

Heini Hediger Award Citation

*Peter Dollinger, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, Doctor of Philosophy
Executive Director of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums*

Let it be known to those assembled here today at this the 63rd Annual Conference of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums held in Adelaide, Australia and kindly hosted by Zoos South Australia, that Dr Peter Dollinger DVM, PhD has been selected to receive WAZA's highest honour, the Heini Hediger Award. This is named after the very distinguished Swiss zoo director Professor Heini Hediger, founder of the science of zoo biology.

Peter Dollinger, a Swiss National, began his zoo career at a remarkably early age. While a high school pupil he became a volunteer keeper at Basel Zoo, already showing great promise. A born natural historian, he rapidly developed an affinity with zoos, serving as a Scientific Assistant at Mulhouse Zoo, France and Zurich Zoo, Switzerland between 1968 and 1971. This was in parallel with his postgraduate veterinary studies, including in the field of parasitology. In these and other aspects he has achieved great academic distinction nationally and internationally, publishing many acclaimed papers in peer reviewed scientific journals.

His professional excellence coupled with an extraordinary eye for detail and an outstanding capacity for hard work was soon recognised. This quickly led to a senior appointment from 1971-1973 as Head of the Diagnostic Laboratory at the Institute of Parasitology, University of Zurich where clinical tests covered both animal and human medicine. In 1974 he further broadened his portfolio and joined the Swiss Federal Veterinary Service to become the Border Veterinarian at Basel, moving on to an appointment as the Veterinary Officer at the Division for International Traffic concerning animals and animal products. In 1976 he was promoted to become the Head of the Endangered Species Service, later serving between 1986 and 2001 as the Director of the Division for International Traffic, which was eventually transformed into the Division of Permits and Inspections. All of these important and highly responsible posts with a growing international element instilled in Peter a great love and concern for animals worldwide in the context of welfare, conservation and the associated scientific, veterinary and regulatory processes.

WAZA was indeed fortunate to secure the services of the multi-talented Peter Dollinger. On a generous secondment from the Swiss Federal Veterinary Service, he was employed from October 2001 as our first Chief Executive Officer. Peter established our foundation headquarters in Bern, Switzerland and with extraordinary energy and diligence transformed the administrative, scientific, conservational and educational capabilities of the entire organisation. He rapidly built up our membership and funding base, developing many WAZA products including a wide range of publications both scientific and popular; even extending into the hitherto neglected area of zoo marketing. He initiated comprehensive website services and a very successful WAZA branding exercise for

conservation projects. This includes excellent support for the WAZA/IUCN Amphibian Ark and its associated Year of the Frog Campaign of 2008.

He has organised, contributed to, recorded, edited and published the outputs from very many conferences on behalf of WAZA and also the wider zoo community and is a founder member of the European Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians. On behalf of WAZA and many other stakeholders, Peter has served most ably over many years on numerous high-level international delegations concerning, for example, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the International Whaling Commission (IWC). Space will not here permit a complete account of Dr Peter Dollinger's remarkable career and outstanding contributions and the foregoing text constitutes only some examples of his many activities and achievements. It is felt to be particularly appropriate that Peter should gain this award because he actually new and studied under Professor Hediger.

As President of WAZA and on behalf of Council and the Membership, I Gordon McGregor Reid, take great pleasure in giving you Dr Peter Dollinger the Heini Hediger Award. This is in recognition of a life-long commitment and service to veterinary science, zoos, animal welfare, statutory regulation and global conservation.

**Gordon McGregor Reid BSc, PhD, DSc, FIBiol
President of the World Association of Zoos and
Aquariums, Adelaide, October 2008**

