tiger Tool Kit, Amphibian Global Warning, Primates in Peril, Freshwater turtles, tortoises and terrapins, Go Gharial, and Bats & Rats. *Sponsors : Chester Zoo, Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Margot Marsh Biodiversity Fund, Appenheul Primate Park.*

FEBRUARY - MARCH 05 - BANGLADESH

Population and Habitat Viability Assessment PHVA for Western Hoolock Gibbon (*Hoolock hoolock hoolock*) 14 - 18 February 2005,

Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management (BIAM). Collaborators : Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB), Forest Department of Bangladesh, Zoo Outreach Organisation (ZOO), Wildlife Information Liaison Development (WILD), Primate Specialist Group, South Asian Primate Network, CBSG, South Asian, RSG, South and East Asia, IUCN SSC CBSG. The PHVA was facilitated by Phil Miller, Sanjay Molur and Sally Walker. Phil Miller conveyed CBSG's methodology for conducting a PHVA in which a series of four tasks were assigned work on which went right up to the last few minutes of the workshop. Dr. Miller also taught advanced techniques to CBSG, South Asia modelling team led by Sanjay Molur and including C. Srinivasulu, P. O. Nameer and B.A. Daniel. The Report was published in September and is being followed up by a systematic lobbying and education campaign.

Sponsored by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Ape Fund; Primate Action Fund/Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation, Twycross Zoo, Appenheul Primate Park, Columbus Zoo.

Seminar /Hands on Training in Husbandry and Management of Hoolock Gibbon, 19-20 February, Dhaka Zoo, Mirpur.

Alan Mootnick, a gibbon husbandry expert, inspected the zoo's Hoolock facilities and then gave an information-packed seminar on care of the species. The following day Alan spent helping the zoo staff to enrich the Hoolock enclosures with ropes and bamboo poles giving them some behavioural options. *Sponsored by Twycross Zoo, UK*

Zoo Advisory visits Chittagong Zoo and Dulahazara Safari Park and Seminar at Chittagong Veterinary College. 21-23 February.

Alan Mootnick visited Chittagong, advising the Safari Park staff on husbandry, use of immobilisation equipment and drugs, and design of gibbon enclosure. On 23rd Alan gave two presentations on gibbon husbandry and taxonomy to the Chittagong Veterinary College staff. Sally Walker gave a presentation on "Zoos in the 21st Century". CVC runs training course in Zoo and Lab Animal Medicine for Bangladesh. *Sponsored by Twycross Zoo, UK*

Teachers for Tigers workshops held in

Bangladesh i) Teachers for Tigers Training Workshop for Teachers of Dhaka. 20-22 February, Asiatic Society. Local collaborators and hosts Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh and Bangladesh Forest Department. In addition to teachers, twelve primate researchers from India and Bangladesh took this training and were given a special manual for Teaching about Primates so they might teach as well as research during their field studies.

ii) Sunderbans (Bangladesh) Teachers for Tigers for researchers and teachers of Dhaka, 24-28 February, venue on cruise boat in Sunderbans. A very special session of Teachers for Tigers was conducted on deck of a cruise ship to Bangladesh Sunderbans. On reaching Sunderbans, trips ashore to see the Sunderbans tiger habitat (and pugmarks) were interspersed with teaching activities, lectures, games, etc. Teachers watching a plaster cast being made of a fresh tiger pugmark on the beach was great.

iii) Teachers for Tigers at Dhaka Zoo. From 2-4 March we conducted a three day T4T workshop at the Dhaka Zoo which was the eleventh T4T Training held in South Asia. In this workshop Resource Persons from demonstrated how the games and activities in the T4T Manual could be easily adjusted for zoo education. *Sponsored by US Fish and Wildlife Service, Tiger/Rhino Conservation Fund and Wildlife Conservation Society, USA*



Field Techniques Training for Volant and Non-volant Small Mammals (Bats 'n Rats) 2-6 March. Asiatic Society, Dhaka. Dr. Mike Jordan, Curator of Mammals at Chester Zoo, UK and Dr. Shahroukh Mistry, Professor at Boston University trained 20 graduate students from Dhaka University, Jhahangirnagar University and Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh, using the grounds of the Asiatic Society and Dhaka University for their field and classroom. A protocol for field study of both groups (bats and rodents) which was begun at the Pakistan series of workshops was completed at this workshop
Sponsored by Chester Zoo, Knowsley Safari Park, UK and Bat Conservation International, USA

APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2005

From April - October our ZOO / WILD / CBSG SA team focused on completing reports and printing projects.

April, May, June : Earth Day, World Environment Day, Vanamahotsava distributed thousands of kits of Plants for Life materials and other faunal taxon based materials for education programmes celebrating these special days : *Sponsored by : Chester Zoo, Botanic Gardens Conservation International.*

Printing, publications and distribution

World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy WZACS : English version (5000 copies), Posters (5000), Stickers (10,000). Pending are 10,000 summaries and 5000 copies of South Asian translations. One thousand copies handed over to Central Zoo Authority. Two thousand copies sent to groups and individuals, zoos, etc. in India and throughout South Asia. ZOOS' PRINT magazine publishes a chapter every month in their issue. An educational packet for kids on "Why Zoos" using material from the Strategy is under press. This theme has been requested by zoos for some time. *Sponsored by Thrigby Hall Wildlife Park, Chester Zoo, North Carolina Zoological Park, EAZA, Koln Zoo.*

Mammals of Afghanistan in Dari (local language of Afghanistan). After a very successful and popular printing of this book in English, the author undertook to get it translated and ZOO undertook to get more of the mammals illustrated. Now 8000 copies of Dari book have been published with all to be distributed in Afghanistan including to the universities. A thousand copies are to be donated to the Kabul Zoo in connection with an education programme for older students and laypersons. *Sponsored by The Aga Khan Foundation, USA; US Fish and Wildlife Service, USA;*

Conservation Management Institute, College of Natural Resources, Virginia Tech, USA)

Primates of South Asia Poster -- Scientific Illustrations of 43 South Asian Species and Subspecies (dated; first edition). Artwork, design and layout by: Stephen Nash, Conservation International, Copyright Conservation International & Zoo Outreach Organisation. Published as part of South Asian Primate Education Programme (SAP-EP) by Zoo Outreach Organisation and South Asian Primate Network, 31 May 2005, Sizes: 22 x 30" & 11.7 x 16.5"
Sponsored by Chester Zoo, Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundations - Conservation International, and Apenheul Primate Conservation Trust

Status of South Asian Non-Volant Small Mammals

Sanjay Molur, C. Srinivasulu, Bhargavi Srinivasulu, Sally Walker, Latha Ravikumar and P.O. Nameer (2005). Status of South Asian Non-Volant Small Mammals: Conservation Assessment and Management Plan (C.A.M.P.) Workshop Report. Zoo Outreach Organisation / CBSG-South Asia, Coimbatore, India, 618 pp. *Sponsored by Columbus Zoo, USA and Knowsley Safari Park, UK*

Summary of the Status of South Asian Non-Volant Small Mammals, Sally Walker, Sanjay Molur, Latha Ravikumar (2005). Summary of the Status of South Asian Non-Volant Small Mammals. Extracted from the CAMP 2005 Report. Zoo Outreach Organisation / CBSG-South Asia, Coimbatore, India, 28pp. *Sponsored by Columbus Zoo, USA and Knowsley Safari Park, UK*

Conservation of Western Hoolock Gibbon

(*Hoolock hoolock hoolock*), Molur et al., 2005, 132pp : Report of the CAMP Workshop for Hoolock Gibbon held in Dhaka, 2005. Sanjay Molur, C. Srinivasulu, P.O. Nameer, B.A. Daniel, Sally Walker, *Sponsored by Columbus Zoo*

Newsletters of Taxon Networks published

Rat-a-tattle, Newsletter of Rodent, Insectivore, Lagomorph, Scandents Conservation and Information Network of South Asia, Vol. 5, No. 1, May Issue, *Sponsored by Knowsley Safari Park*

BAT NET, Newsletter of Chiroptera Conservation and Information Network of South Asia, Vol. 6, No.s, July 05. *Sponsored by Chester Zoo*

Bugs 'R' All, Newsletter of Invertebrate Conservation and Information Network of South Asia, Vol. 8, No.1 July 05. *Sponsored by London Zoological Society*



Frog Leg, Newsletter of DAPTF, South Asia, Issue 12 August issue. *Sponsored by ZOO operating fund.*

Reptile Rap, Newsletter of South Asia Reptile Network, No.7, Issue: August 2005. *Sponsored by ZOO operating fund.*

ZOOS' PRINT Magazine and ZOOS' PRINT Journal

ZOOS' PRINT Magazine celebrates 20 years regular publication. The first monthly zoo magazine in Asia, ZOOS' PRINT includes both a magazine ZPM and a scientific journal ZPJ. ZOOS' PRINT Journal is abstracted in BIOSIS, Biological Abstracts, CAB Records, Elsevier BioBase, Current Awareness in Biological Sciences, Zoological Records, Indian Science Abstracts, Veterinary Records and by more than 20 other abstracting agencies. ZPJ contains articles on scientific research, field survey, new description of species, veterinary, checklists, etc. ZPJ is the only monthly scientific journal for wildlife and zoo in Asia and also the only one published regularly. Editor: Sanjay Molur. Both can be accessed on www.zoosprint.org.

Sponsored by Chester Zoo, The North of England Zoological Society, U.K. & Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW, UK), advertisers and subscribers

ZOO ZEN

Zoo Outreach Organisation Zoo Information Exchange Notebook also celebrated twenty years regular monthly publication in August this year. ZOO ZEN was founded to provide a way of sending published material to zoo personnel who could not access it easily otherwise. This past years topics have included Zoo Planning: Design and Landscape Architecture-Proceedings of the Short Term Course organized by Central Zoo Authority & School of Planning and Architecture 2000 by M. Shaheer and S. Suneja, "Wild Mammals in Captivity: Principles and Techniques", the entire book, a few chapters at a time. *Sponsored by Universities Federation for Animal Welfare and subscriptions.*

Taxon Networks and Specialist Groups

IUCN SSC South Asian Invertebrate Specialist Group & Invertebrate Conservation and Information Network of South Asia (ICINSA). B.A. Daniel, Chair, has been invited to be a member of ESG (external support group) for the GEF (PDF-B) Project "Conservation and Management of pollinators for sustainable agriculture, through an ecosystem approach" of G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Almora, Uttaranchal, India. Chair assisted in the conduct of CAMP workshop for fresh water biodiversity of Pakistan, assisted in spider field project on its survey and monitoring, conducted

extensive membership drive in other south Asian countries particularly Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, assessed more than 20 selected invertebrate species as an in house species assessment to include in IUCN Red list and provided consultancy to zoos in south India for invertebrate conservation. *Sponsor: Zoological Society of London, UK*

Rodent, Insectivore, Lagomorph, Scandents Conservation and Information Network of South Asia (RILSCINSA). Rodent CAMP report and summary published. Reports to be distributed to policy makers with suggestion of upgrading threatened rodents on the Wildlife Protection Act of India and appropriate legislation of other South Asian countries. Published "Rat-a-Tattle" newsletter. Rodent Surveys conducted in several areas by RILSCINSA network members; funds provided by various zoos. Rodent field techniques training workshop combined with bat conducted in Bangladesh in February 05; same planned for Sri Lanka in November 05 and Nepal 06. New Scientific Chair selected, Dr. Sujit Chakravorty, Ret. Scientist, Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta. RILSCINSA Member Directory published and uploaded on website. *Sponsored by Knowsley Safari Park*

Chiroptera Conservation and information Network of South Asia CCINSA. Chiroptera field techniques training, Bangladesh February 05, Sri Lanka November 05. BAT NET Newsletter produced. Network of members increased. Selected new Scientific Chair, Dr. Sripad Kandula. Member Directory published and put on website. *Sponsored by Chester Zoo.*

IUCN SSC PSG South Asian Primate Network.

Members invited. November 04 Provided 34 Institutions with 3325 packets of primate educational material. Worked intensively with artist towards Primate drawings for poster.

January 05 - distributed primate educational material to many institutions for Animal Welfare Fortnightly, January; Earth Day and World Environment Day 2005.

February 05 - conducted Hoolock Gibbon PHVA in Bangladesh and many associated events. Trained 8 Indian and a few Bangladeshi student researchers in public education techniques about primates; brought out a special primate education manual for teachers.

March 05

Raised funds for paying a watcher to track three hoolock gibbons which were "returned" to a wild area by the Bangladesh Forest Department after confiscating them from a zoo that had purchased them from a trapper. Reports are that the animals are alive and all right.

April 05

Walker attended conference in Melbourne and presented a paper on use of art (Arnab Roy, Stephen



Nash and others) for science with reference to South Asian primates.

May 05

Published posters and other materials using Stephen Nash's South Asian primate drawings and with funds from Chester Zoo and Appenheul Primate Park. The poster has an ISBN number and is dated so that future drawings can be done based on this poster and an ongoing attempt to have accurate scientific drawings will be in place.

June 05

Authored with a group of people in India an "Action Plan for the Control of Commensal, Non-human primates in Public Places" which is being considered for adoption by the Ministry of Environment, Government of India.

September 05

Attended primate conference in Jodhpur; released Primate poster and initiated group on South Asian Primate Action Plan.

November 05

CBSG/RSG meeting - non-human primates focus of this meeting.

December 05

SAZARC South Asian Primate Taxonomy training and collection planning sessions for sorting out SA primates in SA zoos. Release of books related to poster on SA Primates. *Sponsor: Primate Action Fund IUCN SSC PSG*

Amphibian network representing DAPTF, South Asia

Published FROGLEG newsletter, July 2004; Amphibians on the Map - packet developing and design continuing with poster; publication of South Asian Amphibian CAMP pending.

Reptile Network of South Asia SARN

Published Reptile Rap Newsletter. Preparation for South Asian Reptile CAMP and Global Reptile Assessment in 2006.

Education

MOU with Wildlife Conservation Society for coordinating Teachers for Tigers, HELP, New York Internship and other WCS projects, including evaluation of projects, educator training in other taxa, etc.

