

Africa : what they are doing to improve their zoos

Dave Morgan is Director of PAAZAB, the African Association of Zoos and Aquaria. Dave and his colleagues developed a process for assessing the state of individual zoos in their association. It was developed in 2006 from several sources including Central Zoo Authority material and some national European zoo associations' proposed accreditation systems. The reason it was developed for the association to ensure a standardised system of assessment whenever any of the Association staff or members are deputed to conduct an inspection. One premise behind it is that in the event they have to turn an applicant down, they can produce written and standardised cause for doing so. There are more positive uses for this audit also.

For example, the audit also lays the beginning of an institutional paper-trail that could potentially lead to that facility undergoing accreditation by PAAZAB. PAAZAB Council approved the idea of requiring a formal inspection of an applicant zoo the formalization of the audit form as well.

As there have been only two applicants since the form was put into use, which was very recently, it is soon to tell if there are any problems with this approach or format. Dave notes however that the copy of the filled in form for a zoo that was to be inspected and the Director told him that he found the questions very useful in sorting management issues that they were unaware of. He also said that the format of the form gave a clear indication of what was expected in terms of best practice in modern zoos. A blank copy of the form is of course given to the applicant zoo prior to the visit so they know in advance what they are looking for.

SAZARC, our South Asia Zoo Association, does not have an official process for inspection of zoos. The association has been shaped by a philosophy of inclusivity, with the purpose of exposing the zoos from countries without legislation (that would be the non-Indian countries of South Asia) to training, literature, etc. which would encourage them to improve welfare, ethics, standards and to work towards legislation.

Every country and every region has a different set of circumstances and their regulations will reflect these. For example, India and most other countries in South Asia categorise almost any captive wild animal facility together for the purpose of their regional or national association and for legislation. Africa is a different region, with 26 countries, almost all of which have an immense tourism industry associated with wild animals. Africa is also much harder to manage as a single unit, due to the diversity of languages and cultures. Trying to make legislation to cover all of those facilities in it would be impossible. In South Asia, it is doable and desirable. PAAZAB audit form follows.

Institutional Application Preliminary Audit Form of the African Association of Zoos and Aquaria

Mission:

Conservation through cooperation.

Vision:

African Zoos and Aquaria internationally recognized as being effective and trusted centres of animal welfare, conservation, education, research and service.

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Under the constitution of PAAZAB, zoos are defined as being: Permanent sited legal establishments, primarily open to and administered for the visiting public which, in accordance with animal welfare and scientific management principles, living organisms are maintained in ethical conditions and under predominantly *ex situ* circumstances, for the foremost and demonstrable purpose of conservation through exhibition, education and research and where the principal business rationale is not the commercial trade in living organisms or their products.

The scope of this definition specifically excludes nature reserves, game farms, botanical gardens, plant nurseries, research laboratories, circuses, pet shops, animal dealerships/brokers and commercial breeding operations that are not open to the public, animal rehabilitation facilities and sanctuaries.

PAAZAB personnel will assess applications to PAAZAB for Institutional Membership against this definition by an on-site visit.

The terms of reference for this assessment are as follows:

1. Permanent siting of the facility;
2. A supportive environment for the animals, personnel and the public;
3. Active involvement in the maintenance of biodiversity;
4. Management for the wider benefit of the community; and
5. Provision of educational opportunities for learning about animals and their environments.

Institutional Management must be able to demonstrate compliance.

Auditor key question = 'Show me . . . '.

In this respect, the attached audit form will apply.

Key:

ACC = Acceptable (requires no immediate attention, normal within the profession)

QUEST = Questionable (should be improved or changed as soon as possible, but is not a critical matter)

UNACC = Unacceptable (must be corrected, does not meet professional standards, may be unsafe or detrimental to the facility, its staff, its visitors, or its animals).

STAFF

1. Are current job descriptions on file?
2. Do staff members regularly meet to discuss work-related problems and possible solutions?
3. In general are there good working relations in the zoo?
4. Is staff provided an opportunity and encouraged to seek continuing education and/or training specific to their current or future position?
5. Are the CEO and staff members up-to-date with developments in their field of expertise?
6. Is there sufficient staff to properly care for the collection and to conduct the facilities' programmes?

SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS (where applicable)

7. Does the support organisation raise funds for the facility? Are funds derived from activities consistent with facility goals?
8. Does the support organisation participate in the decision-making process as to how the funds are utilised?
9. Are activities sponsored by the support organisation meeting the goals of both it and the facility?

