



EAZA Terminates Membership of Al Ain Zoo

Amsterdam, 15 September 2022: The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) announces the termination of the membership of Al Ain Zoo in the United Arab Emirates. The zoo's membership will end on December 31, 2022, following the decision of EAZA Council that EAZA can no longer reasonably be expected to allow the institution to remain a Member. The decision comes after careful examination of evidence related to the import of wild-caught African elephants from Namibia, which the Council agreed constituted multiple breaches of EAZA Codes and Standards.

The African elephant EEP¹ clearly stated that no approval would be given for such an import. The Elephant TAG² repeatedly and clearly informed Al Ain Zoo that no import of wild caught elephants was either necessary or desirable. In response to urgent inquiries from both these bodies, communications from the zoo were insufficiently complete and transparent; the transfer was therefore carried out without the knowledge or approval of the EEP Coordinator as well as in opposition to the publicly stated position of the EEP and the TAG.

The behaviour of Al Ain Zoo in acting against EAZA policies and publicly shared statements has shown a lack of respect for the needs of the EEPs and EAZA Community. It has negatively impacted the reputation of EAZA, a respected collaborative conservation partner to international organisations working in IUCN and UN biodiversity frameworks. EAZA's Codes and Standards represent the framework for cooperation between Members, and the Council deemed the behaviour of Al Ain Zoo to be very severe violations of this framework. Therefore, the Council decided that EAZA cannot reasonably be required to allow Al Ain Zoo to remain a Member. EAZA reiterates its condemnation of the import of these animals and cannot be held responsible for any alternative proposals related to these animals that may be used as justification for their import into a zoo.

Al Ain Zoo retains the right to appeal the decision; should they do so, a final ruling will be communicated by EAZA following the appeal.

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About EAZA: The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria is the membership organisation for progressive zoos and aquariums across Europe, Western Asia and beyond. With more than 400 Members in nearly 50 countries, EAZA is the largest regional zoo and aquarium organisation in the world. Responsible for nearly 400 flagship EEP Population Management Programmes, EAZA is a world leader in *ex situ* conservation, public science engagement and scientific research, and is strongly engaged in international forums for the protection of nature. EAZA is a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

¹ EAZA Ex situ Programme, EAZA's flagship population management programmes

² Taxon Advisory Group, EAZA's structure for the monitoring and management of taxa in zoos and aquariums