

CIRCC : Committee for Inter-Regional Cooperation in Conservation Mid-year Meeting Minutes

The Committee for Inter-Regional Cooperation in Conservation or CIRCC met at Melbourne Zoo on 28 April 2005 for their Mid-year meeting. CIRCC is the old "Conservation Coordinators" group which used to meet under the auspices of CBSG. Now, CIRCC is a Committee of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

This article is not exactly Minutes, but just a way of explaining the kinds of things we discuss in CIRCC.

WAZA has an Inter-regional *ex situ* species management programme on the anvil and CIRCC had requested that the WAZA Marketing Committee review the programme concept to develop a more easily promoted and attractive name or entity. The Marketing Committee has not got back so far.

Some time ago WAZA agreed that a proposed EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquariums) database for *ex situ* projects would provide a prototype for a global effort to compile information on conservation projects undertaken by the zoo and aquarium community. This was to avoid duplication and to ensure standardisation of data. The EAZA committee is still wrestling with the database but hopes to have something ready soon.

CIRCC also requested the Marketing and other WAZA committees to input on a Draft "WAZA Position Statement on Acquisition of Animals from the Wild" before forwarding it to WAZA Council. This request for a position statement came from an earlier CIRCC meeting in which some members from Europe felt that it was not correct to give out a public image of zoos being completely self-sustaining with regard to wild animals, when some species are not threatened and in good populations and can easily tolerate wild harvest for zoos. Also some zoo populations are so genetically impoverished they require fresh genetic material from the wild. The South Asian representative objected to this stating that South Asia just barely has emerged from a reputation for taking animals from the wild and has it under control. Such a liberal position statement might open the floodgates of unscrupulous zoos once again. However, this is still to be decided.

There was a Report on progress regarding WAZA approval of CBSG-approved transponder recommendations for the use of ISO compliant microchips. In the past there has been concern regarding the ability of the ISO standards to ensure unique and unalterable codes.

The CIRCC meeting reviewed the proposed International Studbook questionnaire which had been circulated. Leslie Dickie, representing Chris West, International Studbook Chairman, answered questions about same. CIRCC also reviewed a proposed briefing mechanism for reviewing the appropriateness of a new or vacant International Studbook. It was also discussed how to develop a mentoring programme to encourage and assist the development of structures for regional cooperation in developing regions and a policy statement on ownership of data in studbooks.

CIRCC has developed a statement on the importance of encouraging the reconciliation of studbook data with core ISIS data. This is, of course, of tremendous importance now when ISIS is developing the huge new ZIMS programme. It would not be good to transfer unreconciled information to the new software.

WAZA Inter-regional species management programmes were discussed. CIRCC has previously identified the need for developing application materials and support materials for indicating the types of programmes an Inter-regional Species Management programme would assist. There is an action plan underway for developing the WAZA IR SMP and ways of progressing this were discussed. CIRCC has previously decided to link the international studbook programme directly with the need for inter-regional management of the captive population of a species and to harmonise international studbook and inter-regional species management programme documentation. In this meeting CIRCC discussed the possibility of coordinating the administration of the international studbook programme and the IR SMP. The name for the programme mentioned earlier will help identify and promote the programme and attract donors to assisting with it.

A draft policy has been circulated for WAZA Inter-regional animal transfer. Final comments are due by the end of May. Comments received so far were reviewed.

At the November 2004 meeting of CIRCC, Mark Craig, Onnie Byers and Sally Walker were charged with developing a framework for a mentoring programme to encourage and assist the development of structures for regional collaboration in developing regions. Their proposal was included in the briefing material and will be reviewed before the next meeting.

Species selection criteria developed by EAZA European Association of Zoos and Aquariums were reviewed for Lower Vertebrate and Invertebrate Taxon Advisory Groups. A Power Point Presentation has been developed on this topic and this was showed to the meeting.

CIRCC attendees spent some time discussing the implementation of the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy and its own role in this implementation.

The ISIS trustees reported on outcomes of ISIS Board meeting as Director Nate Fleisness was not able to attend. ISIS is fully engaged in meetings of ZIMS and IADISC to insure that the new Zoological Information Management System moves forward as fast and as accurately as possible.

The register of training grant assessors need to be expanded to include people from Africa, South East Asia and Latin America. The current register of grant assessors was reviewed. Also several changes to the CIRCC membership register were recorded and the updated register was reviewed.