

## Fifteen years E(C)AZA



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*Members of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria have collaborated in one way or another, by exchanging animals, by sharing ideas and by sharing experiences for more than a hundred years. The oldest national zoo association is the German Association of Zoo Directors (Verband Deutscher Zoodirektoren) founded in 1887, which gave birth to the first international zoo association in 1935 at Basle. This International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens, however, had to be refounded after the second world-war in 1946.*

## Joining forces through EEPs

The need for a closer cooperation between zoos became obvious after the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) came into force in 1975. Suddenly zoos saw themselves cut off from the import of wild-caught animals, the trade of which now was strictly regulated. Zoos had to breed animals they wanted to exhibit; to build up self-sustaining populations of animals in order to become independent from import of wild animals. To this end they had to join their forces, as exemplified by the Species Survival Plan (SSP) developed by the American Zoo Association (AZA) in 1983. As at this time there was no European zoo association in existence: it took Europe a while to follow the American example. Dick van Dam of Rotterdam Zoo, at that time president of the international zoo association, Bart Lensink of Artis Zoo Amsterdam and Fred Daman of Antwerp Zoo took initiative, inviting European colleagues to a meeting on 15-16 June 1985. The meeting took place in the board room of Antwerp Zoo, in order to discuss the possibilities of coordinated breeding programmes in Europe. The invitation disappointingly was followed just by a couple of people, namely Bent Jørgensen of Copenhagen Zoo, Ilkka Koivisto of Helsinki Zoo, Jean-Marc Lernould of Mulhouse Zoo, Christian Schmidt, at that time curator at Zürich Zoo, and myself. This meeting has to be regarded as the birth-hour of the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP).

A second meeting was held in the same year, on 15 November 1985, at Cologne. Twenty-six zoos from nine different countries were represented at the meeting and the first 19 EEPs were

established. Wilbert Neugebauer of Stuttgart Zoo was elected as chairman of the EEP Committee.



A world-wide logo for coordinated breeding programmes was selected and rules for running programmes were made and published in an EEP coordinator's manual. The procedure of selecting species for new EEPs had to be developed, and Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) were formed in 1990. Soon it became obvious that the overall coordination and administration could not be handled by the EEP Committee alone. The Dutch Zoo Federation therefore jumped in and offered assistance to establish an EEP Executive Office at Amsterdam (1990). The first director of the office was Bert de Boer, followed by Koen Brouwer in 1993. Computer software was developed for the breeding programmes, and since 1991 an EEP Yearbook, containing all annual reports of the various coordinators and the proceedings of the EEP conferences has been published, serving as an important information source for collection planning of each zoo.

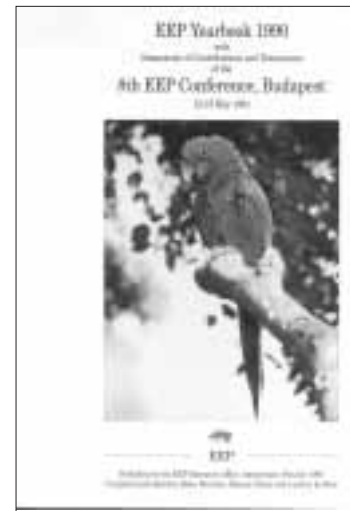
As there was no European zoo association initially, breeding programmes depended totally on voluntary cooperation. It would not have made sense to

build up breeding programmes within the various countries, e.g. in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France etc. To establish vital populations it was necessary to include the whole genetic reservoir of each species present in Europe.

Europe was divided by the Iron Curtain in the 1980's however. At that time it would have been impossible to found an all-European zoo association. But zoos east of the Iron Curtain were able to participate in the EEPs right from the beginning, even without a formal structure. The first EEP conference in an eastern European country took place at the Budapest Zoo in 1991.

## International developments

The history of the European zoo association cannot be understood without looking at international developments. The Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) grew to be a strong link between the zoo community and the conservation community in the 1980's. Ulie Seal, who sadly passed away this year, was appointed chairman of the then Liaison Group between IUCN, the World Conservation Union, and IUDZG, the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens,



in 1979. Under the leadership of Ulie Seal CBSG flourished; becoming one of the largest and most active specialist groups of IUCN's Species Survival Commission (SSC), a catalyst and coordinator for intensive management of threatened small populations, both in zoos and in the field.

Preceding the international zoo conference in Wroclaw 1986, a meeting of CBSG (at that time Captive Breeding Specialist Group) took place in Cologne. A 'Policy Statement on Captive Breeding' was formulated at this meeting. The policy statement was subsequently adopted by the IUCN in 1987, and as such became part of IUCN's world conservation strategy 'Caring for the Earth'. This statement recently was amended by 'IUCN Technical Guidelines on the management of *ex situ* populations for conservation'.

A computer based data record keeping system had been developed in the USA in 1974 through Ulie Seal's initiative, which explains why ISIS (the International Species Inventory System) and CBSG are housed under the same roof in Minneapolis. ISIS was transformed into an international membership based organisation during the 5th Conference on Breeding Endangered Species in Captivity, held in 1988 in Cincinnati. The benefits of ISIS membership, which include the free provision of ARKS, the software for in-house record keeping, SPARKS, medARKS, REGASP as well as all existent international and regional studbooks on a CD-ROM, are obvious. On the other hand 15 years is a long period in terms of information technology. Hardware as well as software has changed rapidly, which is why a new generation of data management software, Zoological Information and Management System (ZIMS), is now being developed.

## ECAZA and the Zoos' Directive

Clearly a European zoo association was not needed for Collection management, as we had the EEPs, CBSG, and ISIS. Zoos within the European Community, what is now the European Union, joined their forces in 1988 and founded ECAZA, the European Community Association of Zoos and Aquaria, for another reason. Animal welfare groups, with the declared aim to close down all zoos, had influence in the European Parliament. The Parliament urged the European Commission in Brussels to work on a directive on minimum standards for the care of animals in zoos in the community. This issue gave rise to a long term dispute, mainly between the Commission and the member states, and the Commission and the European Parliament, as well as between animal welfare groups and the zoo community. Eleven years later, in 1999, we had the EU Zoos' Directive.

The objectives of the directive are 'to protect wild fauna and to conserve biodiversity...', thereby strengthening the role of zoos in the conservation of biodiversity. Member states ... shall ensure that all zoos implement the following measures:

- Participating in research from which conservation benefits... and/or training in relevant conservation skills, and/or the exchange of information relating to species conservation, and/or captive breeding, repopulation or reintroduction of species into the wild;
- Promoting public education and awareness in relation to the conservation of biodiversity...;
- Accommodating their animals under conditions which aim to satisfy the biological and conservation requirements of the individual species...'

What else are we doing?

The history of the European zoo association has long been interwoven with the history of the Zoos' Directive. The results are quite satisfactory, but only because of continuous lobbying of ECAZA, the first European zoo association.

## ECAZA becomes EAZA

The Iron Curtain was torn into pieces as we went into the 1990's. This is when the famous chain of humans all along the three Baltic states was created, an impressive demonstration for liberty and independence, joined by the participants of a conference in occasion of the 125th anniversary of Moscow Zoo and the 50th anniversary of Tallinn Zoo in 1989. The political changes in the early 1990s allowed us to transform ECAZA into EAZA. Discussions began at a Council meeting at Cologne in February 1990. At the Annual General Meeting in Bristol 1990 I proposed that: "Membership should be offered to other zoos than those within the European community. ECAZA then will become an all-European umbrella organisation with the purpose of establishing breeding programmes with a central database and possibly other objectives."

EAZA was officially established two years later at the AGM in Stuttgart 1992, and at the same time the EEPs and the EEP Executive Office formally came under the auspices of the new organisation. EAZA's annual general meetings and the EEP conferences have been held together since 1994. Koen Brouwer was appointed as EAZA's first executive director at the Annual Conference in Poznan in 1995.

Fred Daman was the chairman of ECAZA and of EAZA for the first three years. Roger Wheeler of Edinburgh Zoo then filled this position for the next three years. Roger passed the chairman's hat to me in 1997. I was succeeded in 2000 by Miklos Persanyi

of Budapest Zoo, who became Minister for the Environment and Waters in Hungary earlier this year. Hans-Ove Larsson of Skansen in Stockholm consequently became interim chairman until Bert de Boer of Apenheul Primate Park took over leadership of the organisation at the annual general meeting in Leipzig.

The EAZA chairperson is elected by council members. The chair presides over council meetings and AGMs, and is the spokesman of our organisation. The chair is supported by the Executive Committee; consisting of the chair, a vice chair, a secretary, a treasurer and the chairs of the Standing Committees. For whatever reason, EAZA does not 'know' a past chairman. For the sake of continuity, Council appointed me as advisor to the committee, a task that I regard as a great honour.

