

CBSG Annual Meeting, New Delhi, 30 October – 2 November, 2014

The 35th Annual meeting of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) hosted by the Central Zoo Authority was held at New Delhi, India. The theme of the meeting was 'Application of the one plan approach in India and beyond'. The One Plan approach is to enhance global collaboration and communication in all aspects of species conservation planning and implementation, to accelerate the evolution of species conservation planning tools, and to contribute significantly to achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The three days contained many examples of conservation in action around the world, including conservation of gyps vultures in India, linking *in situ* and *ex situ* efforts in greater one-horned rhino conservation, and the focus on integrated conservation in Indian zoos.

The participants met in working groups to discuss some of the key issues facing zoo community and the wildlife. The highlights of the working groups are:

IUCN Asian Species Action Partnership (ASAP)

The group identified potential flagship/ambassador species that could be used to promote ASAP and discussed processes for developing and marketing ASAP more effectively for greater zoo and aquarium engagement.

Species Conservation Toolkit Initiative (SCTI)

Working group members were introduced to, and invited to provide input on, this initiative. The purpose of the SCTI is to: develop and support the next generation of population modeling tool developers; continue the evolution of VORTEX; and

drive ongoing innovation of metamodeling tools for comprehensive, integrated assessments of the many threats affecting wildlife.

IUCN Guidelines

Three working groups received overviews on the application of some new or recently revised IUCN guidelines for reintroduction, *ex situ* management, and wildlife health. A fourth group provided input on the guidelines on management of confiscated animals (currently under revision).

India's National Conservation Breeding Program

This group discussed the main features of the Central Zoo Authority's collaborative conservation breeding program, a joint venture of *in situ* and *ex situ* wildlife managers. The discussion revolved around the policy framework, CZA's strategy towards conservation breeding of endangered species, the prioritization of the species, and the status and barriers to success of the program.

Dysfunctional Zoos

Critical components of a "good zoo"—such as an environment that is safe for animals, staff and visitors, basic record keeping, an animal collection plan, and a sound financial plan—were identified, as were the steps required to achieve this standard.

The participants were enjoying Delhi in the evenings in spite of their productive days. The traditional Gujarat dancing and viewing sound and light programme at the Red Fort was really mind-blowing.



CBSG Working Groups Summary Reports

CBSG and Conservation Genetics Specialist Group collaboration.

Participant List

Jonathan Ballou, B.A. Daniel, Danny De Man, Dennis Kelly, Keerthi Krutha, Sonja Luz, Mir M. Mansoor, R. Marimuthu, Paul Pearce-Kelly, Craig Pugh, Kazu Takami, S.C. Sharma, Sarhid Sood, Kumiko Yoneda

Summary of the working group

The Conservation Genetics Specialist Group (CGSG) was formed in 2014. CBSG and the CGSG will provide assistance to each other and collaborate on joint initiatives, and it will be valuable for the CBSG community to provide input at this early stage of development of this Specialist Group. This working group was an opportunity to discuss what this input might consist of, and to consider areas of potential synergy between the two Specialist Groups.

Group Questions

- Are there any concerns about the establishment of the CGSG?
- What issues would the CBSG community want to see the CGSG tackle? What can they do for us (within reasonable limits)?
- How can CGSG and CBSG work together on issues of mutual interest and concern?

The working group produced a list of non-prioritized points related to all three of these questions.

There were several concerns, including the importance of having good geographic representation in the CGSG to cover global needs and the desire to make sure CBSG tools remain within CBSG and partners, and not transferred to CGSG.

The group identified topics upon which the CGSG can provide support to CBSG, including the need for forensic genetics (captive and wild), building capacity and understanding of the power and limitations of the new genomics tools; guidance on hindrances to implementing conservation genetics actions (such as regulatory, property rights, etc.), guidance on managing meta-populations, and help with sorting out taxonomic uncertainty.

CBSG and CGSG can work together by identifying a liaison "team" that would be member of both CBSG and the CGSG, plan occasional back-to-back meetings, identifying a few specific projects for a CBSG-CGSG collaborative effort, reciprocal exchange of newsletters and other forms of communication, and have CGSG review and input on conservation plans facilitated by CBSG.

Bob Lacy will pass these issues on the chairs of the CGSG.

Climate Reality Community Conservation Package

Participant List

Convenor: Madelon Willemsen; Facilitator: Onnie Byers, Note takers: Jo Gipps, Martina Anandam. Yara Barros, Martin Bauert, Frands Carlsen, Bryan Carroll, Mark Craig, B.A. Daniel, R. Brawin Kumar, Lena Linden, Rachel Lowry, R. Marimuthu, Paul Pearce-Kelly, Stephanie Sanderson

Background

Madelon Willemsen led the pro-bono development of a creative idea by GPY&R / WPP to assist the Zoos and Aquariums community in collectively communicating climate action to their visitors and wider audiences. This is a potential new initiative and component of the Zoos and Aquariums for 350 climate change movement launched in 2013. This creative idea links animals and species directly to man-made climate change. It highlights how humans are the cause, but that they can also make a change for the better: "It's our story. Help us to write a better ending". The idea and the accompanying materials were shared with working group members for their input and consideration.

Working group outcomes

The creative idea was supported in theory by the working group participants. Furthermore it was agreed that this opportunity should not be missed as the community normally does not have access to such 'costly' opportunities. The group agreed that the idea should be shared and presented to determine if zoos and aquariums around the world would be interested and willing to adopt this concept.

The general Z&A community should be engaged and involved in the development of a visitor based climate action initiative to realize the full benefits and potential of the creative idea. The materials are gorgeous and compelling. While a great deal of work has already gone into creating these materials, they are in draft form adaptable to the needs of the Z&A community, so that we can ensure they work perfectly with the refined purpose of the project and so that others can have input into and ownership of the final product. As part of this conceptual campaign it was agreed that just creating awareness is not enough and asking people to change their behavior is important but should not as such be key of this campaign as other campaigns are already doing this.

Actions: Network – establish and secure support of Z&A organisations and link with current campaigns Determine partners / participants; Develop campaign strategy / plan; Creative assets; Platform to register support – where can one register interest or support/ comment on initiative? Determine cost to launch – costs need to be kept to the minimum possible to lower any participation barriers; What is evidence for probability of success of such petitions?

IUCN Asian Species Action Partnership (ASAP)

Conveners and participants: Madhu Rao, Bill Robichaud; **Facilitators:** Caroline Lees, Elizabeth Townsend, Phil Miller, Bengt Holst, Bill Robichaud, Renuka Bandaranayake, Mark Craig, Danny de Man, Susie Ellis, David Field, Myfanwy Griffith, Markus Gusset, Bengt Holst, Kira Husher, Deborah Jensen, Joerg Junhold, Sonja Luz, Jansen Manansang, Mark Pilgrim, Pichirikkat Rajeev Raghavan, Ivan Rehak, William Robichaud, Christoph Schwitzer, A.K. Paltra, B.P.S. Parihar, Enayet Hossain, A.B.M. Shahid Ullah

Introduction:

Across the globe, vertebrate extinction risks are highest in South-east Asia. This region also has among the world's fastest recent habitat-loss rates within a context of rapid economic growth. An explosion in the trade demand, and thus harvest rates for wild species for luxury food, medicines, tonics, horns and other trophy parts has resulted in the near-extinction of globally significant biodiversity with implications for ecosystem services and dependent human communities in this rapidly developing part of the world. The protected area systems are neither effectively managed nor sufficient to protect biodiversity and are under serious threat due to large-scale deforestation. Consequently, many South-east Asian species will become extinct in the near future if current trends continue. Acknowledging the need for urgent action, fourteen institutions have joined forces in a call to emergency action to address the crisis. By mobilizing support where it is urgently needed, drawing on the synergistic strengths of the participating institutions, there is need to implement urgent actions that include a combination of *in situ* and *ex situ* measures to prevent the extinction of Critically Endangered vertebrate species in South-east Asia. Zoos, rescue centers and other conservation breeding institutions.

Presentations:

The following presentations were given to provide context and ideas for discussion:

- EAZA support for ASAP species: building on an effective working model: Myfanwy Griffiths, EAZA
- Developing effective strategies using science-based tools: Caroline Lees, CBSG
- Sumatran Rhino Conservation: A critical need for *in situ/ex situ* linkages: Susie Ellis, International Rhino Foundation
- Saving the Saola through collaborative application of the One Plan approach: Bill Robichaud, Saola Working Group
- A role for zoos in conserving wild pigs: Kristin Leus, Copenhagen Zoo & Wild Pig SG
- Fighting extinction and supporting *in-situ* conservation of the Philippine crocodile: Rachel Lowry, Zoos Victoria

Group discussion:

1) Group discussion on the first day exposed areas of confusion around the ASAP project among those present. In particular:

Geographic focus. Many of the workshop participants were from India and there were representatives also from Sri Lanka and Nepal. These countries are not included in the ASAP initiative, though they are in Asia. It was explained that though there remain many challenges, these countries have achieved a great deal for wildlife conservation. ASAP is specifically targeting countries that both support a high concentration of CR vertebrates and which currently have very low capacity for effective wildlife conservation. It is therefore concerned with a narrower geographic focus which is described as ASEAN plus E. Timor.

Species focus. There were many questions about the species focus. Why only vertebrates? Why not include many of the Endangered taxa? Why not narrow the list to high body weight taxa as suggested in other prioritization initiatives? We have to start somewhere. The list of 154 species should be seen as a guide to the most urgent cases and a focus of the ASAP initiative. If things go well, invertebrates could be included downstream, as could other taxa.

Areas of clarification were requested:

- How many of the ASAP species have action plans and can we get a summary of *in situ* and *ex situ* information for each of the species on the list?
- Can we get information on which species are being worked on already, and where? This would help assess the potential for others to be added on, synergistically.
- Which ASAP species require *ex situ* management? Apart from captive breeding, what are the other relevant conservation needs that the CBSG community could help ?

The following suggestions were made for moving forward:

- Can we look for candidates for One Plan Approach planning workshops?
- Can we look for species that need intensive management?
- Can we look for ways to support the Taxon Advisory Groups to do more work on these species?
- Can we think more about how to find species champions?
- Can we reduce the list of 154 to a more manageable number by applying some relevant filters (e.g. AZE, RL recommendations for *ex situ* management, zoo/aquarium populations with studbooks, species present in zoos/aquaria)?
- Could we apply the Amphibian Ark conservation needs assessment here?
- Can we identify flagship/ambassadors (could be species, important sites or issues e.g. trade, habitat loss), that would help to deliver conservation action across a collection of species, including those that might otherwise receive little attention?
- Can we get together a spreadsheet tool that will allow us to subset these taxa in a range of ways to help us explore different possibilities?

Wildlife Disease Risk Analysis (DRA)

Participants: Richard Jakob-Hoff (Facilitator), A.K.Jha, Anil M. Anjankar, Bipul Chakrabarty, Caroline Lees, Disha Sharma, Heribert Hofer, Kazu Takani, Keerthi Krutha, Khyne U. Mar, Kristin Leus, Mir Mansoor, N.V.K. Ashraf, Paul Pearce-Kelly, P.C. Tyagi, Phil Miller, Priyanka Iyer, R.K. Sahu, Rajkumar Jadhav, Sanjay Molur, S. Chandrasekar, S. Panda, S.K. Patnaik, Sonia Luz, Stephanie Sanderson, Suzanne Gendron

This working group was attended by 26 delegates representing 23 organizations from 10 countries (Germany, Holland, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Myanmar, New Zealand, Singapore, United Kingdom, United States of America) and four continents (Asia, Australasia, Europe and North America).

The aims of this Working Group were to:

1. Introduce the new IUCN-OIE DRA publications
2. Identify specific situations for which the DRA process could be helpful in the country represented in the group
3. Discuss what actions could be taken to enable the wildlife DRA process to be used more widely?

The group started with a brief brainstorm to list some of the wildlife disease threats they were aware of in their countries:

- In Japan, avian influenza has been a concern over the last 10 years and it is not clear which wild birds bring it into the country. Foot-mouth disease in deer and wild boar is a threat to livestock.
- In Hong Kong, avian influenza continues to be a major concern and, recently, chytrid fungus has been identified for the first time.
- In India, the chytrid fungus has been identified in 9 endemic amphibian species. Research is continuing to determine how many of these species are diseased; skin sloughing and deformities have been observed.
- In Myanmar, there is a concern about tuberculosis spread due to free movement between domestic and wild elephants and contact with livestock. Infected Mahouts may also be a risk to elephants. Also concerned about anthrax

and the occurrence of some outbreaks of avian influenza.

- In the Himalayan Protected Areas, there is a grazing problem by nomads with livestock posing a disease risk for wildlife, especially red deer.

Richard Jakob-Hoff then presented an overview of the structure and contents of the DRA documents:

Two documents were published in March 2014 through the collaboration of four IUCN-SSC Specialist Groups (Conservation Breeding, Reintroduction, Wildlife Health and Invasive Species). They have been endorsed by both the IUCN Species Survival Commission and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). They are:

The IUCN-OIE Guidelines for Wildlife Disease Risk Analysis. Aimed at policy and decision makers, this provides an overview of the transparent, evidence-based DRA process. It is illustrated with case studies demonstrating a range of applications and explaining how wildlife DRA can help to inform decision making for wildlife managers and policy makers.

The IUCN-OIE Manual of Procedures for Wildlife Disease Risk Analysis. This document was written for people tasked with conducting a wildlife DRA. It is divided into three broad sections: key concepts, how to plan and conduct a DRA, and a section describing tools that can help to complete a DRA.

Both are available for free download from www.cbsg.org and hard copies can be purchased at a modest price from the OIE bookshop at www.oie.int

Key actions:

- Develop a simplified template for day-to-day use in zoos
- Training trainers in each region to facilitate global uptake of the DRA process
- Develop e-learning modules for distance education
- Establish a database of case studies for use by others
- Explore options for translation of the guidelines and manual



Dysfunctional Zoos Working Group Report

Participants: Martina Anandam, Anne Baker, Yara Barros, Martin Bauert, Jacob V. Cheeran, Anna Croukamp, Latha Ravikumar, Maria Clara Dominguez, Anil Garg, Sarita Jnawali, Manoj Misra, Siddhartha Mohanty, Kirsten Pullen, Disha Sharma, Surinder Suneja, Sally Walker (Convenor), John Werth.

The group began by recognizing that there is some diversity in the definition of a zoo/aquarium. They developed a definition for a zoo/aquarium to cover that diversity: Any facility that has wild (non-domestic) animals and is open to the public on a regular basis.

It was recognized that in working with dysfunctional zoos or aquaria, some may be able to progress and raise standards, but there should also be an acceptance that some of these may not be able to raise standards and should be closed. Much of the work during the first working session centered around developing criteria by which to identify a "good" zoo/aquarium. Criteria were divided into three broad categories: critical (must-have), should have soon, and aspirational (recognizing best practice within zoos/aquaria).

Critical components of a "good zoo/aquarium" included: good animal welfare (healthy animals exhibiting a range of special-typical behaviors); environments that are safe for animals, staff, and visitors; basic record keeping; a masterplan for the facility with clear, achievable goals; an animal collection plan; and a sound financial plan.

Because good animal welfare is at the core of a good facility, more specifics were developed around this concept. Good animal welfare begins with good exhibit design, developing complex habitats that are based on the animals' biology and provide opportunities for the display of species-typical behaviors and individual choice. If habitats are lacking in some aspect, enrichment programs should be in place as needed.

Animals should be held in species-appropriate social groups, including solitary if this is appropriate. Veterinary care is in place and regularly available and veterinary facilities are readily accessible. Husbandry problems should be recognized and appropriate research done to address problems, including seeking expertise from outside the zoo if needed. Animal training is utilized as needed on a species-by-species

basis to facilitate husbandry activities and veterinary care.

Requirements for a "good zoo/aquarium" that a facility might not have initially but should work to develop within a reasonable time frame included: an education program and appropriate signage; compliance with all legal requirements; and compatibility with WAZA guidelines.

Aspirational goals included: research with broad applicability that is published; programs that reflect innovative thinking; and staff training programs.

Each country/region will need to develop some sort of an inspection process that utilizes the guiding criteria identified above. A zoo association might be the inspecting body (as is the case within the USA), or the government might be the inspecting body (as is the case in India).

Recognizing that every country is different, the group developed a "tool box" of approaches for improving zoo/aquarium quality within a country or region. Some steps are universal. Presumably there exists some group of zoos/aquariums and/or a zoo association that wishes to raise the quality of facilities within the country or region. The interested parties should develop an agreed upon plan of action which identifies goals, objectives, timelines, and responsibilities. At the outset all zoos and aquariums within the country or region should be identified. Finally, fundamental to any attempt to improve zoo/aquarium quality is some type of zoo legislation and the appropriate implementation of that legislation, necessitating dialogue between the zoo/aquarium community and the government.

There were a number of suggestions of ways to begin a zoo/aquarium – government dialogue. These included:

- engage government officials and educate them; show government officials good zoos and good zoo programs,
- use help from outside the country (e.g. WAZA or other zoo associations),
- find an influential person to be your champion, - find a country with common ground (e.g., the BRICS countries have similar common economic ground, maybe India could help Brazil),
- identify the value to uplifting zoos and to being part of a zoo association.



Species Conservation Tools Initiative Working Group

Participants: Jonathan Ballou, Danny De Man, Markus Gusset, Keerthi Krutha, Bob Lacy, Caroline Lees, Khyne U. Mar, Phil Miller, Mark Pilgrim, Kazu Takami, Kathy Traylor-Holzer

Summary

The purpose of the Species Conservation Tools Initiative (SCTI) includes:

- To develop and support the next generation of tool developers with skills in population biology, computer programming, and conservation science, while ensuring that the core software tools continue to be validated, well-tested, and thoroughly documented.
- To continue the evolution of Vortex as a highly flexible population modeling tool that can be used to integrate conservation assessment and planning across the spectrum of levels and kinds of intensive wildlife management.
- The ongoing development of the innovative metamodeling framework for linking analyses into comprehensive, integrated assessments of the many threats affecting wildlife populations.

The Working Group discussed these topics:

Questions about the initiative

- How to manage process of future development?
 - a. Incorporating new ideas
 - b. Setting priorities
- Suggestions of updates or new needs

These were some of the requests for new functionality:

For PMx:

- Better regional analyses. Simultaneously evaluate and compare what is going on in different regions. Value of individuals in different regions.
- How can non-ISIS members (no access to SPARKS, ZIMS) use PMx? Design an Excel file

template for basic import of most important data into PMx.

- More flexibility in life tables – build components of the life table from multiple sources.

For Vortex:

- Need PVA models that can deal with different levels of data: e.g., just census data, stage-based data, age/sex specific.
- Develop a Vortex reference library to import default population variables for a taxon type. E.g., import typical small antelope values
- Evaluate impact of uncertainty in entered parameters on results
- Need to better link into Vortex: GIS data; projection of landscape changes over time, models for changes in human habitat use.

Questions about the initiative included:

- This is still just a stop-gap initiative. Short-term solution. Need a much larger initiative for an international population management software center.
- Concern about competing requests for support and updates (e.g., Vortex requests vs. PMx). How to prioritize? Maybe an advisory team of subject matter experts?
- How feasible for one programmer to do this all?
- These concerns will be passed on the SCTI partnership leadership (RL and JB were in the working group), and the suggestions will be added to the "To Do" lists of PMx and Vortex.



My Life with Onnie Byers

Sally Walker*

Onnie Byers and I became involved with CBSG in the very early '90's. I attended my first meeting in 1990 and Onnie joined CBSG as Program Officer in 1991. In the 80's we both were involved with wild animals but in very different parts of the world and with very different work set ups. I came to know Nate Flesness, Tom Foosse and of course Ulie Seal some years before the CBSG meeting.

Onnie Byers earned a B.S., Animal Science, University of Wisconsin, 1983; an M.S., Animal Physiology, University of Minnesota, 1987, a Ph.D., Animal Physiology, University of Minnesota, 1990 and, finally, a Post Doc., National Zoological Park/ Smithsonian Institution 1990-1993. She was Dr. Ulie Seal's student at some point. She continued at Smithsonian Institution's National Zoo in Washington D.C. as a member of the National Zoological Park's Mobile Laboratory Research team, and participated in reproductive studies involving cheetah, pumas, tigers and giant pandas.

Onnie joined CBSG in 1991 as a Program Officer and was promoted to the position of Executive Director in 2005, and appointed Chair in 2011.

According to the short blurb on the CBSG website, in addition to leading the organization and driving its global climate change initiative, Onnie shares with CBSG's Program Officers responsibility for organization, design and facilitation of a wide range of Species Conservation Planning and other CBSG workshops.

Onnie is dedicated to the transfer of these tools and processes to conservationists around the world through the establishment and nurturing of CBSG's regional and national Networks, the work of the SSC's Species Conservation Planning Subcommittee, and the development and implementation of mass collaboration tools for conservation.

Onnie serves on the SSC Steering Committee, the ISIS Board, the Conservation and Sustainability Committee of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and the Board of the Emerging Wildlife Conservation Leaders (EWCL).

Onnie and her husband, Steven, a newscaster with Minnesota Public Radio, have two teenagers, Will and Emily and a cat named Oliver.

That is all from the CBSG website ... except Oliver!

Onnie and I have had good moments and bad moments. Despite that Onnie has gone WAY out of her way to help me in many facets of my work. Her understanding and forgiveness and many times probably forgiveness without a clue has been noted by me but never sufficiently spread around. I am sure Onnie has done for others but I must be in the top five candidates for the aggravation prize.

In addition to the aggravation toleration Onnie has been so very encouraging and helpful whether I have done good or bad. She has freely given me the notes and reports on the Annual Meetings so that I could also publish it for our readers in South Asia.

I think Onnie, more than anyone else, has given me the benefit of doubt, knowing very well that conservation in India and conservation in western countries have their own ways and meanings.

Onnie has a great sense of humor and irony. She is able to sympathize with something happening that is not so good but kind of funny and turn it into hilarious. This is very important when you deal with someone like me that has one foot in each world.

When the Indian CBSG and WAZA conference was decided, Onnie went out of her way to make CBSG Meeting one of THE greatest ever. She had been dreaming of visiting India for decades literally.

Onnie and I began agonizing over getting a lot of Indians and other Asians to the meeting. Moreover I was feeling awful that my office colleagues were not going to be able to attend right in their own country. The cost of attending was enormous for Indian currency and they would not be able to meet that expenditure. Central Zoo Authority were sponsoring the zoo directors in India and one or two each South Asian country. I had raised some money also from western zoos but Onnie wrote to the members of the CBSG Strategic Committee and asked for personal donations for the Technical Staff of my office. One by one donations came in until we had enough for 7 people.

This was a grand coup. My colleagues were delighted and participated enthusiastically in the conference. The others attending enjoyed meeting them. In addition to that, Onnie had created an Award for every other year for members in a different role and we agreed that Latha Ravikumar was an excellent first decision for this award.

After the conference I asked my colleagues to give a write up of their impression and what they had learned at the CBSG meeting. Their replies were very enthusiastic ... I hope the donors will be satisfied that their funds had been used for a worthy cause.

Since we don't have an official award for Onnie who most deserves one, we collected a few photos that will reward and embarrass her by publishing them. I wish I could have found the photo of Oliver!

***Founder/Director/Mg.Trustee, Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Email: zooreach@zooreach.org; sallywalker@zooreach.org**

Below:
Onnie and Phil Miller
applaud speakers
during one of the
sessions.



Central Zoo Authority
केन्द्रीय चिड़ियाघर प्राधिकरण

Left:
Although we can
hardly see Onnie,
we can see the
CBSG posters and
the riveted people
in the first table
right in front.



Above :
Onnie and Paul
Pearce Kelly who is
an entomologist
and many other
things.

Below:
Left - a better photo
of Onnie at the dias.

**A photo of total
satisfaction after
our Latha Award.**



Zoo Outreach Organisation's Technical Staff remarks about the 2014 Conservation Breeding Specialist Group Annual Meeting, Oct-Nov. 2014

Whereas this writer, the Founder/Editor of ZOOS' PRINT was lucky enough to discover the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, CBSG, in Copenhagen, 1990 and immediately to suss out the many benefits of becoming a member and attending regularly, every year from 1990 - 2014, she felt bad that she could not bring her growing technical staff to the meetings, that were growing more and more interesting and useful. Sanjay Molur attended from time to time when time and money permitted, but none other. That is until this year when the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) of India had its turn hosting the Annual CBSG and WAZA meetings.

The CBSG Chair, Dr. Onnie Byers and the writer exchanged many emails about utilizing this opportunity to have as many Indian and other South Asian conservation 'wallas' at the CBSG meeting. In the early stages we did not realise that the Central Zoo Authority was inviting all the zoo directors from the A-group (also called the Large Zoos) to BOTH CBSG and WAZA. When we did, it occurred to us that we might be able to bring the whole Zoo Outreach Organisation Technical Staff to the meeting.

One of the greatest obstacles to attending CBSG and WAZA meetings is money ... registration, travel and accommodation are bad enough but most members come from far away continents that inflates the cost exponentially. This year there was no staggering air fare for Indians and other South Asians but there was indeed the cost of registration, accommodation and travel from somewhere. I gathered some funds for some of the cost and Dr. Byers wrote to her Strategic Committee members and held out the begging bowl.

This was essential as the difference between South Asian money and US, European and Aussie money is very different indeed. As time went on, they Strategic Committee members that wanted to contribute grew and grew and at last there was enough to bring the technical staff, e.g., 7 eager ZOO folks. It would be very wrong not to acknowledge the donors who are:

Contributors to ZOO for arranging funds for Staff presence at CBSG New Delhi

Al Ain Zoo,
Anne Baker & Bob Lacy,
Bill Conway,
Chicago Zoological Society,
Disney's Animal Kingdom,
Frances Westley,
Jansen Manansang,
Mike Maunder,
Paul Pearce-Kelly,
St. Louis Zoo,
Susie Ellis,
Dave Wildt,
Suzanne Gendron,
Zoo Zurich

Now our staff will share their own experience and enjoyment of the CBSG meeting. Some of these write ups are long and some short but all very sincerely meant.

Sally Walker

CBSG Annual Meeting 2014, New Delhi - an Incredible Experience, Rengasamy Marimuthu



My Director had arranged me to attend a CBSG meeting at New Delhi from 30 October -02nd November 2014 that was hosted by Central Zoo Authority. During my first stint at Zoo Outreach Organization from 1990-1994, I came to know the term "Captive Breeding Specialist Group" for the first time. Our director founded CBSG India with Dr. Seal's consent that led to a CBSG South Asian Regional Network. I attended technical workshops of threatened species, e.g., the Population and Habitat Viability Assessment workshops. These workshops introduced me to the principles of conservation and small population biology for the first time. During that period I attended the PHVA's of Manipur Brow-antlered deer, Lion-tailed macaque, the Great Indian Rhino and later a Hoolock gibbon PHVA held at Bangladesh in 2005. Though I attended these workshop processes in or near India, the annual meeting were held in different parts of the world and the expense was too much.

My longstanding dream became reality by attending one of the CBSG annual meetings this year in New Delhi. The theme of this year's meeting was "Application of the One Plan Approach in India and Beyond". In the opening session, Ms. Onnie Byers, Chair CBSG, Mr. P.R. Sinha, Head, IUCN, India, Mr. B.S. Bonal, Member Secretary, CZA, Ms. Sally Walker & Dr. Sanjay Molur, Co-convenors, CBSG

South Asia gave a welcome address and all participants introduced themselves. It was big gathering of 130 participants and more Indian zoo directors also could participate for the first time.

Mr. Bonal gave a presentation entitled "National Scenario on Conservation Breeding initiatives in India", giving an overview of species selected for coordinated breeding and the participating and coordinating zoos. Ms. Walker followed this and her talk was Innovation, Interest and Ideas-CBSG's tools for thought. She mesmerized the audience by her usual jovial speech.

After that plenary sessions were started. The first one was Continuation of momentum of zoos & aquariums for 350. Zoo Outreach Organisation has been part of this movement, and promoting it in South Asia. The topic of the afternoon plenary session was 'application of one plan approach in India' and Dr. B.C. Choudhury talked on "Integrating *ex situ*, *in-situ* and science in to India's journey in conservation breeding efforts'. In the next plenary session, working group moderators gave the introduction to meeting format, introduction and working group formats.

The working groups were: 1. Dysfunctional zoos: Learning from India's experiments (Sally Walker) 2. The Asian Species Action Partnership (Madhu Rao) and 3. CBSG/Conservation Genetics Breeding Specialist Group (Bob Lacy). I joined in the Conservation Genetics Breeding Specialist Group. Though this group was attended by only a few members a lot of inputs were discussed. I enjoyed being a member of the group thoroughly and learned about conservation genetics from other members.

Nov. 1 another two new working groups were introduced and formed and they are: 'Training session on IUCN guidelines (*ex situ* management, reintroduction, confiscated animals, wildlife risk (Kathy Traylor Holzer) and Climate Change Community Conservation Package (Madelon Willemsan). I attended the Climate Change working group and spoke on climate change education.

The other new working groups were introduced and formed in the afternoon. 1. A new initiative to ensure continued development of species risk assessment & population management tools (Bob Lacy and Jon Ballou) and 2. The Way Forward for Collaborative Conservation Breeding Programme in India (P.C. Tyagi). I joined the collaborative conservation breeding programme group. On 2nd November Mr. Ghanim Al Hajeri made announcement for CBSG 2015 annual meeting hosted by Al Ain Zoo. There were other talks in plenary sessions. Mr. Chandra Kumar Bora's spoke on "Linkage between *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation of One-horned Rhinoceros in Assam. Dr. Vibhu Prakash spoke on *Ex situ* and *in situ* efforts in saving three Critically Endangered resident Gyps species of vultures from possible extinction. The welcome dinner was arranged at the Civil Service Officer's Institute with Gujarati dancers which I

cherished, particularly the Dandiya dance. The next day evening we went to Deli Haat Market and dined at Hauz Khaz village restaurant. The last day we visited the National Zoological Park and Mr. Amitabh Agnihotri, Director welcomed the participants and made arrangements for us to visit the zoo. He also invited all of us to witness burning of illegal and seized wildlife articles such as tiger skin & body parts, elephant tusk, rhino horn, deer antlers, shathoosh shawl etc. in the presence of the Hon. Mr. Prakash Javadekar, Minister of MoEF & CC. I visited the zoo after 5 years and I noticed a lot of new developments there. I really enjoyed watching the Hoolock gibbon at the zoo. It was very agile on that day swinging all around the moat. In the evening we watched a spectacular sound and light show at Purana Quila Fort with a story about tracing Delhi's history.

It was a wonderful experience to participate in a CBSG meeting. I learned their working group processes. We were part of several working groups, special lectures, meeting and interacting people with different experiences, as well as finding old friends after a long time. One of them I met after 21 years! All the outings during the workshops, the food and venue were also very good.

I express my sincere thanks to Madam Sally Walker for providing me such a great opportunity to participate in the CBSG meeting, for the sponsorship and CZA for hosting. The amazing conference experience will remain me forever.

A Glorious Meeting of minds and learning.
Latha Ravikumar, Finance Director.



I have been working with ZOO since 1991 and involved with all CBSG South Asia projects that ZOO does since then. My main work is finance, accounts and administration. One of my duties as an Administration Manager is to look after the travel needs of all the people, particularly I take care of my boss Sally Walker's travel bookings. During Septem-

ber I had asked her about her plans for the CBSG and WAZA Annual Conference that is held in Delhi, hosted by the Central Zoo Authority. At that time she told me that I also be prepared to go. First I thought she was joking, as I mostly like to work behind the scene and don't like to go out, but soon I realized she was serious. She had told me that Dr. Onnie Byers is raising funds for our technical staff and she is excited in all our participation.

ZOO has been using CBSG's workshop processes since 1991 developed mostly by Dr. U.S. Seal in creating strategies for endangered species. Due to the generosity of Sally and Sanjay I have been involved with all the PHVA, CAMP and Training workshops that ZOO organized till now and I am very much interested in all those workshops. I am amazed with their scientific tools, particularly Vortex, a computer model that simulates the complex dynamics of wildlife population growth. So when Sally told me about this opportunity I was really delighted to have this opportunity to meet the CBSG people and very much interested to see how they run their conference. I have been talking to Dr. Onnie Byers, Elizabeth Townsend and other CBSG people over email for so long and this is the first time I had interacting with them directly.

The main theme of the conference was One Plan approach. The "One Plan approach" (OPA) proposed by the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group promotes integrated species conservation planning, which considers all populations of the species, inside and outside their natural range, under all conditions of management, engaging all responsible parties and all available resources. In addition to plenary presentations and working group discussion, there were various working groups.

The Working group topics includes:

- Dysfunctional Zoos: Learning from India's experience
- 'Training' session on new IUCN guidelines (wildlife health, reintroduction, *ex situ* management, confiscated animals)
- Species Conservation Toolkit Initiative: A new initiative to ensure continued development of species risk assessment and population management tools
- The Asian Species Action Partnership
- The Way Forward for Collaborative Conservation Breeding Programs in India

I joined the working groups for Dysfunctional Zoos and the Way Forward for Collaborative Conservation Breeding Programs in India. All the plenary presentations and working group report presentations are very informative and I got a picture how CBSG works for their mission to save threatened species by increasing the effectiveness of conservation efforts worldwide. I am grateful to my boss/mentor/friend Sally Walker for giving me this wonderful opportunity. We are all very grateful and thankful to Dr. Onnie Byers and the sponsors for their generous

support. We will continue to give our best for CBSG in promoting their mission and vision.

I got a first time award from CBSG for providing support to our technical people for enabling them to make important and long-lasting improvements to the conservation of South Asian species. Sally Madam and Onnie kept the news themselves to give me a surprise and I don't have words to describe my feelings when Onnie called me to the stage. It was a most valuable gift and coincidentally it was on my birthday. I thank Central Zoo Authority and their staff for their wonderful arrangements. Everything from food to outing will be memorable in our mind a long time.

About the CBSG meeting ... it was great! B.A. Daniel

First of all I would like to thank CBSG, its sponsors and Sally Walker who are responsible for my participation of the CBSG annual meeting at New Delhi. This was my first CBSG meeting that I have ever attended. To say few words

about the CBSG process and my work, after I joined ZOO in 1995 I was asked to take part in one of the CBSG processes, a PHVA for Gharial at Gwalior in February 1995. With all my experience in different university departments and organizations, I could understand the difference in the CBSG workshop processes that were dynamic and result-oriented. Since then I got ample opportunities to take part in CAMP and PHVA workshops.

The theme for the CBSG annual meeting, Delhi, 'One plan approach for India and Beyond' for the region was very appropriate. The plenary talks were very apt for the theme. All the topics were of great interest but the talk by Susie Elis on Challenges in Conservation: Indian Rhino Vision 2020 was very useful for me since I am involved in some of the conservation education programmes in Rhino areas in India. Though I wanted to attend more than one working group, I could attend the group on 'Rolling out the Climate Reality Community Conservation Package'. The discussion in the working group gave me a lot of ideas to work in this regard for the mitigation initiatives that are required for India. Thanks to Central Zoo Authority for organizing the event in a wonderful manner. Great to know that Al



Ain Zoo will be the next host for the 2015 CBSG annual meeting.

The greatest part of the CBSG meeting was the opportunity to meet up with the experts, scientists and managers from about 26 countries at one place. It was indeed wonderful to meet all of them, as it helped me to renew my contacts after many years with some of them but also paved ways to create new contacts and project initiatives. I also got the opportunity to meet all CBSG office bearers except Emily Wick. The social gatherings and outings were enjoyable and worth spending time since I could meet many people with my interests. The Sound and Light programme organized by Central Zoo Authority at the Old Fort near the National Zoo was very dramatic and enjoyable.

I would also like to thank Paul Pearce-Kelly who planned two days pre-CBSG visit to Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun and G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development to learn about various Climate change related projects happening in India, particularly in the Himalayan region

CBSG Meeting 2014 New Delhi- An experience to remember
Martina Anandam



I am extremely thankful to CBSG for making it possible for me and my dear colleagues at ZOO/WILD to attend the wonderful conference at New Delhi. It undoubtedly was a once in a lifetime experience.

I spend most of my good year at my field site in the Himalaya and hardly get to attend such events. So this time, when I was invited to the conference I knew I had to make good of the opportunity. It was exciting to see so many conservationists all at the same place, learn of their experiences and share in some very exciting and interesting discussions.

The 'One Plan Approach' theme of the conference, to sync conservation action is a refreshing and promising approach to conservation. I enjoyed the

working groups and had an opportunity to participate in two working groups: 'Dysfunctional Zoos' and 'Rolling out the Climate Change Community Conservation Package'. I was the note taker in both these groups and enjoyed the many responsibilities that came with the role. Dysfunctional Zoos Group worked to establish criteria for good zoos and closure of sub-standard or dysfunctional zoos, thereby ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of captive animals. We realized the need for the group to define 'good' or 'standard' zoos. Criteria such as Stud Book Keeping, Educational and legible signage, scientifically sound enrichment plan were laid out and scored. The many criteria were assigned scores such as 1 = critical for animal welfare; 2 = must achieve soon; 3 = good to have. As a field worker, I had little practical experience of zoos and therefore the opportunity to sit with the zoo keepers and directors from across the world gave me a much needed insight on zoos and captive management. It definitely made me reflect on the role of zoos in conservation. Zoos as media for conservation awareness and sensitization cannot be ignored and the bane of sub-standard zoos in misrepresenting conservation cannot be taken lightly.

The Climate Change Community Conservation Package working group was equally interesting. The Zoos and Aquaria 350 awareness campaign was the subject of discussion: how to market it in zoos, aquaria and beyond. While we as a group agreed on the necessity of such awareness campaign, we felt the need define community and to appreciate the wide spectrum of definition it represented.

Community then, when the workshop began, did not include the communities dwelling in climate change hotspots or in other biodiversity hotspots. Rather, 'community' referred to zoos and aquaria visits and therefore the whole awareness campaign was built to trigger such audiences. There was felt a need for the campaign to be all encompassing and to include communities from such climate change and biodiversity hotspots, for a better reach and a better working towards the campaign. Climate Change sensitization books as valid tools for the campaign were discussed. The group came out with really interesting views on the use of such classic tools and bane of cliché and repetition in such tools. Novel tools such as phone apps and computer programs and websites were discussed as replacement to such tools but their functionality was brought to question. Deadlines to market the campaign and presenting it through various platforms were discussed and timelines drawn. In all, the group turned out to be an eye opener.

A lot of what I learnt through these discussions I have planned to adapt and have included in my own project framework. Apart from the superb discussions, it was wonderful to meet so many conservation enthusiasts from around the world and be encouraged. The other cultural programs organized by CZA, the outing to Delhi markets were a

much needed time out with my colleagues and I enjoyed it thoroughly. Thanks to Sally for making this happen. Thanks to Onnie Byers and team, CZA and every one else who made this possible. I wish CBSG only the best for the future.

CBSG Meeting at New Delhi - New things to try, learn and carry out. Keerthi Krutha



It was my first time at a CBSG conference and I am extremely grateful to my sponsors without whose support attending such a conference would have remained a wish.

Being someone who is currently working on understanding the presence and distribution of the amphibian chytrid fungus in the Western Ghats of India, I have always wanted to reach out to on ground people involved in ex-situ breeding programs especially in amphibians. This conference offered me one of the best networking opportunities I have ever had and more so to be able to meet kind and humble people despite their phenomenal achievements.

I had participated in the working group sessions of Conservation Genetics Specialist Group (CGSG)/CBSG collaboration; Training session on IUCN guidelines (ex situ management and reintroduction); Development of species risk assessment and population management tools; Training session on the new IUCN guidelines (Wildlife disease risk analysis). The rule the 'every idea is valid' is very commendable, and made me very happy and comfortable during the working sessions.

As a major component of my current work mainly involves field sample collection, I could contribute to a small extent a few ideas on how CGSG could aid in field sample collection. I truly believe that a manual on various methods on field sample collection for different taxa, which could be comprehensive guide providing information on characteristics of different

chemicals used for sample preservation to field biologists from different backgrounds would be extremely useful.

The lectures during the working group session on ex situ management and reintroduction were very informative by Dr. Kristin Leus, Dr. Sanjay Molur and Dr. Kathy Traylor-Holzer and I look forward to the development of local language guidelines copy.

Even though, I couldn't contribute much to the working group session on Development of species risk assessment and population management tools led by Dr. Jonathan Ballou and Dr. Bob Lacy I got to be the time keeper and learnt quite a bit about the various tools used in species risk assessments.

The role of a flip chart writer is tough and very important, I realized that when I took up the opportunity in the working group session on the 'Training session on the new IUCN guidelines (Wildlife disease risk analysis)'. Firstly, it was a pleasure working with Dr. Richard Jakob-Hoff, his team spirit is admirable. I look forward to the database on researchers working on wildlife diseases.

The talks by Dr. Anne Baker and Dr. Vibhu Prakash on amphibian conservation and the vulture breeding program made me feel especially hopeful and the other talks on the conservation breeding scenario within India were informative.

Finally I'd like to express my gratitude to Ms. Sally Walker and Dr. Sanjay Molur for trusting that the exposure to this conference was important for my career and suggesting I could take up a moderator's role and taking it on them to ensure I could attend it.

CBSG Meeting at New Delhi, India - My experience! Priyanka Iyer

As employees at Zoo Outreach Organization all of us had come across the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group and its various initiatives at some point of time of the other. And when Sally Walker and Onnie Byers presented some of us with the unique opportunity to meet in New Delhi all of us were thrilled, excited and anxious. We were to represent our organization and receive exposure to experts from different part of the world to interact and understand the differences in conservation problems and solutions.

The icebreaker dinner on 30 October 2014 was an exciting and humbling experience as many of the experts whose papers we had studied were extremely helpful and down-to-earth. We met some of the "revolutionaries/rock stars of conservation" (as I like to call them) such as Bob Lacey and John Ballou who have been instrumental in developing the vortex model. This mathematical model was one that helps analyse trends of population-habitat viability assessments (PHVAs) of many species that are highly threatened and face a great risk of extinction. This a special connection for us at ZOO as many PHVAs have been conducted for India's threatened species by ZOO in collaboration with a network of subject



experts and government agencies. We were also exposed to the international zoo community and many ways in which zoos are making crucial contributions to conservation.

The meeting was officially kickstarted on 31 October with opening session talks by Onnie Byers, Chair, CBSG, P.R. Sinha, IUCN India Country office, Bishan Singh Bonal, Member-Secretary, Central Zoo Authority of India, Sally Walker and Sanjay Molur, Co-convenors, CBSG-South Asia. This was followed by the Key note address by Mr. Bonal and Ms. Walker.

The plenary sessions focussed on the One Plan Approach a process introduced by CBSG at the meet, Climate change and introduced the process to be followed during the working groups.

Working groups attended:

Asian Species Action Partnership

This session was put together by Madhu Rao and was about a new partnership that was being introduced at the CBSG meet. This session focused on Southeast Asian threatened species that needed urgent conservation attention. The ASAP was looking for commitments from the Zoo community and other researchers to take up work on some of these species and support existing studies.

The first step was to assign roles of flip chart writer, recorder etc. as per the process suggested by the organisers. This was followed by discussions on species list and questioning as to why it did not include South Asian species. Despite being named the Asian Species Action Partnership, it concentrated on Southeast Asian species, as they believed that

species belonging to that region do not receive adequate attention in terms of research and conservation.

The species list was considered very extensive and there was a need to prioritise species from the existing list. Some of the prioritising criteria suggested were – Species with no wild population and only captive populations, AZE species, species with highly restricted distributions among other things. There was also a suggestion to change the name of the partnership as it concentrated only on Southeast Asian species. The group was to meet again the next day to continue the discussion after species prioritization.

Training sessions on IUCN guidelines (Ex-situ management and Reintroductions)

This session was put together by Kristen Leus, Kathy Traylor-Holzer and Sanjay Molur and introduced the guidelines for *ex-situ* conservation and reintroductions. The *ex-situ* session explained the process of assessing the need for an *ex-situ* programme for a species. Also, they informed the different solution available in *ex-situ* mechanism that may contribute to solving problems caused by threats. This was an interesting session, as it may prove relevant in the future if the amphibian fungal disease has detrimental results in India. There may be a need for *ex-situ* programmes to conserve threatened amphibian populations.

Sanjay Molur gave us insights into the Reintroduction guidelines and informed us of the rigour and well-informed decision-making needed to set up a reintroduction programme. He defined and differentiated similar sounding terms such as translocation, restoration, reintroduction and reinforcement and ran us through a decision-making tree to understand if and whether there is a true need for reintroduction or translocation.

This session was relevant for Indian Alliance for Zero Extinction freshwater fish species and threatened fish species exploited for ornamental trade from the wild. Some of these species inhabit a highly restricted range and suffer a risk of extinction. These species are in urgent need of captive breeding and policies suggesting the same. This session helped me understand the process that may be tailored to propose a process for freshwater fish in the future.

IUCN Guidelines on Wildlife Disease Risk Analysis. Richard Jakob-Hoff of Auckland Zoo facilitated this session and I took down the minutes of this session. The group was invited to give inputs on some of the wildlife diseases that are known in their country and reaction of the general public and the government. There was also the problem of some of the governments not willing to be transparent about some of the wildlife diseases due to political pressure. Dr. Jakob-Hoff introduced the guidelines for assessing disease risk in captive animals in zoos and ran us through the process.

The feedback to the guidelines from the zoo community was that the process seemed complicated and a little intimidating to be followed by them. Also, the feasibility of it on a day-to-day level was questioned. Dr. Jakob-Hoff suggested simple solutions to these problems and also invited to help out by providing the methodology used by him and his team at Auckland Zoo to assess disease risks.

The result of the discussion was to come up with simple e-learning tools that may be accessed by managers and others to understand the guidelines and the assessment process better. Also, a suggestion for a country-specific database on the different disease risks faced by wildlife and the researchers working on these aspects may prove useful. Lastly, translation of these guidelines into local languages to widen its reach and use was suggested.

In addition to this, this experience is especially valuable to me as I was given the opportunity to present the freshwater fish work/projects undertaken by our team/fishy folk in India. I was given a slot of ten minutes to present the current situation of freshwater fish in India and what the freshwater fish team working and collaborating with ZOO is trying to achieve. This was a golden opportunity as the presentation was met with a lot of encouragement and offers of support. Also, the zoo community came forward to suggest contacts and exchanged information on the problems faced in their region. All in all the experience was extremely enriching and will be put to good use in conservation works/projects that I undertake in India.

I would like to use this write up as a medium to thank all the people behind making it possible for me to attend this meeting and giving me the opportunity to learn new concepts, experience conservation exercises on an international scale and exchange information on the different solutions to the unique conservation problems around the world. This would not have been possible without the support of Sally Walker, Onnie Byers, Sanjay Molur, the ZOO team and of course the generous sponsors.

CBSG Annual Meeting 2014, my Experience. Brawin Kumar

The CBSG meeting held in New Delhi provided a valuable platform to know about the many CBSG processes and management tools and techniques.

Conservation managers and researchers from many parts of the World shared their experiences and their conservation knowledge. This was my first CBSG meeting where I met a variety of scientists who shared their conservation work with me.

I took part in three working groups. Rolling out the Climate Reality Community Conservation Package, that provided an innovative approach on



how to make the conservation outreach techniques to a wider audience by many available teaching tools. Asian Species Action Partnership (ASAP) will help me to identify and prioritize the need for conservation of threatened species.

The way forward for collaborative conservation breeding programs in India was a very interesting and informative group. I shared some of the AZE species and small mammal conservation research initiatives to the group. This program provided a valuable platform for my ecological studies. It also helped to build up a network with researchers. I was most impressed by the talk about ongoing conservation research work, especially for Vultures and Red Pandas. This meeting helped me to work for threatened species in my region for long-term conservation.

I enjoyed all the presentations, plenary talks, working group sessions and zoo visit. I participated in the burning of illegal and seized wildlife articles event in the zoo. This gave me a strong picture of role of wildlife trafficking and stop of poaching. I thank the organizers and supporters of this important meeting.





Above : Sanjay as a young man. Note the clear skin, the healthy looking eyes, the rosy complexion, flat ears, charming hair cut, acute mind.

Below: Sanjay today. This photo shows how hard Sanjay has worked over last few years...note the pasty skin and pale complexion, tired eyes, floppy ears, paucity of hair, grey beard, and unknown mind.



CBSG and Conservation Genetics Specialist Group collaboration working group

Sri Bishan Bonal addresses the grand opening of the CBSG, SSC, IUCN Annual Meeting in New Delhi. Other speakers were P.R. Sinha former M.S. CZA, Sally Walker, Sanjay Molur Co-convenors of CBSG, India and CBSG, South Asia and Onnie Byers, Chair, CBSG SSC IUCN.



**CONSERVATION
BREEDING
SPECIALIST GROUP**
Planning a Future for Wildlife

Discussion on Dysfunctional Zoos facilitated by Anne Baker. The group began their discussion by ascertaining what was a good zoo



1. P.R. Sinha, former MS CZA gave an excellent speech.
2. The photo of CBSG members cannot contain their numbers as it is almost overflowing.
3. Onnie Byers, Chair, CSBSG looks as dignified as one can with such shapely and attractive legs.
4. Cooling it after a long day.



CBSG Participants



CBSG (Part 1)



CBSG (Part II)



CBSG (Part III)



(Somebody's got to do it !)

**A Great Day at India's National Zoo - CBSG and WAZA Members from all over the World were honoured guests at the National Zoological Park and other wonderful sites.
Editor**

A highlight of the joint conferences of CBSG and WAZA 2014 was the afternoon and evening at the National Zoological Park. Participants of CBSG meeting and also the newly arrived WAZA participants were honoured.

First they all just wandered, ad hoc, around the zoo ... by foot or by the small and convenient zoo buses that perpetually went around the zoo, taking on passengers who were tired or had enough for the present. A round in the bus made the visitors energetic so they could do more and see more of the half century park. For two or three hours the zoo personnel from other countries and continents toured the zoo by foot or bus and compared notes with the Indian zoo directors.

They admired the animals, many of which were very much known to them such as the Bengal tiger, the variety of bears, pure Asiatic lions, Hoolock Gibbons, etc. Many of these animals, although they were known, had not been seen in other countries ... at least not purebred ones.

After a couple of hours the long trek around the zoo caused a powerful thirst, both for beverages and also for a place to sit down!

Zoo Director Sri A. Agnihotri welcomed the gathering of zoo personnel from all over the world and shared some information about the zoo.

There was tea on the lawn and the dignitaries of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change joined the affair. After a nice rest and beverages there was another interesting wildlife confiscation programme in the zoo.

One of the events was the burning of confiscated, illegal wild animal skins, bones, horns, etc., taken from bad people who meant to sell them to other bad people. The Press was there in plenty and met with both dignitaries and participants after the ceremony.



The Press also interviewed a number of the many foreign guests that had come to India for their zoo conferences. This made for very good publicity demonstrating the wish of government to curtail all hunting and capture of wild animals and also of confiscating the hides, trophies, bones, etc. along with the criminals who sold these products and got a tidy sum from them.

This tradition of burning publicly the confiscated bones and hides and is not much observed in all Western and European countries and thus, the guests were much intrigued.

India is one of the most compassionate countries in the world regarding animal welfare. By India we mean the Government of India primarily that takes the subject into its Constitution. Although all the suffering of animals has not been taken care of, there is a governmental will to follow the Article 51A(G) in its Constitution in which it says:

**IT SHALL BE THE
FUNDAMENTAL DUTY OF EVERY
CITIZEN OF INDIA TO
PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT,
INCLUDING FOREST, LAKES
RIVERS AND WILDLIFE, AND
TO HAVE COMPASSION FOR
LIVING CREATURES.**

The Bengal Tiger to the right relaxes in its spacious, forest like setting. It was amusing and nice to see a very old sign identifying the tiger. It is one of the characteristics of India to be very sentimental and this is a very good example.

Many participants were enthralled to see so many animals in good condition and health. The Central Zoo Authority of India is careful to look after all the zoos of the country so that carelessness or ignorance do not determine the health of the animals. India has many, many veterinarians, both for domestic animals and wild ... both wild in the zoo and wild in their natural habitat. Now, many zoos have 2-3 veterinarians to monitor and treat the animals.





The Hoolock Gibbon is one of the most popular primates in any zoo, and much more within the National Zoological Park in India.

There is always a crowd around this enclosure or vast outdoor space, particularly when it includes moats and trees and other "furniture" for the Hoolocks to show off their antics.

The Asiatic Lion is among the most of those that draw "shock and awe" from visitors when they hear the animals roar and shriek very loudly. The Asiatic Lion has quite a history, particularly in India. The Veterinary officer of the Trivandrum Zoo told a group of us this story. We were looking for genuine, purebred Asiatic lions because the last of the prides in Gir Forest were drying up. Finding unrelated mates for them was practically impossible. The Trivandrum Zoo seemed a good possibility because they had many many lions. Surely, we thought, some of them would be pure stock. Fortunately the Veterinary Officer was an honest person and he confessed that they had mixed their lions. He said "we had a choice... we could continue mating the lions from pure groups but those that were of the same lineage were showing terrible weaknesses. They were inbred over several generations and could not produce a strong or healthy or normal offspring. In the end even the forest lions, the wild ones, were inbred, as they didn't get to cross far boundaries where non-related lions might still be.



To make a long story short, the Sakkarbaug Zoo in Gujarat began manipulating the forests and the lions so that they were not free to mate just any lion. At the Delhi conference he told the story of how they managed the lions now so that they would not mate the lions in such a way that they would produce inbred offspring. This was the bare bones of the story ... it went on and on until finally the Gujaratis made it right.



Caught and confiscated wildlife

The Environment Minister, Sri Prakash Javadekar had been giving encouragement and assistance to the Central Zoo Authority for some months, in the hope that the two conferences would be enjoyable as well as interesting and acquiring knowledge.

Sri Javadekar, Member Secretary, Central Zoo Authority, Sri B.S. Bonal, Conference Coordinator, Brij Kishore Gupta, and many others making up the Conference Committee wanted to make an impact on the foreign visitors of just how India works now to improve its zoos, its conservation and its animal welfare.

On November 2nd in the afternoon in the National Zoological Park, a variety of activities were done but none of them or nothing could match the Minister's and his colleagues conviction that the sale of illegally procured wildlife products had to stop. He said the government will not tolerate illegal trade of wildlife.

To make a firm and well-founded statement they decided to destroy by fire the wildlife trophies right in the National Zoological Gardens and in the presence of the CBSG and WAZA as well as other dignitaries to make their point. Sri Javadekar presided over this event stating that government will not tolerate illegal trade of wildlife products, as the authorities destroyed a consignment of illegal wildlife products in the capital. The products were consigned to flames at the National Zoological Park here.

Sri Javadekar who presided stressed the need for "harmonious co-existence by burning the illegal wildlife products and send a robust indicator of the unscrupulous profession of trading wildlife commodities.



These unlawful skins, bones, teeth, fur, etc. from the wild cats - tigers, leopards, lions, leopard cats, as well as the small mammals, the lovely deer varieties, reptiles, birds, snakes, owls, mongoose, and shells. These were destroyed and given to flames on behalf of the Ministry of Environment at the National Zoo itself. Sri. Javadekar alleged that the funds that came in from the evil traffickers always ended up in a variety of illegal activities. He said "unethical use of products of various animals and plants, often based on unjustified reasons has been a factor flaming illegal activities like poaching, smuggling and illegal wildlife trade."

A statement from the environment ministry pronounced the occasion a serious move ahead towards applauding efforts of the many law enforcement agencies (forest and wildlife departments, wildlife crime control bureau, police, customs, and many others) for checking illegal trade of such products.

So this event was appreciated as much more serious that a photo opportunity. It will be a solid step toward changing the behavior of a certain group of people in the country.

Javadekar went on to say: "Today's event is being held to send a strong message that people should not kill animals or engage in trade of animal parts. This must be stopped as the trade finances many anti-social activities." Moreover, he said "We have decided to destroy these animal skins and other products in public view because we want to send a dramatic message that illegal wildlife trade was banned and would not be tolerated in the future."

Mr. Javadekar also stressed on the importance of biodiversity and government's determination to protect it. The Minister cited an example of the large amounts of money used for wrongdoing is



generated from illegal trade of wildlife products. He said, "Can you imagine a Rhino's single horn can fetch Rs. 10 million and this money can be used for other crimes such as terrorism or drug trafficking."

So, through this gesture we want to show that the Government of

India cares for co-existence of flora, fauna, and human beings because it is an inseparable link in our scheme of things of nature," he said.

Indian wildlife, already struggling with habitat loss due to the expansion of human settlements has been hit hard by poachers and



the illegal trade in animal parts. India is home to half of the world's estimated 3,200 wild tigers, but those numbers have declined drastically from the 5,000-7,000 beasts India was estimated to have had in the 1990's.

Also that month, a stash of peacock weighing 29.8 kg were seized by customs officials from a Singapore bound passenger at the airport.

Over 100 wild tortoises were found on the possession of three women train passengers in the Thrissur district of India. Acting on a tip off, police carried out a check in a Chennai-bound train and seized the species from them.

The once-obscure pangolin trade has soared, with at least 320 of the scaly mammals now seized from smugglers each year. Start tortoise seizures by customs officials have also shot up, from less than 800 a year before 1999 to more than 3,000 a year since 2002.

Products demanded by the illegal wildlife trade includes exotic pets, food, traditional medicine, clothing and jewellery made from animals' tusks, fins, skins, shells, horns, and internal organs.



Smuggled wildlife is also an increasing global demand. It is estimated that the US, China, and the European Union are the places with the highest desire.



Wildlife officials and members of the media crammed into the small hot room at the zoo to witness the inferno. "The exercise is an attempt to deplore the unethical, indiscriminate and most unlawful activities of harvest and trade of wildlife products," the Environment Ministry said in a statement linking India's future development with the health of its biodiversity.