SAN-IZE. Formation of new South Asian Educator network in collaboration with the International Zoo Educators Association (IZE) called the South Asian Network of International Zoo Educators **SAN-IZE**. The purpose of the network is to share the workload of the Asian Regional Representative of IZE providing grassroots guidance and materiel for ZOO's 200 strong group of institutions in India and correspondents in other countries of South Asia.

Education in Zoo Outreach Organisation also very much depends on CBSG tools and processes. ZOO takes CAMP and PHVA workshop reports, or even plans, and develops educational material using the Red List status, Taxon Data Sheet information, PHVA output, to develop conservation themes. Educational packets on bats, primates, amphibian, reptiles and rodents were created on scientific information from CAMPs. They were distributed last year and this year's programmes finished them off the first week of October during Indian Wildlife Week. In addition to these conservation oriented themes, we also create educational material on animal welfare and visitor behaviour (in zoos and parks) but relate to conservation only.

We invite over 200 individuals and institutions conducting education to apply for these materials. We request them to plan a program which includes active learning techniques, games, stories, activities. We have a set of educational guidelines for each taxon group or subject area. The material is given free of cost but educators and organizers have to pay for postage and handling, observe our guidelines and submit a report on their programs. Just distributing packets is discouraged as we want the educators, be they zoo directors, zoo vets, zoo curators, ngo officers, whomever to engage their audience and make the learning experience fun and memorable.

From 2004 through 2005 we will have distributed more than 100,000 educational packets and numerous posters, stickers, booklets. Our new material for this year was "Bears on the road ... Not in the forest", "Plants for Life", "Why Zoos?" and Taxonomy of 46 South Asian Primates.

Sponsored by Chester Zoo, Margot Marsh Biodiversity Fund, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Appenheul Primate Park, Knowsley Safari Park, Columbus Zoo, Fauna and Flora International.

Animal Welfare

ZOO created new educational materials for creating awareness of good treatment and conservation of wildlife.

Sally Walker and Sanjay Molur assisted with a policy document consisting of an Action Plan for Comensal monkeys.

Sally Walker has been working on a zoo improvement project for last 20 years and it is now being formalised in CBSG and WAZA. More on this at the end of this Report.

Research (by ZOO, WILD, CBSG, South Asia staff)
Manju Siliwal, Sanjay Molur, B.A. Daniel --



Theraphosid survey in India -- Theraphosids are large bodied spiders, particularly Asian tarantulas. This project covers surveys and behavioural studies of the theraphosids in India. Surveys are ongoing in Arunachal Pradesh (northeastern India) and in Coorg (Karnataka, southern India). Behavioural and population studies are being conducted in Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu (southern India). The gist of activities conducted until date is provided below.

A study was initiated on Rameshwaram Island in April 2004, soon after the discovery of *Poecilotheria hanumavilasumica* Smith, 2004 to understand the distribution, abundance and behaviour of this species in the wild and the threats to this species in a small area of the island. For understanding the activity pattern of *Poecilotheria* spider, night surveys from dusk to dawn (12 hours) were conducted for 5-7 nights in Hanumavilasum temple site each in different seasons of the year in the selected areas. To know the distribution of *P. hanumavilasumica* in Rameshwaram Island, surveys were carried out in different habitats including human settlement areas on this island. Indirect evidences like exuvia or silk web/nest on the tree trunk or tree-hole were collected to record the presence of the species and to identify the species. Ecological parameters such as vegetation sampling, weather conditions, threats were documented. Abundance studies were conducted through random line transects of 100m. Conducted initial survey in North of River Bhrmaputra in Arunachal Pradesh and few areas in Assam to understand presence/absence and distribution of Theraphosids and various threats to the species in the northeast. We suspect about 15 new species of Theraphosids from first two months survey in this area.

Survey and monitoring of theraphosid burrows in Coorg was initiated in August 2004 and is continued on a regular basis. Several new areas of occurrence have been recorded and impact of habitat disturbance on one family group is being monitored. Trade related information is being compiled

Procuring of literature from various libraries in the world was done and 80% of the literature regarding Theraphosids have been collected. Recent publications are collected by contacting various researchers. Manju Siliwal, Research Associate presented paper entitled "A review of spider studies in India -need for taxonomic/systematic update" at National Conference on "Animal Taxonomy-Emerging Trends" held on 14th - 15th January 2005 at Sacred Heart College, Kochi. Seven papers have been published in 2004-2005 and four papers are accepted for publication. *Sponsored by Whitley Laing Foundation, UK; Oakland Zoo, USA*

ZOO's ZOO PROJECTS

Z.O.O. Education Officer conducts zoo visits to

evaluate our education programmes and materials and also to survey all levels of staff about various issues and what ZOO can do to assist them. All the zoos have highlighted help in education as the most needed help. In response to questions about the World Zoo Conservation Strategy, zoos replied that they could not conduct in situ conservation work in any other way than holding and breeding animals for reintroduction.

Therefore Zoo Outreach Organisation will spearheading an initiative in South Asia to assist all zoos in the South Asian region to find a variety of ways to contribute to *in situ* conservation, without the need of expensive captive breeding programmes or field projects. ZOO will encourage western zoos which take up *in situ* project to engage the local zoos in the state and find ways to utilize their local knowledge and their zoo venue for education and promotion of the project.

Z.O.O. and SAZARC will assist the North Carolina Zoo with its project at Kabul Zoo, by continuing to provide training and arranging zoo personnel from SAZARC to make occasional inspections and training visits.

Sponsor : N.C. Zoo Kabul Zoo Fund

Meetings

ZOO & WILD Staff (Manju Siliwal, Latha Ravikumar, B.A. Daniel and R. Marimuthu) represented Zoo Outreach Organisation at the Southern Regional Zoo Director's Meeting held in Trivandrum and the Western and Central Zoo Director's meeting held in Ahmedabad from 8-9 April 2005. S. Walker represented the South Asian Zoo Association and CBSG, South Asia at IADISC meeting. *Sponsored by Chester Zoo*

CBSG Meeting in Syracuse : Sally Walker and Sanjay Molur participated in the meeting representing CBSG South Asia.

Sally convened a Working Group at CBSG on Sub-standard Zoos and presented a statement from that group at the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums meeting of the Ethics and Welfare Committee and at the Regions meeting. WAZA created a Substandard Zoos Working Group to gather information and create a strategy for WAZA and its members to officially address this issue. The first meeting of many for this group will be held in Coimbatore in connection with the RSG/CBSG meeting and later at SAZARC.

CBSG RSG Joint Meeting: CBSG, South Asian/ RSG South & East Asia, Coimbatore, 28-30 November. Working Groups on Rehabilitation Guidelines (by Mike Jordan) Comensal Monkeys and other release issues preceding the Annual Conference of SAZARC 1-5 December 2005.



Substandard Zoos Working Group of WAZA : Paper trail of a much needed initiative

The “Other” zoo world — bad zoos and their impact : what is to be done

*Sally Walker, David Morgan & Yolanda Matamoros
(Presented at the 59th WAZA Conference, held in Costa Rica in 2003).*

There are a very large number of animal collections throughout the world which most people would call “zoos”. The “other” or unaffiliated zoo world refers to all zoos that are not in the communications loop of the organized zoo community which means the World Association of Zoos and Aquaria WAZA, and effective regional or national associations. “Effective” regional or national associations means those that work well in certain very important aspects of conservation, most particularly, planned breeding or zoo conservation but also relevant, high quality research and innovative, value-based, behaviour modifying public education.