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

10. Does the facility have amusement rides/playground areas near or on facility grounds?
11. Is the facility easy to reach by car and/or public transport?
12. Is there adequate provision for disabled visitors?
13. Are the rest rooms maintained in a sanitary condition?
14. Is the method of sewage disposal adequate?
15. Is the method for disposal of toxic/hazardous materials adequate?
16. Are there adequate provisions for the proper storage and disposal of animal waste?
17. Are public food services adequate?
18. Are the grounds neat and clean?
19. Are paths and roads in good repair?
20. Are the buildings in good repair/
21. Is the general impression given the exhibits acceptable in terms of modern zoo practice?
22. Are the plants and trees maintained throughout the facility?

FINANCIAL MATTERS

23. Does the facility have continuing financial support?
24. Is the total financial support adequate to meet the needs of the facility?
25. Is there a separate budget available for capital development?
26. Is there a planned capital development programme and are adequate funds available?

ANIMAL CARE

Veterinary Care

27. Has a programme of veterinary care been established and is it maintained under the supervision of a veterinarian?
28. Does the veterinary care provided to the animals appear to be adequate?
29. Do the animals appear to be in good health?
30. Does the facility maintain up-to-date records on the health of the collection?
31. If veterinary facilities are provided, are they adequate to meet the needs of the collection (including quarantine, isolation, surgery and holding facilities)?
32. Are the facilities for collecting, restraining and if necessary, for administering a general anaesthetic or for the putting animals down and for the after-care of animals recovering from sedation, sufficient and in satisfactory order?
33. Does the facility use controlled drugs? If yes, are there appropriate protocols established for the use of such drugs and antidotes (e.g.: procedures established in the event the veterinarian is not present to administer the drugs)?
34. Are controlled drugs safely kept under lock and key with access by authorised personnel only?
35. Is there adequate capture equipment available and is the staff trained in its use?

36. Is there a sufficient number of staff trained in the use of chemical capture equipment?
37. Is there a safe and effective programme for the control of pests and where necessary, predators?
38. Does the facility normally perform necropsies?
39. Are deceased animals disposed of properly?
40. Are deceased animals stored away from food?

ANIMAL CARE

Enclosures

41. Are the enclosures clean and well maintained and of appropriate size for the species exhibited?
42. Is it apparent that enclosures are of sufficient size and that the animals are managed in such a way that:
 - a. Undue dominance by individuals is avoided?
 - b. Persistent and unresolved conflict is avoided?
 - c. The physical carrying capacity is not overburdened?
 - d. An uncontrolled build-up of parasites and other pathogens is prevented?
 - e. All animals that are in visibly adjoining enclosures appear to be those that do not interact in an excessively stress way?
43. Is separate accommodation provided where appropriate for pregnant mothers and animals with young?
44. Are animals kept in temporary accommodation? If yes, is their situation regularly assessed and evaluated?
45. Do the enclosures provide for the well-being of the animals throughout the year?
46. Are enclosure substrates, design features and furniture sufficient to provide shelter for and meet the behavioural needs of all specimens displayed, especially those kept in multi-species exhibits?
47. Is sufficient suitable equipment provided to aid and encourage normal behaviours?
48. Do trees within or near enclosures appear to be in a safe condition?
49. Do water quality methods and controls programme appear to be adequate for aquatic exhibits?

ANIMAL CARE

Nutrition

50. Does the quantity and quality of food and drink provided for the animals appear to be adequate?
51. Are supplies of food and drink kept and prepared under hygienic conditions?
52. Is it apparent that food and drink are placed so as to be accessible to every animal within a particular enclosure?
53. Is food and drink provided in such a way that:
 - a. It meets the biological needs of the animal (time and frequency of feeding)?
 - b. It meets the behavioural needs?
 - c. Contamination is minimized?

ANIMAL CARE

Visitors & Animal Contact

54. Is it apparent that the animals are not unnaturally managed (locked outside) or provoked for the benefit of the viewing public?
55. Is feeding by visitors permitted?
If yes, is this on a selective basis only with suitable food sold, provided or approved by the management? If no, have adequate measures been taken?
56. Does the facility have animal demonstrations, shows and/or animal rides?
If yes, is there a protocol to ensure the animals' well-being and safety?
57. Are animals handled only by or under the supervision of authorised personnel?
58. Does the handling of animals by personnel appear to be consistent with the animal's welfare?

ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTION

Animal Records

59. Are records held of all individual animals?
60. Is the system of recording information suitable for ready examination?
61. Is an individual member of staff designated as being

responsible for the facilities' animal record keeping system?