If one looks closely at the succession of officers in the Executive Committee, it can be seen that all parts of Europe, from Scandinavia to the Iberian Peninsula, from the British Isles to Eastern European countries such as Hungary and Poland, are evenly represented.

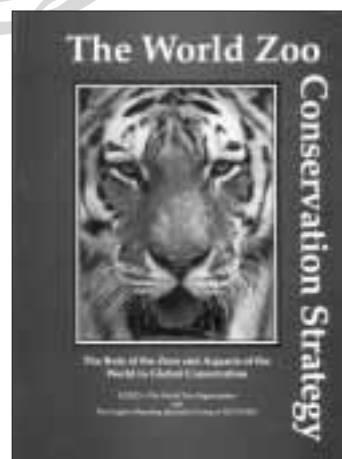
## Establishment of committees

The work load grew very quickly, and could not be undertaken by just Council and the Executive Committee any longer, resulting in establishment of committees for various tasks. One committee, the EEP Committee, as you have heard, is older than EAZA. During ECAZA's existence EEPs were administered independently from ECAZA - ECAZA was a political organisation. A Veterinary Committee established in 1989 dealt with legal issues rather than scientific or medical questions. Minutes from meetings held then are filled primarily with BALAI issues, another never ending story from Brussels. Five formal committees had been established when ECAZA metamorphosed into EAZA in 1992. In addition to the EEP and the Veterinary Committee there was a Membership and Ethics Committee, a Legislation Committee that was responsible for all legal matters except for BALAI, and an Aquarium Committee to reflect the specific concerns of aquaria.

Once we had opened the organisation for all European zoos, we found that we have to help zoos all over Europe to reach the highest possible professional standard. To this end a working group for technical support to Eastern and Central European zoological institutions, now the Technical Assistance and Animal Welfare Committee, was established in 1993. This committee - now chaired by Dominique Tropeano - organised various training workshops, e.g. in Romania and the Czech

Republic, and in 1995 established 'clearing houses', professional resource centres in various countries of eastern Europe, namely in Moscow, Warsaw, Kiev, Riga, Prague, and Budapest.

An Education Committee and a Research Committee were established in 1995. The Committee for Education and Exhibit Design, chaired by Lars Lunding Andersen, developed standards for education in member zoos of EAZA, which were adopted in 2001. There was a professional organisation of zoo educators before EAZA came into existence, which, just like the veterinarians aquarium curators and other professional groups, always have had their meetings to exchange ideas and to develop their profession. In the end, however, these organisations are part of EAZA - just as educators, veterinarians and aquarium curators are part of a zoo's staff. The year 2003 constitutes the first year that an education conference was conducted in conjunction with an EAZA conference. The purpose of this exercise was to bring two professions, curators and educators, closer to create a better understanding of each other's profession in order to make better zoos.



The objective of the Research Committee is to promote conservation and animal welfare through zoo and field based studies. The zoos' research work is stimulated by a regular research newsletter and research related conferences. After two meetings on 'Research and Captive Propagation' held 1994 in Erlangen and 1995 in Usti

nad Labem, we joined our forces with the 'Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research' at Berlin. An 'International Symposium on Physiology and Behaviour of Wild and Zoo Animals' has been held since 1996, alternating with the 'International Symposium on Wildlife Diseases in Zoo- and Wild Animals', conducted for the first time as early as 1958.

The first summit on environment took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Far reaching resolutions were laid down in the 'Agenda 21' and the 'Convention on Biological Diversity'. The zoos' response to Rio was 'The World Zoo Conservation Strategy' (WZCS) launched in 1993, the author of which was our current chairman Bert de Boer. To implement this strategy, a strategic planning workshop was conducted by the World Zoo Organisation in 1995 at Cologne, resulting in a paper called 'Zoo Future 2005'.

# From the EAZA Office

EAZA established a Conservation Committee in 1998. One of the first tasks of this committee was to build up an *in situ* conservation database. The first conservation awareness campaign, the bushmeat campaign, was launched in 2001. The following campaign, dedicated to the Atlantic rainforest in Brazil, was undertaken in 2002. The current campaign, focussing on tigers, is scheduled to be carried out for a period of two years to increase its effectiveness. A Conservation Forum will take place for the second time at Angers/France in 2004. Now we have committees for the three major tasks of zoos: education, research, and conservation.