The WAZA network represents only about 10% of them (200 individual WAZA members plus 16 regional zoo associations making up a further 800 individual institutions). A rapid survey of the known animal facilities of the world suggests that there may be as many as 10,000 of various size, quality, and type.

This paper is concerned with substandard zoos in “low currency / high biodiversity” countries only. We are aware that America, UK/Europe and Australia have their share of bad zoos and problems. However, the zoos in countries with devalued currency and many species seem to have more problems with less capacity to solve them.

It is not important whether all these animal facilities fit your definition of a zoo, but that the public, including animal welfare activists, etc. considers them zoos. Thus, they reflect on you, the aligned zoo community, who are trying to contribute to conservation in an ethical and efficient manner. Such collections are not, for the most part guided or constrained by any apparent scientific or ethical structure. They are estranged from the aligned zoo community, which is characterized by various international, regional and national codes of welfare, trade, quality and ethics and which emphasize high standards and conservation focus in breeding, research and education.

Some results of this estrangement include

- dependence on animal dealers of many types for animals to display and breed, which leads to further depletion of wild animals and disturbance of wild habitats;
- inadequate management either for conservation or welfare leading to a high death rate;
- wasted opportunities and wrong messages in the area of education and interpretation;
- being seen as having an “entertainment” function as opposed to anything else, a perception shared by the public, press, politicians and even, at times, other zoo professionals;
- lack of ability (financial or otherwise) to avail modern advances in animal management which deprives the institution of solutions to its many problems;

-- and many other – perhaps less tangible things having to do with ethics and “community” which are not so easy to describe or quantify but which affect an institution’s quality and effectiveness.

Not all unaffiliated zoos will fit this description but they are the exception that proves the rule. Likewise there are zoos which are affiliated with some regional and national associations that still do not come up to an appropriate standard of welfare and conservation.

It is important to recognize that many zoos are substandard because their administrators or personnel are unaware of the implications of their actions, uncaring due to lack of peer or governmental pressure, or even under pressure from their own administration which puts tourism, politics and economics ahead of ethics, animal welfare, and conservation. In many case it is because the financial and technical capacity to improve is not accessible. They are caught in a vicious circle of bad management for which there may be genuine reasons but nonetheless continues to consume animal resources and trash the image of effective zoos world wide. There are legitimate reasons for zoos in the “other” world not to be in the loop, as well as reasons why not all of the regional and national associations are “effective”.

WAZA and some of the organized regional and national zoo associations have made efforts to bring them into the organized zoo community, but these efforts are unsystematic, unsustainable, insufficient and too slow! The implications for conservation and welfare of wild animals and even for the image of zoos globally are very serious. The organized zoo associations of the world as well as their individual zoo members need to give far more attention to this problem and apply a systematic plan to assist their sister zoos.

The enormity of the task and the length of time required has been beyond the comprehension of the organized zoos, despite every wish on their part that all the world’s zoos would come together and adopt high standards of management. Before suggesting methods for tackling the problems generated by the existence of the other zoo world, let us look at a case study from South Asia.

The South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (SAZARC), founded in the year 2000, is the newest zoo association covering India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan. India has been extremely useful in providing good examples for the other zoos, as they are very much in process of regularizing their zoos. SAZARC has had three meetings (one of them with SEAZA), several interim visits, training, discussions with government officials and distribution of much literature advocating good values in zoo management.



Despite a strong focus on legitimate animal acquisition in the meetings, discussions and literature, most of the member countries' zoos with the exception of India (mostly) have not taken accepted that it is not constructive conservation to purchase animals from animal dealers. Four of the six participating countries routinely acquire the majority of their exhibits from local trappers or international traders. There is no value placed on not doing this; no peer pressure.

In many cases of acquisition from international dealers, the zoo director who sources the animals and places the order has very little powers of his own; these activities are initiated at a very high political and administrative level. The cost of obtaining exotic animals and transporting them is gargantuan, particularly when the fact of devalued currency is taken into consideration. In South Asia one unit of currency is roughly equivalent to one US dollar in wages. In the different countries the value of this unit ranges from about 45 up to 100. The Sri Lanka rupee is worth exactly one cent: 100 rupees makes \$1.00. Therefore to appreciate the cost of any international animal transaction for Sri Lanka, multiply by 100. Sri Lanka may pay \$3000.00 to transport an animal or to attend this WAZA meeting, but to their economy it is like \$300,000.

This lesson in low-currency country economics is to prove the power and pressure local, state and national governments put on zoo directors in these countries to obtain "interesting", "exotic", and "new" animals for people to see. Zoos are popular in these regions and politicians keep the entry fee low and otherwise try to please the public by obtaining exotic animals. It is almost unthinkable for a zoo director or even a zoo association to intervene successfully even if they want to very much. Only an autonomous government authority, such as the Central Zoo Authority in India, might have sufficient protection and influence and even CZA has to stand down when a powerful politician really wants something to take place.

Therefore, sanctions from WAZA towards an individual zoo or even a national or regional association for such acts is better directed towards government because the impetus, funds and approval came from there. These governments which are making wrongful orders for animals (gorillas, black rhino, cheetas, etc.) need to hear directly from the organized global zoo community.

Many of the zoos in these regions have the capacity to care for them well; there is no reason why the organized zoo community could not help them with surplus animals after ascertaining their standard of management and with caveats which might help the other zoos become more effective for conservation.

The organized global zoo community is committed to conservation and in the last decade is spending quite a lot of money on *in situ* conservation projects. Although this is unquestionably praiseworthy, we have to ask if it makes complete sense to do this while ignoring the conservation havoc being created by the "other" zoo world. A few ways these zoos undo all the good the good zoos do are :

- Over breeding and release of surplus animals without monitoring is surely destructive to wild animals and habitat – disease, fighting, over-population, over-grazing, etc.
- Waste of wild animal resources both animal and financial.
- Creating wrong attitudes in visiting public
- Projecting a bad image of zoos worldwide with poor animal welfare practices
- most of all, purchasing animals from international and regional dealers, other bad zoos, and local trappers/ traders.

Many of the "other" zoos of Africa, Asia and South America have numerous and very similar problems in their administration, economy, society and vocational culture. Some of these problems prevent them even from making a start towards sustainable, genetically and demographically healthy populations for their zoos. These problems have to be accepted, at least for some time, and ways found for helping the zoos, their regional zoo associations and their governments get together for better zoos. It can be done as we have examples of very good zoos and regional or national associations from such countries in this room. India has closed 140 of its bad zoos and applied stringent standards and inspection to the rest, which is a good example, but difficult to emulate.

It is very unlikely that these zoos will be closed. On the contrary, interest (the wrong kind) in having more and more zoos is growing, ironically, as fast as the number of conservation programmes on Discovery Channel or National Geographic ! The more publicity giving to conservation, the more interest in wildlife, and the interest (the wrong kind) in having zoos. The incidence of substandard zoos is only going to increase without sustained, systematic action to address it.

