Associations Meeting I
14 October 2013, Seabrook Room, Disney Conference Center

Sally Walker, WAZA Associations Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

Facilitators: Jörg Junghold, WAZA President and Sally Walker, WAZA Associations Chair
Recorder: Miranda Stevenson
Attendees: Listed end of report

A meeting of association chairs and others interested was scheduled on 14 October to discuss pending issues. There was a change in programme by Jörg Junghold to discuss advancement of zoo associations working more together in the future, in order to be more effective and avoid alleged competition. This was the result of a futures workshop entitled ‘Global Zoo Community’ that had been held prior to the WAZA council meeting and attended by invited directors and carefully selected chairs of the national/regional associations.

Some interesting and controversial issues were discussed during this meeting including methods of improving communication and cooperation and better branding. It was decided that a one-day workshop would be held sometime in 2014, possibly before the next WAZA meeting. In the meantime the National/Regional Associations need to discuss this further with their respective boards.

Associations Meeting II
17 October 2013, Seabrook Room, Disney Conference Center

This meeting picked up the issues which were not discussed on 14 October and had been pending for some time.

First on the Agenda there was a talk about the WAZA Decade of Biodiversity by Dr. Tiago, Education Director of WAZA. Tiago began the meeting by bringing the Association Presidents, Chairs and other attendees up to date about the the prestigious WAZA Decade of Biodiversity project, a brainchild of Dr. Gerald Dick, Executive Director, WAZA. Tiago explained how to locate the materials and suggestions available from the WAZA website. He also explained that the materials are limited for use to WAZA members and also members of associations that are WAZA members. In the case of the latter they must use them with the regional/national association logo not the WAZA logo.

Discussion of suggested and pending issues

1. Individuals and organizations for and against zoos: discussion on which associations are having these problems and how they are dealing with them. The US have IDA and PETA. IDA focus on anti-zoo members in city councils to get their agenda heard. This is particularly true of elephant issues. CAZA have the Born Free Foundation BFF Canada; they tried to stop elephant moves. In Europe, BFF have launched a campaign against all solitary elephants. It was suggested that we may need an elephant centre in Europe like the one in Florida, USA. A survey of these organizations and their modus operandi would be useful including identification of the networks.

Lesley Dickie reiterated the case of the solitary elephant in a Romanian Zoo, which resulted in her receiving personal abusive emails. She produced a fact sheet
which was sent to the ‘saner’ emails. There followed a
discussion on whether to respond to such emails or not. Drive fishery
problem has been targeted by some groups and they have
identified WAZA as the body that can sort this out. They are claim-
ing that WAZA is supporting the hunt. Eight thousand emails in
one week were received on this. Social media is frequently used,
e.g. friends, on some abused animals. However, there are
differences between countries, e.g., Sweden does not actually
have an anti-zoo problem, but zoo standards are high in Sweden.
There was a discussion on the strategy of actually joining these
groups, and talking to them. In Brazil they are also having
problems with elephants but it is sometimes not a good idea to talk
to the groups as they have fixed and immovable ideas. Animal
Rights organizations often just want money and these campaigns
raise funds. It is essential to know the organization that you are
dealing with and how ingrained their anti-zoo stance actually is
e.g. RSPCA, BFF and CAPS. CAPS are trying to link to other
European Associations.

It is a good idea to be out front and proactive, e.g. explain why
you feed whole goats to your animals and why it is good for
them (Landau). In France the Zoo Association went directly to the
government about the ENDCAP report on French Zoos. It is a
good strategy to partner with the ‘good’ welfare group e.g. EAZA
work with Eurogroup. They managed to get the wording of a
letter changed through this relationship.

In Australasia the RSPCA will endorse the accreditation system
of ZAA. However, this is not true in every country, sometimes there
is not a group you can align with. There is a big problem in Germany
with Animal Rights Groups and the development of standards for
zoos. In the past we may not have taken some of these groups
seriously enough, in Germany they have considerable political
lobbying influence.

2. Organizational structure:
It was agreed that this issue would be better done by
communication and then put on the web site. Action: Sally Walker
to coordinate information already sent.

3. Euthanasia: there are
considerable national legislative
and cultural differences. In
Sweden they can breed and cull. It is important to be honest and
open and not lie about it. Also we need to be honest about the
alternatives to euthanasia – we need to be much more open about
the breed and cull issue to the public. Basel Zoo euthanized two
lion cubs with no adverse public reaction. There was a general
feeling that you have to be consistent and honest, and do not
ruin all reindeer in December! There are differences in perception
between species: apes and antelope for example. We also
need to be honest about the negative effects of contraception.

In the US there is a strong anti-
culling response; they prefer
contraception. Disney also has
culling problems when managing
nature reserves belonging to the
company as it has to protect its
image. There is also the issue that
most people don’t understand the
difference between ethics and
welfare. The example was give of
two male macaques that were
ethanized at Newquay Zoo – the
Sparticus effect can be very
important in these instances; it is
very important that the zoo
community provides support when
these issues arise. Kolkata zoo
had a very old lion/leopard hybrid
and there were complaints about
its condition, this time the animal
welfare lobby insisted on
ethanasia. It was stressed how
important it is to get good papers
into peer reviewed journals and a
reference list on the WAZA website
would be a useful resource. We
need to work with veterinary
associations over this issue. It was
noted that EAZA are hiring an
animal welfare officer who might
collate these documents. It was
noted that some organizations
have a euthanasia policy, EAZA,
ZAA, AZA.

Action: please send to Sally Walker
who will coordinate these and
make them available.

4. Animals in shows: There is a
problem in the use of the generic
term show – as it has circus
notations. Animal training
sessions – education
demonstration etc are better
terms. It was noted that the
content was very important.

Action: associations to share any
policy documents they have on
this.

AOB
Phrase ‘animals in captivity’ can we find another term?
Suggestions were: animals in
human care, animals in zoological
settings. There are also problems
with the impression given by the
word ‘sanctuary’ over ‘zoo’.

SW thanked everyone for coming
and contributing. She will produce
minutes and requests attendees to
please send their policy/policies on
organizational structure,
euthanasia and animal shows to
her as decided in the workshop so
these can be circulated to all
Chairs.

Note from Chair: In future
meetings, I will not serve as
Associations Chair but will
participate in my capacity as
SAZARC Director. I appreciate the
help, support and friendship from the
Associations Chairs.

Participant List (next page)
Names of Participants attending open meetings of the WAZA Associations Committee

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Yolanda Matamoros, Director, Fundazoo, <info@fundazoo.org>

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Chris Hibbard, Executive Director, Zoo Aquarium Association Australia, <chris@zooaquarium.org.au>

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