

# CBSG 2009 Working Group Report (Summaries)

## CBSG Climate Change WG

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### Working Group recommendation to CBSG

Recognising the possibly fatal climate change impacts on the Great Barrier Reef, the working group urges that CBSG provides all assistance possible to facilitate an urgent review of the reef's viability in the face of climate change and to explore best response options. The recent review initiative detailed in the Royal Society's report Climate change and the fate of the Amazon is a guide for how such a review might be realised.

Major Royal Society working group review confirmed viability threshold levels for coral reefs to be <350pp CO<sub>2</sub>. Associated working group statement (including President of WAZA and Head of IUCN SSC Groups) and justification documents produced. Professor Veron's summation presentation viewable on Royal Society website.

### Working Group recommendation to WAZA

Zoos and aquaria can make an invaluable contribution through their *ex situ* and *in situ* programme work, research and support focus and above all their unique ability to directly engage with the public. On this last key area we urge that WAZA put in place as matter of urgency a climate change response strategy as detailed in the proposal for WAZA Council consideration.

### WAZA Global climate change response strategy

In any but the early and rapid emissions reduction scenario there are no realistic conservation response options capable of contending with the profoundly altered environmental states our planet will have entered.

### 2008 CBSG Climate Change Working Group

Responding to the urgent climate change challenge Following up on WAZA's 2006 climate change resolution, the dramatically increased severity of the global warming threat (as clarified at the 2008 CBSG and WAZA briefing and review sessions) requires the international zoo community to realise its tremendous engagement potential. To this end, all necessary assistance should be provided to the Conservation Committee and IZE colleagues to produce the most appropriate engagement response for the zoo community.



### A key message

The international zoo community needs to convey the message that the climate change threat highlights that sustainable living and the conservation of the natural world are key to ensuring human survival.

Through close collaboration with the regional zoo associations this task can most effectively meet local issues and associated responses. The opportunity now exists for greatly improved collaborations with subject matter specialists and access to associated information, *via* the WAZA tool kit and other reference tools.

To help realise this task it is proposed that a climate change task group be established of a composition reflecting the relevant skills and drawing from the WAZA membership. Additional specialists are to be co-opted as necessary.

This unparalleled global environmental threat demands an unprecedented response in the short time we have left to make a difference.

### Review of 2008 CBSG WG Climate Change

- CBSG (Phil Miller/Bob Lacy) worked with Barry Brook (University of Adelaide) and others to explore meta-modelling approach to integrate climate change data, and to compare with existing RAMAS tools. Current climate models do not sufficiently incorporate biodiversity impacts into their

calculations (e.g. feedback systems associated with ocean plankton, deforestation). Recommended need to systematically review all CBSG tools for adequate incorporation of CC relevant information.

- CBSG can serve as link between research and zoo communities to facilitate research progress (physiological tolerances etc). Start a process to collate relevant data from zoos using newly developed mass collaboration tools.
- Climate change-relevant zoo and aquaria data needs to be utilised. An envisaged focus of the proposed CBSG/WAZA Climate Change Response Task Force.
- Climate change impact considerations need to be sufficiently incorporated into the zoo and aquaria collection planning process. Also zoos' research and conservation programme areas. How to respond to the need to rescue species from "doomed ecosystems" needs special consideration.
- Species impact evaluation ability has progressed significantly over the past year (see Bioclimate database) and should enable Zoo Collection Plans to incorporate the new information.
- Zoos and aquaria should develop/support field programmes with strong climate resilience parameters build into to reintroduction, habitat management etc.
- Continue to expand and disseminate the climate change and biodiversity information network tool (the web-enabled iteration of which has been renamed Bioclimate) [www.bioclimate.org](http://www.bioclimate.org) .

## Elephant Working Group WG CBSG 2009

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This workshop was to develop a framework for how captive elephant management can best serve conservation of the species.

Elephant themed working groups were held at the annual CBSG meetings in 2004 and 2005. This year's working group reviewed suggestions from both of those groups, and discussed whether earlier recommendations had lead to progress.

The discussion topic for the CBSG 2009 Elephant Working Group was introduced: agreeing on a better framework linking captive elephant management to the needs of conservation of the species. The unique situation of Asian elephants was also mentioned, with almost one third of the worldwide population in captivity and a majority of those

animals managed in the Asian range countries. Discussions considered these range country facilities, and how these animals are able to serve the needs of conservation.

Initial discussions within the working group listed all the ways in which participants felt that captive elephant management serves conservation. Next, the group listed major threats to elephant conservation worldwide. Then participants agreed on the major "roadblocks" which hinder the ability to effectively leverage captive elephant management to support conservation. It was also noted that there was a need for communication from captive management facilities and from conservation representatives from elephant range states.