We suggest old solutions with new components. For some time organized individual zoos or groups of zoos have made attempts to partner with zoos and associations in the "other" zoo world. These gestures are well-meaning and potentially effective, but much more sustained effort and input is required for overall impact. These methods have not had a significant impact only because the interaction between these zoos and zoo personnel is too infrequent, too impatient for results, and too haphazard. A long-range, systematic and very carefully designed programme is required. Such a programme might have the following components :

- sponsorship of WAZA membership fee and costs for an appropriate representative's attendance at the WAZA Conference every year
- provision of guidance regarding zoo development, collection planning, staff training, animal management and enclosure design
- financial support for selected zoo programmes and infrastructure
- making available surplus animals from coordinated breeding programmes.

The contribution of the zoo partner could be such things :
- provision of zoo bred or otherwise legally obtained



animals to establish new species in the donor zoos or to improve the genetic viability of an existing breeding programme

- plants / seeds to its partner zoo for their tropical exhibits and supply of handicrafts for the zoo shop
- provision of information for landscaping of themed "natural habitat" exhibits of their country,
- provision of local knowledge and contacts for the initiation and implementation of *in situ* projects
- provision of relevant cultural instruction of their country to the organized zoo

We call for a sub-committee to be set up in WAZA to make a detailed, systematic plan with focus on building relationships between individuals as well as institutions. This programme might include all of the same elements so generously contributed over the years, some of which are described above, but with a few additions, such as :

- a longer-term commitment to a specific individual, institution or region,
- a clear picture of the situation from the beginning so that progress can be accurately monitored
- sustained and frequent interaction between partners
- individual Action Plans to fit varying levels of need and cultural situations,
- mutually decided, formal agreements which would help both parties to the partnership contribute usefully to it,
- interaction with governments so that the other zoos can improve and sustain the improvement without depending on continued aid from outside.

A couple of examples are :

Zoos in these countries need animals. Western zoos can provide some animals to the well-managed zoos with caveats that certain conditions be met. If this is arranged at a governmental level, one of the caveats could be that zoo legislation could be initiated, or if it is already there in some form, that individual taxon standards be added.

Zoos in these countries need exposure to good zoos and to committed and culturally sensitive zoo personnel.

Many zoos which sponsor projects in the wild are not involving the local zoo and maybe they have good reasons. The local zoo may not be interested or it may be so bad, there is reluctance to associate with it, but the right approach over time can rectify such problems and create enormous potential.

Zoo personnel and their governmental associates from these countries need to attend WAZA meetings. They can be invited as special guests to give presentations on their problems so that all may understand better how to help them not just with occasional hand-outs but for long term change.

As individual zoos in these countries improve they could attempt to help less fortunate zoos in their country and join with their association to strengthen zoo legislation so that their bad zoos could be closed. This programme could be linked to such commitments from the beginning and made a mandatory part of the interaction.

India has proven that this can be done although India had advantages for which some equivalent will have to be created – perhaps from outside – in most other countries.

Finally, the organized zoos are largely located in the western hemisphere where one expects overnight results. Gunther Nogge says "to work in Afghanistan, you need a long breath". Many of the low-currency/high biodiversity zoo countries are cultures which are thousands of years old and are on a different time line than industrialized countries. Much patience is required to sustain such projects.

In the western world we are proud to claim that "we say what we mean and mean what we say".

In eastern culture we are proud of our manners and that "we speak the truth that is sweet, not the truth that is not sweet."

Let us speak both languages here. The truth that is sweet is that we can turn the zoos of the world around. The truth that is not sweet is that we are not working hard enough at it.

WZACS is, or should be, for ALL Zoos or let's take the "Con" out of conservation **Sally Walker, Miranda Stevenson, Dave Morgan, Nick Lindsay, Published in ZOOS' PRINT Magazine, September 2005, pp. 6-8.**

The South Asian Zoo Association, a member of WAZA, has taken a very active role in trying to promote WZACS to South Asian zoos. We now have a special mission to promote the notion that ALL zoos, not just zoos with a surfeit of resources, and, at least, all those zoos that WANT to be ethical and caring and "righteous", need to be *active partners* in this movement.

Therefore, the interpretation of what WZACS says is very important. WZACS has adopted the IUCN definition of conservation which is "*Conservation is the securing of long-term populations of species in natural ecosystems and habitats wherever possible.*"

This definition is more or less what we often refer to as "field conservation" or "in situ conservation." How do zoos from our part of the world achieve that? When zoo

personnel continue to think that just by holding an animal they are "conserving" it, no matter where it came from (a trapper, dealer or a bad zoo), many zoos will see no problem. But there is a problem and the purpose of this article is to set right misguided thinking on this issue.

The environmental and wildlife crises which are taking place all over the world should suggest to all zoo, wildlife and environmental institutions that they should make the most of their their unique ability to promote awareness and lend whatever their expertise to the goal of protecting, renewing and/or sustaining habitat and the wildlife within.

The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy more or less defines conservation as "field conservation". According to Mirand Stevens in reviewing



this paper “. . . the reason for the emphasis on in-situ conservation in WZACS is two fold

(i) true conservation can only take place in the natural environment and therefore the ‘securing of long-term populations, etc. must be the long term goal of any programme

(ii) keeping animals in captive environments without this goal can hardly be considered conservation – more accurately this would be preservation only! Some preservation efforts (Pierre David’s deer, Pzwalski’s horse, etc.) started off as preservation and ended up as conservation, however zoos have been criticized by the anti-zoo lobby and even some conservationists for putting the “con” into conservation, and where a zoos claims to be doing conservation simply by holding a species – there is some justification for this criticism and, as Sally describes subsequently, buying animals from dealers and irresponsible breeding can be actually detrimental to conservation, as can keeping them in inadequate captive environments.”

WAZA is right to promote this definition. Keeping wild animals in institutions, when their habitat has been allowed to degrade and disappear, makes very little or no sense at all if they have no future as species. If all we wanted was a “biodiversity blood bank”, we could just take samples for a few “frozen zoos.” No, we want to save wild animals in their habitats and we want to save habitats as well. The presence of threatened wild animals in a locality can be used as a means of encouraging government to declare them as protected areas and of strengthening protected area networks all over the world.

Is it not the case that we want to utilize zoos/wild animal facilities in all their forms for conservation — national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, museums and botanical gardens and even rescue centers and animal orphanages ? Education in any of these, bolstered by effective interpretation, can create emotion along with awareness related to the environmental crisis so that people will be encouraged to change their behaviour. The current crisis has a chance of being stabilized only if most of the people in each locality of the world, understand it, feel its importance and change their behaviour. If the crisis can be stabilized, then there may be a way to turn it around.

The WZACS, in defining conservation as “field” or “in situ” conservation does not mean that zoos which are not wealthy enough or without sufficient infrastructure can’t participate. There are many ways to give support to field conservation besides breeding threatened species for release into the wild. Breeding — of the quality required for reintroduction — is a very difficult and delicate operation that may be beyond the ability of many of the worlds’ zoos and other animal facilities. Support to field conservation can be a variety of associated activities, such as

- re-orienting education programmes from biological emphasis to conservation values,
- organizing fundraising events or currency collection sites for specific field projects,

- sharing their many skills in daily animal handling and wildlife veterinary medicine
- conducting benign research on captive animals which will aid in understanding them in the wild
- advising field biologists and other field personnel who may be involved in reintroductions, etc.
- and many more ...

Or, again according to Miranda Stevenson “the caveat is ‘benefit’ species in the wild – and much captive management does this in a variety of different ways.

In addition to positive actions, however, supporting or ‘benefitting’ field conservation can also be achieved by curbing certain actions that are inimical to protecting and sustaining wild populations, such as :

- buying animals from dealers or other zoos who obtain them from the wild
- obtaining animals from any source without knowledge of how to breed them, without belonging to any coordinated breeding programmes, without knowing with certainty their taxonomic identity, without knowing their provenance
- Hybridizing animals, cross-breeding, over-breeding, inbreeding is also inimical to conservation.
- releasing animals into the wild without sufficient knowledge of their ability to survive, without knowing their health status (or ignoring it), without knowing fully the other fauna and flora in the release locality and the threats the release may create, both to released animals and to resident wildlife ...including plants.

Much of this is going on today with the full support of some governments and even under the direction of their Courts. Such activities can create disastrous problems which insure population decline of other taxa. ***For zoos (and governments) which permit, encourage or do these things, making a commitment to stop these actions is in itself a commitment to conservation of wildlife in the wild.***

Zoos which commit these actions are not wholly culpable when their state or municipale administration insists on transferring zoo officials frequently, obviating the possibility of their understanding the consequences of such actions for conservation. They are also not wholly to blame when their politicians and policy makers encourage them to obtain new animals at any cost just because the voting public wants to see exotic spectacles. And refusing politicians and policy makers what they want for their public can impact one’s career and all that entails for their family, etc. Nobody is judging zoo directors in this paper.

All of these things impact wildlife in the wild. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of everyone involved to educate those who are uninformed and to work towards an improved way of conducting their affairs.

Other than support for wildlife in the wild the second major principle of the WZACS is its emphasis on partnerships. No zoo is an island and when it comes to field conservation, hardly any organisation or institution make much of an impact alone. Partnering with forest departments, non-governmental organizations,



educational institutions, other zoos and animal facilities of different kinds, etc. can help zoos in any part of the world with their involvement in field conservation. Many zoos and conservation organisations in western countries have been giving very significant support to field conservation for several years. Sometimes these organisations come into our countries in South Asia to conduct a field project and do not even contact the local zoo. There is an initiative now (this also was suggested in WZACS, Chapter 7, Partnerships and Politics) for zoos with projects in localities where there is a zoo to engage the local zoo and its staff and see if there is any way in which they can collaborate on the project. One easy way is through education — the local zoo could highlight the field project in their education programme. The visiting zoo could probably help out by contributing some equipment, expertise, funds for printing, etc. The local zoo staff will know better how to communicate with people in the nearby field project and could be of help in that way.

We want to encourage the regions and countries whose zoos are not administratively, technically or financially in a position to run a field project themselves to find ways to contribute to field conservation with a partner or partners. The partner(s) can be from another country or region, or from your own country or locality. One of your partners will have to be the existing forest administration

due to local legislation and rules. Maybe there is some DFO (Divisional Forest Officer or equivalent) nearby you that has a small project that he can't implement alone.

The Bhilai Steel Plant Zoo made a policy decision that their zoo's primary mission would be conservation education. After his first CBSG and SAZARC meeting Ganesh Dubey, who heads that zoo, took up a very successful education project involving trade in wild parrots. Now, tell me THAT doesn't affect wildlife in the wild. The Chennai Snake Park Trust has also made such a commitment to conservation in education. So they are already carrying out the WZACS principles

Over the next few weeks and months, we will be working on a list of ways that ALL zoos can contribute to field conservation meaningfully. We would like to invite contributions of ideas and opinions (either for or against), examples or case studies. Please send your ideas and projects, even projects that you can't do but would like to, to <sallywalker@aol.com> or zooreach@vsnl.com.

Working together with guidance from WZACS and our partners, we can make a difference in conservation of wildlife in the wild. Some of what WZACS says about partnerships for in situ conservation can be read on the next page.

WAZA PAPER ABSTRACT Global Imperative — ALL Zoos contributing to Wildlife Conservation

**Sally Walker, Zoo Outreach Organisation / SAZARC and David Morgan, PAAZB
(Presented at the 61st Annual Conference of WAZA, New York, Oct 2005)**

There is a potential incongruity in the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy, which essentially defines conservation as *in situ* conservation, using the IUCN definition of "the securing of long-term populations of species in natural ecosystems and habitats wherever possible." While many zoos of the western or high currency countries (HCCs) of the world have some financial, material, or human resources for *in situ* or field conservation, many zoos in some low currency countries (LCCs) either do not have surplus funds, and/or are prohibited from giving where they might like to by their various financial and administrative regulations. They also may not hold expertise for contributing to *in situ* projects, or resources for effective education programmes promoting these projects. Furthermore, zoos in some LCCs may not have the requisite relationship with their wildlife field community and thus find involvement difficult due to local obstacles.

This seeming incongruity, however, can be turned into an opportunity, if HCC zoos with field conservation projects networked with and made greater attempts to engage LCC zoos. Several distinct objectives could be achieved. A relationship with a good zoo in an HCC could help raise the standard and status of a zoo in the country hosting an *in situ* project as a result of training, advisory services, direct help through small grants for education programmes, and occasional staff visits combined with visits to the project site. Also, it would provide the HCC zoo a means of becoming more familiar with the target country, learning more about its people, culture and governance, and doing a high profile public service to assist both zoo and wild. Linking their *in situ* project with a local zoo or zoos has tremendous potential for public education. Other ways of contributing would emerge as the institutions come to know one another. Such an approach would make it possible for the LCC zoos which lack the means to do so otherwise to contribute meaningfully to *in situ* conservation.



Substandard Zoo Initiative of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, aided by C.B.S.G.

S. Walker, D. Morgan, P. Dollinger, O. Byers, N. Maddison, K. Schwartz, I. Boardman, R. Ngwenya, B.R. Sharma⁹, K. Taylor-Holzer



In October 2005, at its 61st annual meeting, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) formulated an initiative to address the issue of substandard zoos, following some years of concern. Two events facilitated this action step:

First, Ed McAlister, WAZA President and Chair of WAZA's Welfare and Ethics Committee, along with David Jones, Director of North Carolina Zoo, reported a recent visit to Japan in collaboration with the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). The visit involved inspection of numerous shockingly substandard bear facilities and interaction with their owners and managers. The facilities were illustrated in a short film clip which was run later at the WAZA plenary.

Second, the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG), following a discussion of the topic at their annual meeting, presented WAZA with a statement of solidarity for the initiative :

"We as a community of staff and friends of organized zoos have a moral, ethical and professional responsibility to engage with poorly maintained animal collections in order to help them improve their standards, achieve conservation goals and benefit the animals they hold."

The operant word in the statement is "engage" meaning personal contact, as in the instance of Ed McAlister and David Jones visiting Japan and spending time with the owners, directors and governmental officers related to the bear facilities. Substandard zoos need attention and care by knowledgeable and concerned people with the capacity for compassion, and for patience with the governing authorities and staff running these facilities. In many ways they may be as "captive" and helpless in their administrative constraints and lack of awareness and expertise as the animals they keep so badly.

Not all bad zoos are run by bad people, or even bad governments. Therefore, it has been found that in many instances the infusion of information and training, judiciously delivered, has led to a complete about-face in the community or country of these substandard institutions.

The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy WZACS itself suggests that zoos with means and expertise should assist less well-resourced zoos, particularly while working on an *in situ* project in a country which has substandard zoos. It says in Chapter 7 of WZACS that "institutions conducting field projects

should make every effort to include, where practicable, local zoos and aquariums in the project. Such ties will help the local institutions to promote understanding and contribute to the sustainability of local wildlife management." The Strategy goes on to comment even that "it is not appropriate for a well-resourced zoo or aquarium involved in a field project to ignore or snub poorly maintained or under-resourced animal institutions in the region. Well resourced institutions should attempt to work with local institutions to improve their standards and capabilities."

According to a variety of WAZA documents, substandard zoos are zoos that

- either do not meet the legislated codes for animal welfare of their respective countries, or,
- if such codes are inadequate, or in the absence of such codes, do not keep their animals in enclosures of such size and volume, and being structured and containing such equipment, as to allow the animals to express their natural behaviour, and
- do not meet the basic principles described in the WAZA Code of Ethics and Animal Welfare.

In the CBSG meeting the substandard zoos group discussed the issue and made the following points:

- **There are substandard zoos all over the world.** Substandard zoos in developed or "High Currency Countries" (HCCs) such as the United States, Europe and Australia are *more* culpable than zoos of Asian, African or South American countries because the former have access to and probably knowledge of an organized zoo community where they could get information, help, etc. Substandard zoos in wealthy countries theoretically could purchase the equipment, special food and medicine, and required expertise for good zoo management far more easily than zoos in developing countries.
- **Substandard zoos in Low Currency Countries (LCCs)**, however, do not have the same kind of access. They need help even to find out where to purchase some important material. They have to pay three times the price for books, drugs, certain equipment not available in their country, (basic cost, postage, and customs duty) in addition to the cost-expansion which goes along with the low unit rate that their currency means in comparison to HCCs.
- **Emerging zoo associations provide a framework for action.** Now, the development of stronger-based



regional and national zoo associations in Latin America, South Asia, South East Asia and Africa provide a framework and platform for the global community to tackle the substandard issue, as well as a vehicle to work through in these or nearby regions.

- The “solution” to the “substandard zoo” problem is not just closing zoos.

Although some zoos surely should be and will be closed, it has been found that closing zoos leads to other problems such as *what to do with the animals*. In substandard zoos many of the animals are not viable for exhibit or breeding (surely not for release) and even those which are, are often common surplus and not wanted by other zoos. Many zoos in some countries simply release any surplus animals and animal welfare persons are doing this with confiscated animals. This creates problems for conspecifics in the wild, for habitat; it also leads to human animal conflict. So, improving zoos, whenever possible, is a better option in most cases, although it may not always be possible.

Different countries have evolved different solutions for substandard or marginal zoos, ranging from ignoring them entirely to strong legislation. Switzerland, for example, has detailed legislation, providing for standards, inspections, closure of zoos. The Federal Veterinary Office has produced checklists, and a great number of enclosures - even in big zoos - had to be adjusted or the animals given away, and a few facilities were closed down. EU countries also have produced similar legislation prior to or as a consequence of the EU Zoo Directive. Australia has very detailed standards with guidelines for different taxon groups and the United Kingdom also. In the United States there is no zoo legislation as such but there are laws which loosely cover people keeping wild animals which differ from state to state. In the USA, the American Zoo and Aquarium Association has a rigorous inspection and standard to be “recognised” by the association which seems to take the place of legislation for those zoos which are organised enough to apply. A recent estimate put the number of non-AZA accredited wild animal facilities in the United States at 2000 however, many of them being no more than “roadside attractions” consisting of a few miserable animals.

In the so called developing or Low Currency Countries of the world, the LCCs, India is the model, as the only LCC which has created legislation for inspecting, evaluating, assisting or, when appropriate, closing zoos. Central Zoo Authority of India has closed over 100 zoos in the last decade and is thus the world expert in the very difficult task of disposition or placement of homeless or “zooless” animals.

Thus, the call to action by WAZA, enthusiastically supported by IUCN SSC CBSG, is not only timely but imperative, and that is because of the dramatic conservation, education and public relations impact of substandard zoos.

Impact of Substandard Zoos

WZACS essentially defines conservation as *in situ* conservation, using the IUCN definition, e.g., “*the securing of long term populations of species in natural ecosystems and habitats wherever possible.*”

Accordingly, substandard zoos, particularly in Low Currency/ High Biodiversity countries not only do not contribute to sustainability of local wildlife management, but actually contribute to extinction. These zoos have to curtail their bad management practices in order to stop this contribution to extinction.

Despite much concern by WAZA and others in the zoo community over the last few years and helpful actions by individual zoos over many years, there has been no definitive position statement or systematic strategy for addressing these issues within the organized zoo community. Now, however, a subcommittee/working group, exists to respond to this issue. First, much background work needs to be done. Among other things, such as looking at what has been done before with what results, substandard zoos need to be assessed as to whether:

- a. they want, and would benefit by, engagement, information, training, mentoring; or
- b. they require intervention to engage their authority or government; or
- c. they need some emergency support and then “a” or;
- d. they need to be closed; and finally
- e. if there is desire, interest, and willingness to be helped.

Such knowledge will help to develop a strategic plan.

For western countries, helping zoos in high biodiversity countries is a way of giving something back. Good zoos have those countries’ animals drawing visitors to their institutions. Substandard zoos in high biodiversity countries are often the ONLY place where local people see living wild animals – they NEED zoos too.

The better zoos in LCC or developing countries may also help substandard zoos, and there are some precedents. In Pakistan the Lahore Zoo has given assistance to the Pakistani Hyderabad Zoo. In Bangladesh, the Dhaka Zoo donated animals to some of the smaller zoos and trained them to look after them. Also, Dhaka Zoo hosts staff of the smaller zoos in Bangladesh whenever they get visiting experts for training.

***In situ* conservation**

The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy and Substandard Zoos has called upon all zoos to get involved in *in situ* conservation. The Strategy is meant to apply to ALL zoos, but can “range country” zoos and substandard zoos contribute to *in situ* conservation? We believe that “good” zoos in range countries *can* definitely contribute although it is more difficult for them for a variety of local reasons — political, territorial, administrative and economic.



In implementing *in situ* conservation WZACS specifically suggests working with local zoos ...yet, many "local zoos" are not very good, so why and how ? Well, if they are indeed contributing to extinction by bad management practices, then *helping these zoos improve their ethics, standards and manner of operation or encouraging their governments to close them is itself an important conservation action.*

Animal Welfare groups

In the past, animal welfare groups have been very active in ferreting out and complaining about substandard zoos. In many instances, this is helpful as no one really knows where and how many bad zoos there are and every one identified and listed can be helped either to improve or to close.

The problem with animal welfare groups, however, is the same as with zoos, e.g. there are good ones and bad ones. Some of the animal welfare groups are serious, sensible, scientific and practical. They can distinguish between a good zoo and a bad zoo, a good zoo with some not-so-good enclosures, etc. These groups sometimes can be very helpful in encouraging a government to provide funds for improving the bad enclosures or the whole zoo or closing it. However, there are animal rights organisations for which all zoos are bad and their belief is that all should be closed and the animals released back to the wild! This is not helpful, least of all to the poor animals which could not survive if released back to the wild.

The challenge in addressing the issue of substandard zoos is to find ways and means bring different groups together and work towards common goals. The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy encourages partnerships between different groups to realise common goals of conservation and animal welfare. The WAZA Code of Ethics is strong in its insistence on zoos making conservation its highest priority but not at the expense of causing undue suffering of animals in captivity.

Conservation, however, with its need for fit and healthy animals is itself a reliable framework for animal welfare. It is hard to imagine many instances where long term conservation of species and the well-being of animals would be in conflict.

Some animal welfare advocates often learn to distrust zoos by seeing substandard zoos and concluding that all zoos are the same. In decades past, perhaps zoos as a community were not as united either in conservation or in animal welfare as they are today. The development of awareness and sensitivity to conservation and animal welfare issues has made a quantum leap. Only the most extreme and critical animal rights advocate could find much to target the WZACS or the WAZA Code of Ethics.

Partners for good zoos

Good zoos do far more good than harm and closing all zoos would usher in unthinkable cruelty to the animals housed there, unprepared for life in the wild and undeserving of life in an animal welfare rescue centre. The only way forward is to improve the substandard zoos that can be improved and close those which simply cannot be improved. Both zoo personnel and animal welfare advocates will agonise over whether a life of confinement in a sterile rescue centre is preferable to a quick and painless death for some unfortunate animals which can't be placed, but these difficult decisions must be made.

The over-riding issue is that the problem of substandard zoos is bigger than any single community or profession can solve alone. Zoo professionals, the welfare community, wildlife and other governmental agencies, conservation groups, etc. all must work together for a common good.

WAZA has taken a giant step in initiating this project. It is up to all of us to help it succeed.

So let's help ...

The current CBSG / RSG Joint meeting for which this Newsletter has been published is the first public forum of this important initiative of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. We are very proud indeed to introduce this initiative here so that a group of people from the developing world can be the first to discuss and debate how to go about tackling the problem of substandard zoos.

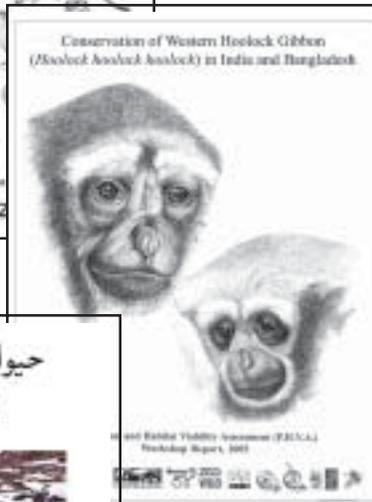
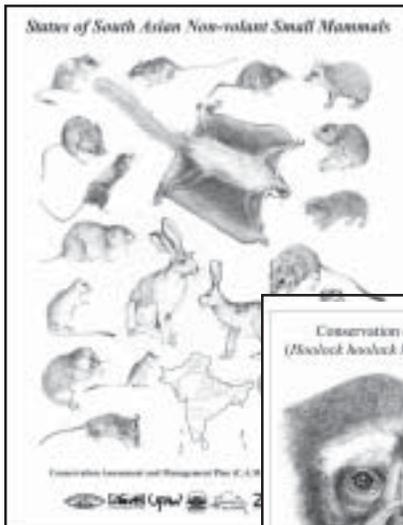
We hope to have two working groups, one in the CBSG/RSG meeting and one at the SAZARC meeting. A group could select one aspect of the problem to discuss if they wanted (such as the problem of surplus and confiscated animals specifically in zoos which are often released inappropriately and without proper health screening, behaviour modification or other preparation), or the problem in general or any of the sticky issues ... such as "how bad is bad? what is good? what is the essential standard -- animal welfare, impact on wild populations, effect on visitors -- all of those, none ?

The number and variety of substandard zoos in the world probably exceeds the number of good zoos. Zoo directors attending this conference should perhaps first look at their own institutions and try to clean up the bad patches as a first step. Then, we hope, zoos of this region will take up a project under Zoo Outreach Organisation and SAZARC to address the issue in its own region and share our findings with the larger initiative.



2005 publications of ZOO/CBSG South Asia

1. Sanjay Molur, Sally Walker, Anwarul Islam, Phil Miller, C.Srinivasulu, P.O. Nameer, B.A. Daniel and Latha Ravikumar (Editors) (2005). *Conservation of Western Hoolock Gibbon (Hoolock hoolock hoolock) in India and Bangladesh*. Zoo Outreach Organisation/ CBSG-South Asia, Coimbatore, India, 132pp.
2. Sanjay Molur, C.Srinivasulu, Bhargavi Srinivasulu, Sally Walker, P.O. Nameer, Latha Ravikumar (Editors) (2005). *Status of South Asian Non-Volant Small Mammals: Conservation Assessment and Management Plan (C.A.M.P.) Workshop Report*. Zoo Outreach Organisation/ CBSG-South Asia, Coimbatore, India, 618pp.
3. Khushal Habibi (2005). *Mammals of Afghanistan in Dari Version*. Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, India, 223pp.
4. WAZA (2005). *Building a Future for Wildlife - The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy*. South Asian Version printed by Zoo Outreach Organisation and South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation
5. Poster on South Asian Primates
6. Poster on Dancing Bears
7. Education Packets on :
 - a. Plants for Life; b. Bears on the Road.... Not in the Forest; c. Revised Bear Packet; d. Hoolock Gibbon



CBSG, South Asia

CBSG, South Asia is a regional network of the IUCN SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group whose main office is located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. The CBSG regional and national network initiative originated in India with CBSG, India started by Zoo Outreach Organisation with the kind permission of Dr. U.S. Seal, late Chairman of CBSG. Today CBSG, India has been amalgamated into CBSG, South Asia which covers all the South Asian countries. There are many national and regional networks -- Indonesia, MesoAmerica, Mexico, Southern Africa, Japan, Europe, Brazil -- all working for conservation action in their own way and at their own pace.

CBSG, South Asia is funded by Global Conservation Network (GCN), USA and the Chester Zoological Gardens, UK. CBSG, South Asia projects get funding from a wide variety of zoos and conservation organisations throughout the world. This newsletter and meeting have been covered by funds from Chester Zoo and CBSG.

CBSG Newsletter is published occasionally but news of CBSG South Asia can be found throughout ZOOS' PRINT magazine.

This issue has been published on the occasion of the Annual Joint Meeting of CBSG, South Asia and RSG South and East Asia held in Annaikati, Coimbatore, India and the Annual Conference of the South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation. November - December 2005. *Sally Walker, Editor and Convenor, CBSG, South Asia*