

# Review of CBSG South Asia, RSG South Asia Annual Meeting 2009

The 6th Annual CBSG RSG South Asia Meeting was conducted at the Palm Beach Hotel, Mt. Lavinia on 9-10 February 2009. It was organised by Zoo Outreach Organisation and hosted by the National Zoological Gardens, Dehiwala, Colombo, Sri Lanka and Ministry of Sports and Public Recreation, Government of Sri Lanka. It was sponsored by the Chester Zoo/North of England Zoological Society, UK, Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, UK, the Ministry of Sports and Recreation, Sri Lanka, and the Department of National Zoological Gardens, Sri Lanka. Resource persons were from UK and participants came from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

Sally Walker, Convenor, CBSG South Asia and Sanjay Molur, Chair, RSG South Asia facilitated the meeting. The main thematic material of the CBSG RSG meeting were the presentations by Mike Jordan, representing the IUCN SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group, entitled Considerations in releasing animals - some IUCN Fundamentals and Southern Ground Hornbill (*Bucorvus cafer*) Reintroduction, and Miranda Stevenson representing IUCN SSC Conservation Breeding specialist Group covering a wide range of CBSG activities in the past year.

Following these presentations we had a brainstorming session for topics to be discussed at working groups, using CBSG Ground Rules for Group Interaction. Topics suggested were

**Vulture conservation and the vulture crisis**  
**Small mammals reintroduction**  
**Amphibian reintroduction and strategy**  
**Strategy for small forest fragments**  
**Management of excess population in zoos**  
**Human/elephant conflict**  
**Translocation as a solution for problematic animals**  
**Training and interpretation needs for zoos**  
**Signage**  
**Animal exchange**  
**Site selection for reintroduction**  
**Global climate change and its impact**

We prioritized the topics as a group to Small mammals reintroduction, Global climate change, and Human/Animal conflict. The reports of these groups follow this review.

A new style newsletter for both CBSG and RSG was brought out for this meeting and given to every participant along with a folder, some stickers, a pad and pen. The Newsletter covered activities of CBSG and RSG, South Asia over the last year, a list of invitees, Ground Rules of CBSG for working groups, various reports of international activities, and two long articles, one for the theme of SAZARC taken from the UK Zoos Forum and another for both CBSG and RSG, that is a portion of the Draft Report of the work CBSG South Asia and RSG South Asia has been doing on the highly threatened species, the Hoolock



Gibbon. The latter article has been reprinted here in ZOOS' PRINT to complement the emphasis on CBSG and RSG South Asia in this issue.

The Hoolock Gibbon "story" illustrates how effective the collaboration between CBSG and RSG can be and how powerful. The CBSG processes are scientific in nature and uphold the conservation perspective of academics, biologists, veterinarians, sociologists, zoos, foresters, wildlife experts and others. The first page of the article relates how a series of CBSG processes and activities including conservation education drove the development of one event after another which has led in turn to the development of a greater level of expertise and sophistication among the foresters and biologists of NE India and Bangladesh with regard to the delicate operation that we call translocation. Therefore this account profiles both CBSG and RSG in an ongoing, practical and potentially successful project. See the story after the CBSG RSG Working Groups entitled *How CBSG, South Asia works holistically for Hoolock Gibbon* for details.

The CBSG RSG South Asian meeting tries to follow the lead of CBSG SSC, RSG SSC and WAZA. The working groups selected by the whole group reflect the interests of all these organisations which are so much of interest to zoo and wildlife people.

Zoo Outreach Organisation hosts both CBSG and RSG for South Asia as well as several taxon and thematic networks which match up with the IUCN SSC taxon specialist groups. For example, the Amphibian Network of South Asia represents the IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group in South Asia. Another example is the educator network SAN-IZE which represents the International Zoo Educators Association with over 200 members in South Asia. Therefore when CBSG and WAZA created Amphibian Ark (AArk) ZOO (and WILD) were well equipped to participate ... we had amphibian biologists for *in situ* conservation, SANIZE for amphibian conservation education, and experience in organising for training both *in situ* and *ex situ* learners.

Likewise, we try throughout CBSG, RSG and SAZARC to have presentations which showcase the major issues taken up by CBSG and WAZA. We hope this combination will enrich your knowledge of global conservation issues and some of the many aspects of these two specialist groups.