It was agreed that overall there should be a better message from captive management facilities, and that there is an urgent need for current global action plans and priorities for the conservation of Asian and African elephants.

The working group then focused on setting a goal, objectives and actions that can be carried out to develop the framework linking captive elephant management and conservation of the species. The following lists the goal agreed to by the working group participants, as well as objectives with proposed actions to achieve these objectives.

### **Goal : Conservation of Elephant populations to ensure their survival in the wild.**

It was agreed by the working group participants that Objectives and Actions should be prioritized on the basis of conservation urgency and needed expertise.

1. Build partnerships for elephant conservation. Reduce distrust by getting the message out via increased communication.
2. Maximize the use of captive elephant populations to leverage support for wild populations. Link elephant exhibits and visitor programs to conservation projects on a long-term basis.
3. Cooperation between captive and wild population management.
4. Identify which elephant populations need urgent action.
5. Maintain self-sustaining populations in representative habitats across the ranges. Facilitate restoration of degraded habitat.
6. Manage HEC/Educate and prevent conflict to minimize human and elephant fatalities. Facilitate research on mitigation and consequences of translocation.
7. Save habitats.
8. Reduce/stop trade in illegal elephant products and live elephants.

## Collaboration Among Asian Zoos WG

**Participants:** *Nancy Clum, Robert Cook, Gerald Dick, Nate Flesness, Hidemasa Hori, Bosook Kim, Kanako Nishimoto, David Reed, Christian Schmidt, Yasumasa Tomita, Kathy Traylor-Holzer, Eric Tsao, Sally Walker*

Several factors have contributed to a historical lack of collaboration in the region. These include differences in language, culture, economic status and political status, as well as different visions of zoo management, standards, professional skills, and record keeping. In the past there has been no communication on a regular and frequent basis, and there is no overall zoo association that integrates the conservation activities across the entire region. Only a few institutions were represented but several topics were discussed and recommendations made to further collaborative efforts in this region.

### **Proposed Regional Association**

SW was asked to summarize a discussion held at SEAZA annual conference at Seoul Zoo, August 2009. SEAZA Board proposed the formation of a more inclusive zoo association to encompass all regional and national zoo associations within Asia. It would not interfere with the operation of existing zoo associations but would seek to strengthen all Asian zoos and their programs. Advantages to such an association include the establishment of a secretariat and a continental focus. SEAZA is the primary contact.

### **Priority Species Collaboration**

Last year the working group discussed the goal to identify high priority species for *ex situ* management within the region. The goals for this year are:

1. GOAL: Identify priority species for Asian zoos.
2. GOAL: Identify at least one project for a jointly-held priority species as a model to encourage communication, participation and collaboration.

A suggestion was made to focus first on interested countries with functional zoo associations and to expand to others as the effort progresses.

Once data are collected regarding the priority and managed species in the region, one or more species can be selected to develop a collaborative project. The working group discussed several criteria:

- Asian species
- Easy to manage
- Species of interest to the institutions
- Large enough *ex situ* population
- Held by multiple regions/associations
- Species of conservation concern
- Avoid species with taxonomy uncertainty, at least initially as a model project
- Potential candidates include the red panda (multiple regions, conservation concern)
- Pangolin is another (but is a difficult species to manage and breed)
- Black bear subspecies also a future candidate; taxonomic uncertainty.

### **Zoos in Need**

The issue of needy zoos in Asia was discussed by the group. SW has been working in South Asia for some time to assist in the improvement of zoos and promote zoo legislation focused on standards. India was the first to develop zoo legislation and set up a Central Zoo Authority, which 15 years later has improved many zoos and closed many others when deemed necessary. The WAZA evaluation tool was developed by a working group in WAZA set up

to address the issue of zoos needing improvement, and is being used by some zoo associations in a variety of ways. SEAZA has been conducting their own assessments or zoo standards evaluations within Southeast Asian zoos for a number of years. In South Asia, much of the problem is administrative rather than financial, with mandatory transfer of high-level staff (directors, veterinarians, curators) and lack of adequate value given to the potential of lower level staff. National legislation regarding zoo standards has been helpful in India, which is an excellent role model for encouraging similar action by other South Asian countries.

The group discussed the possibility of bottom-up assistance, such as providing training, education and resources. Basic training (e.g., record keeping, individual animal identification) is one of the most important activities required.

In some cases, zoo staff has only ever seen "bad" zoos, and would benefit from seeing good designs and management. ZooLex is a potential source, but visiting good zoos is very valuable. It would be valuable to have good zoos invite zoo staff from other needy zoos, perhaps hosting a training program to provide an opportunity to see good zoos.