62. Are the collection's records protected from fire, flooding and other natural hazards?

63. Are duplicate records stored in an appropriate separate facility?

64. Is the facility an ISIS subscriber?

ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTION

Acquisition, exchange and transport

65. Do the facilities' acquisition and disposition fully comply with the PAAZAB Code of Professional Ethics?

66. Are there adequate facilities from crating and transporting animals?

67. Does the facility utilise wildlife in off-site situations (shopping malls, schools, events)?

68. If yes to #67,

a. Does the facility make certain that the off-site programmes do not cause undue stress for the animals?

b. Is there sufficient transportation and care provided whilst the animals are off-site?

c. Are animals kept separate from the collection especially following an appearance off-site?

d. Do formal animal training programmes provide for the well-being and overall health of those participating?

ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTION

Collection Plan

69. Does the facility have an up-to-date collection plan?

70. Is animal identification adequate and implemented?

SAFETY & SECURITY

Enclosures, Barriers and Exits

71. Are the enclosure barriers designed, constructed and in such a condition to contain animals within the desired enclosures?

72. Are the enclosures free from vegetation or other items that would aid animal escape?

73. Where appropriate are warning signs displayed in respect of enclosures containing hazardous animals and in respect of enclosure barriers that include any electrified section?

74. Are barriers designed, constructed and in such a condition that they cannot trap or represent a hazard to visitors, especially children?

75. Are standoff barriers designed to discourage children from climbing through or over them or from sitting on them, without providing features likely to cut or cause injury?

76. Are gates/doors to enclosures containing hazardous animals securely locked at all times?

77. Do gates/doors to enclosures appear to be as strong and effective in containing the animals as the rest of the enclosure barrier?

78. Where appropriate, are adequate standoff barriers provided to prevent direct contact between visitors and enclosures containing hazardous animals?

79. Are surfaces where visitors are likely to be walking whilst looking at exhibits even and non-slippery or grassed?

80. Do buildings and structures to which the public have access appear to be safe?

81. Is the perimeter boundary of the facility clearly defined?

82. Is the perimeter fence independent of all animal enclosures?

SAFETY & SECURITY

Drive-through exhibits

83. Is a satisfactory system of double-gates provided for enclosures containing dangerous animals?

84. Is the type of grid or gate system adequate?

85. Is there a satisfactory alternative method of opening or closing mechanically operated gates in the event of power failure or other emergency?

86. Do operators of mechanically operated gates have a clear, unobstructed view of the gates under their control and of the area in the vicinity of the gates?

87. Are satisfactory precautions and emergency procedures applied in respect of visitors where hazardous animals are kept in drive-through enclosures?

SAFETY & SECURITY

Emergencies

88. Is first aid readily available to the staff and public?

89. Are personnel adequately trained in first aid?

90. Are emergency procedures adequate in the case of major injury or death from a large or venomous animal?

91. Is there a procedure in the event of a dangerous animal escape?

92. Are emergency drills conducted?

93. Are there sufficient exits from the zoo for emergency situations?

SAFETY & SECURITY

Health & Safety

94. Are personnel who handle animals adequately informed regarding common zoonoses?

95. Can personnel safely service all exhibits?

96. Does the facility have written procedures for working with hazardous animals?

97. Are service areas adequately protected from visitor access?

98. Does the facility make use of firearms?

99. Are firearms kept in a secured area?

100. Are personnel trained in the use of firearms?

CONSERVATION

101. Does the facility; governing authority and personnel actively participate in local, regional, provincial, academic, national and international conservation endeavours?

Describe how:

102. Does the facility participate in any of the following conservation initiatives:

a. Educational programmes/materials that increase public awareness on the importance of preserving ecosystems?

b. Training programmes that provide field experiences?

c. Programmes that aid the transfer of relevant technology to the field?

d. Programmes that purchase land or contribute funds to establish reserves

e. Field research programmes and development of economic incentives to preserve ecosystems?

131. Is conservation included in the message of the facility to the visiting public?

132. Does the facility practice energy conservation and environmental management?

EDUCATION

133. Does the facility have an education programme?

134. Is the education programme under the direction of a paid professional trained in education?

135. Do the educational facilities meet the needs of the facility?

136. Do personnel have an adequate and accessible library?

137. Do the exhibits and collection demonstrate an educational theme?

138. Does the facility have a documented educational policy?

139. Does the facilities education programme address the role of zoos/aquaria in conservation?

140. Are exhibit graphics legible?

141. Is the collection identified and interpreted for the visiting public?

RESEARCH

142. Does the facility employ research personnel?

143. Does the facility participate in any form of research? Describe.

144. Does the facility have cooperative research activities with colleges and universities?

AUDIT CONDUCTED BY:

Date of AUDIT:

Recommendation to the Executive Committee of PAAZAB:
Signed: