

WAZA 2010 Conference Overview - Biodiversity is Life

Editor

The 65th Annual WAZA Conference, themed "Biodiversity is Life" was conducted from 17-21 October 2010 in Cologne, Germany at the Koln Zoo, one of the old zoos in Germany and world. The year 2010 marked the 150th Anniversary of the Zoo, making it a great occasion to host a WAZA meeting. Dr. Theo Pagel, Zoo Director and CEO and Christopher Landsberg from the Executive Board of the Zoo represented the official hosts and organisers. Others from Koln Zoo and the WAZA Executive Office who made the conference happen did an outstanding job without a glitch. The theme in full was "Biodiversity is Life: the Role of Zoos and Aquariums in Biodiversity Conservation".



Biodiversity of Life

The conference venue was the Maritim Hotel, Cologne, located on the famous Rhine river, was both dramatic and lovely in the middle of the old city, five minutes walk from the Railway station and the famous Cathedral. The hotel resembles a cathedral as well with its steeple-like glass rooftop covering the hotel and indoor street or boulevard lined with shoppes and restaurants, as well as a large conference hall and conference rooms. Despite a schedule as packed with work, or more so than usual WAZA conferences, everyone was comfortable and happy with the hospitality which promoted a great deal of good work.

Sunday 17th October the WAZA members joined CBSG on a zoo tour and final events, a WAZA icebreaker for both leaving and arriving participants at the Zoo and the Award Ceremony for the CBSG US Seal Award. Afterwards there was a very nice buffet dinner.

The conference began the following morning at 8am with a Welcome from Dr. Theo Pagel joined by the Mayor of Cologne, Jurgen Roters, the President of the German Zoo Director's Association, Thomas Kauffels, Lesley Dickie, Director of the European Zoo Directors Association and the President of WAZA, Dr. Mark Penning. All welcomed the conference briefly.

There were three keynote addresses on the theme *Biodiversity is Life*, the first by Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Exec. Secretary UNEP/CMS, entitled "Saving Biodiversity-key messages in IYB & the roles of WAZA and UNEP/CMS. Claude Martin, Former D.G. of WWF International presented "Where zoos can make a difference to Biodiversity". Sara Oldfield from BGCI spoke on conserving plant diversity, the role of botanic gardens and zoos. The keynote speakers, well known in the international conservation community, always are carefully selected to enhance the WAZA theme. It is one of the many attractions of the WAZA Conference.

The session themes for the Congress were i) Conservation - Strategic approaches (Chaired by Jo Gipps), Conservation and Projects, (Jenny Gray) Conservation Projects (Chaired by Theo Pagel) and Challenges for the Future I & II , Chaired by Manfred Niekisch, and finally Communication and Partnership chaired by Jorg Junhold. All presentations will be published in WAZA Proceedings.

WAZA has many committees which met from Monday through Thursday at scheduled times other than Congress, some of them through lunch and dinner. The Committees which met, led by their Chairs, were Conservation and Sustainability, Jo Gipps; Committee for Population Management CPM, Dave Morgan; IZE/Education, Kathy Lenhardt; Marketing, Jorg Junhold; Associations, Sally Walker; Ethics and Animal Welfare, Chris West and David Jones; Aquarium, Heather Koldewey; Science/Veterinary, Heribert Hofer; Membership, Lee Ehmke. Other associated issues or organisation reports, meetings or workshops: Report on WAZA 2010, Gerald Dick; "Surplus disposition and other forms of reproduction control", H. Hofer; CBSG, Bob Lacy; Amphibian Ark, Kevin Zippel; ISIS, Roger Stonecipher; Review of the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy at the half-way (5-year mark), Jo Gipps; WAZA Climate Change engagement progress, Paul Pearce-Kelly; Developing criteria for GSMP selection; Future of Zoos, Bob Weise, Robert Cook, Bob Lacy, Jenny Gray; and presentations of new members. Mark Penning gave the President's Report and Gerald Dick, Exec. Dir., reported on the Executive Office and International Relations.

Apologies for being unable to include summaries of various presentations and reports. The Proceedings of the Sixty-fifth Annual Conference will be available soon. The Proceedings of the Sixty-fourth Annual Conference conducted last year, 2009 in St. Louis are available on the WAZA website <www.waza.org> under the Marketing and media section. It is entitled "Zoos and Aquariums: Global Challenges, Opportunities and Strategies".

There are similarities between CBSG and WAZA meetings but each has its own unique character and atmosphere. Although they are "back to back" with literally no down-time in between, one is never bored! Even though some of the faces are the same, they wear different hats, and are concerned with different approaches and issues, depending upon their role in the meeting.

The organised global zoo community which includes hundreds of zoos is very fortunate to be represented by these two organisations, CBSG & WAZA which make all efforts to keep zoos on a solid conservation track: research, education, and animal welfare as well as other challenges that emerge in our modern and complicated world.





**B.S. Bonal, Member Secretary, Central Zoo Authority
presenting at WAZA 2010 Conference.
Photos by ZOO.**



WAZA Animal Welfare Meeting



WAZA Overworked Working Group



WAZA Council Meeting at Koln Zoo



**Koln Zoo 2010 Host passes the WAZA banner to
Prague Zoo Host for 2011**