### **Future Plans**

The working group tentatively plans to reconvene at the 2010 CBSG annual meeting provided that members still view such a working group session as valuable at that time. Possible topics include national status reports and review of progress regarding the group's goals and recommended actions, particularly the development of one or more collaborative projects around high priority species.

### **Global Cheetah *Ex situ* Planning WG**

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### **Goal: Development of a Global *ex situ* management plan for cheetahs**

The focus of this working group is to outline strategies of how the North American cheetah SSP program can facilitate and begin networking internationally towards global cheetah population management. Neither the European (EEP) nor the North American (SSP) cheetah populations are self-sustainable and rely on imports from Africa to bolster demographic needs. The current status of each the SSP and EEP populations necessitates that new animals be brought in for population management to maintain demographics and fulfill

facility requests. The largest free-ranging population of cheetahs is in Namibia (~3,000 individuals). This country also maintains many captive non-releasable individuals potentially available to contribute to the global *ex situ* population. Recent attempts to transfer animals from the Namibian captive population have failed for the North American population; therefore, the largest and most easily-available sources for purchase of cheetahs are breeding institutions in South Africa. Regionally managed captive populations worldwide are keen to begin transfer individual cheetahs among various institutions. Towards this end, recent discussions have focused on global meta-population strategies for cheetah management to reach the goal of establishing self-sustaining *ex situ* populations.

#### **Goals/Central Themes:**

What are the most important goals for creating a self-sustaining global *ex situ* cheetah population?

- I. Establish and implement cheetah meta-population/global management program.
- II. Update studbooks and management plans for each region.
- III. Increased breeding success to make global populations self-sustainable.
- IV. Generate international husbandry manual (to be coordinated by regional directors).
- V. Update disease management workshop (to be coordinated by regional vets by 2011).

#### **Species Conservation Planning WG**

**The objectives of this group were to :**

- Explore mechanisms by which CBSG's conservation planning processes can be improved by integration with the SCSP process.
- Think about Jan/Feb 2010 CBSG workshop design and goals.
- Determine the implications for application of tools to the question of population stability (both intensively and extensively managed populations).

#### **Background:**

The SSC is interested in revamping their conservation planning process to emphasise action and ultimate success for species persistence and function. A Species Conservation Strategic Planning task force has been established, Bob Lacy is the chair of this taskforce.

Traditionally SSC specialist groups planning:

- are focused on a single or few species although some have multiple species impacts.
- have been developed by biologists alone i.e. no diversity of stakeholders which is built into CBSG processes and recognised as an element essential for success.
- visioning has been quite high level and does not necessarily define success: avoid extinction for how long, save all populations, within a certain range, define cultural relevance.

- lack details such as the barriers to achieving goals and what will need to be accomplished to succeed?.

What will be necessary and sufficient, who is responsible, by when must this be performed?.

The result is plans developed and implemented at the policy level, providing guidance but not getting the work done the ground.

CBSG has been chosen as the lead agency to drive forward and coordinate other SSC groups in this area due to its history with successful conservation planning in the past. There was some resistance to CBSG taking this lead role - others have expertise and felt this would be undermined if they were to be subsumed by CBSG. A Conservation Planning SG was also suggested to be run by CI, WWF or some other independent group – there was even more resistance to this suggestion. So, a new secretariat along-side Red List lead by CBSG but with equal partners CBSG. It is a challenge for CBSG to determine how we contribute without appearing to dominate the process. There are no firm terms of reference yet for this body, but there are general guidelines.

A new SSC tool has been developed to address the shortfalls of this process. The SSC will evolve, promote and implement this tool over the coming years. The new SCS process and its relationship with PHVA's in particular are in the briefing notes and handouts and on the following websites:

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/scshandbook\\_2\\_12\\_08\\_compressed.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/scshandbook_2_12_08_compressed.pdf)

[http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/scptf\\_overview.pdf](http://www.cbsg.org/cbsg/content/files/scptf_overview.pdf)

The apparently similar nature of the Species Conservation Strategy (SCS) tool and the CBSG planning tools such as PHVA and CAMPs has prompted us to clarify the role of each planning tool and perhaps modify the tools to reduce the risk of confusion with SSC processes. These roles were discussed (Status Review, Goals, Goal targets, Objectives Objective targets, Actions, Tools relevance, etc.) as well as how to mesh the processes, Prioritisation, the upcoming Jan-Feb meeting, etc.

#### **Recommendation from this group were:**

- To put together a summary paragraph of a proposal to be delivered to SSC Chair at WAZA.
- To put together a workshop planning team to begin dialog with SSC Chair about workshop and subsequent proposal.
- To offer to open communication between the SSC and WCPA to link planning efforts as a way to develop an effective strategic prioritisation tool for species and habitat planning.