Finally, we have a Marketing Committee which grew out of a preceding working group in 2000. Among other activities, this committee organises marketing conferences on different themes. From time to time working groups are formed on certain topics such as the 'Policy Guidelines on Surplus and Brokers'/Dealers' Involvement', approved in 1996.

so obvious that almost every zoo in Europe wants to become member. Of course EAZA never wanted to exclude zoos from participation. On the other hand membership can only be provided to institutions which fulfil the obligations as laid down in the 'EAZA Constitution', the 'Bylaws to the Constitution', the 'EAZA Standards for the Accommodation of Animals in Zoos', the 'Policy Guidelines on Surplus and Brokers'/Dealers' Involvement', the 'EAZA Obligations for Members', the 'EAZA Code of Ethics', the 'EAZA Education Standards' and the 'EAZA Resolution on Invasive Species'. Therefore strict accreditation rules and a system of screening applicants for membership were developed by the Committee of Membership and Ethics and adopted by EAZA in 2000.

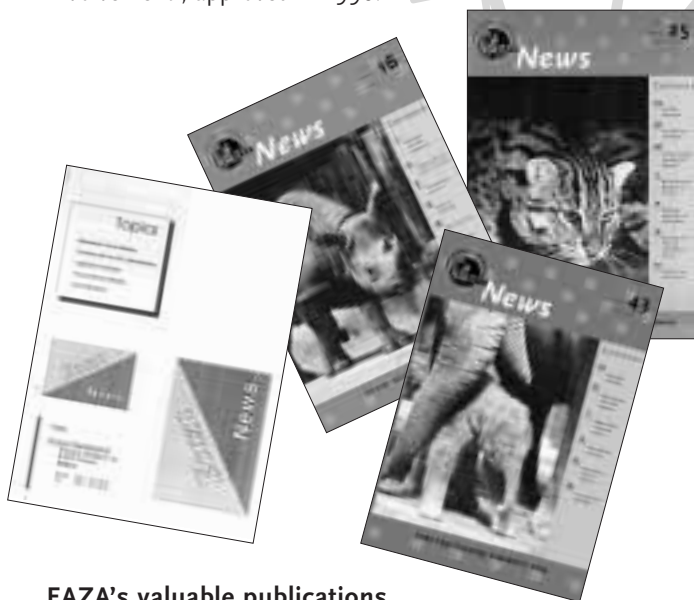
The influx of new members has slowed down over the last few years as a result of the new accreditation procedures. E(C)AZA was founded by 18 institutions from 8 countries in 1988. EAZA currently has 289 institutional members in 34 countries, including 248 full members, 10 temporary members, 28 associate members and 3 temporary associate members as well as two honorary members: our past chairmen Fred Daman and Roger Wheater.

## The way forward

EAZA is the largest zoo association in the world, and we certainly can be proud of what we achieved over the past 15 years. On the other hand we have not only to see our strengths, we have to look forward to face the future demands that zoos are exposed to in a so-rapidly changing world.

EAZA therefore began a future search process in 2001, resulting a year later in the 'EAZA Strategy for the 21st Century'. There are only 97 years left to implement this strategy.

I do not want to conclude my review on the first 15 years of our organisation without thanking all those who have helped EAZA to become what it is today. EAZA's success depends on the commitment of our members, on the commitment of each single staff member of our member institutions: his or her participation in Council, in various committees and in working groups, TAGs and EEP commissions. With such support we need not fear for the future of zoological gardens and aquaria in Europe. These institutions and their staff are prepared to play their role in the human society as well as towards protecting the endangered biodiversity of the planet.



## EAZA's valuable publications

The first EAZA newsletter was published in a very simple form in 1989. Today EAZA News is a highly professional magazine providing the best possible forum to inform EAZA's members. The first EEP Yearbook was published after the EEP conference in Budapest in 1991. At this point I would like to acknowledge the support of the Adolf and Hildegard Isler Stiftung over many years to ensure publication of the yearbook. A major step was the production of the first 'Available and Wanted List' in 1994. This important service to the members has been available on the world wide web under the internet address: [www.eaza.net](http://www.eaza.net) since 2001.

## Influx of members

EAZA was founded in 1988 by zoological gardens within the European Union. The benefits of an EAZA membership are

