EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIA

TAG Reports 2022

Marwell scouts are also working closely with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and local partners to combat poaching of Grevy's zebras and other wildlife as this has drastically increased during the drought.

The study "*Genetic evaluation of the EEPs for wild Asiatic wild asses as a basis for future in situ and ex situ conservation strategies*" by Petra Kaczensky and Ralph Kuehn (Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway) has been completed in 2022 after sampling almost all EEP animals. The results show the two *Equus hemionus* EEP populations in human care (onager and kulan) are clearly distinct from each other and cluster with the wild populations from which the respective founders of the two EEPs were believed to have originated. The authors recommend continuing to manage the two EEPs separately.

The Hartmann's mountain zebra EEP is in contact with Morris Gosling (University of Newcastle, UK) who is working on *in situ* research and conservation for this species. The EEP is looking to get more involved.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Bernátková, A. et al. published *Influence of weather on the behaviour of reintroduced Przewalski's horses in the Great Gobi B Strictly Protected Area (Mongolia): implications for conservation* in BMC Zoology in 2022 (7(1), 1-17).

37 RHINOCEROS

TAG Chair: Lars Versteege (Beekse Bergen, Hilvarenbeek, the Netherlands) • Vice Chair: Katharina Herrmann (Berlin Zoo, Berlin, Germany)

INTRODUCTION

The vision and mission of the EAZA Rhinoceros TAG is to have a healthy, viable population of free ranging and intensively managed rhinos ranging through intact ecosystems, where they are valued and cherished both locally and globally, and to ensure all populations in human care are healthy, self-sustaining and genetically viable and are capable of being an effective tool in support of rhino conservation in the wild. 2022 could be summarised as a transition year. In the beginning of the year, many institutions were still suffering from COVID-19 measures, slowly easing up during the year.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENTS

The status of the three EEPs within the Rhinoceros TAG are as follows.

White rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*)

It was another very good year for the white rhino population! Despite the difficulties caused by COVID-19 and Brexit, the EEP population developed strongly with 13 (7.6) births (2.0 DNS). Twelve animals (5.7) were exchanged between the EEP participants, and seven (4.3) animals died. The population has grown to 360 animals forcing the EEP to become extremely creative. All participants are asked to create separation exhibits for animals that will potentially need to be outplaced, and the EEP is pro-actively searching for additional holders. The balance between breeding (for health and behaviour as well as demographic reasons) and maximum capacity is tricky. Contraception is not easy, and one risks losing breeding animals for life.

Black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*)

2022 was a challenging year for the Black rhinoceros EEP population. Young black rhinos usually need to be moved out of their place of birth once they become independent from their mothers at around three years old. As the number of births each year exceeds the number of deaths, additional space is required either with the current holders or by finding new holders. As for white rhinos, contraception of black rhinos is too risky to the long-term breeding health of this extremely important zoo population. Due to the financial and practical challenges on zoos caused by COVID-19, a number of building projects for new rhino facilities were delayed. The planned transfer from the EEP to the Grumeti Game Reserve in Tanzania was also delayed in 2022 adding to the issue. This caused a number of difficult situations for zoos that couldn't move animals as planned. It is hoped that these new facilities will be completed in 2023 and the translocation to Grumeti can take place, freeing up crucial space for the development of the EEP population. During 2022 there were three births (1.2) and three deaths (1.2). Four animals were transferred (4.0). Overall, the population numbers remained unchanged with an end of year population of 90 (40.50).

White rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) calf © Colchester Zoo

Indian rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*)
In 2022, the exhibit plans of Zoo Guadalajara (Mexico) and Zoosafari Fasano (Italy) were approved. Guadalajara Zoo was approved as a non-EAZA EEP participant by the EEP Committee in early 2022.

In February 2022, the breeding stop – imposed in 2019 due to the increasing difficulty to find new holders for this species – could partly be lifted and detailed breeding recommendations were sent to all holders.

This year, 5.1 animals were born and 4.1 survived. This skew in the sex ratio and the increasing numbers of male calves are a serious problem in this EEP and solutions will need to be found to house single bulls or bull groups.

As far as genetics is concerned, it is important to continue increasing the representation of underrepresented blood lines. Three potential founders have still not bred successfully and are unlikely to do so in future. The same applies to the old females at Singapore Zoo (Singapore). Closer cooperation and intensified exchange of animals between the EEP and SSP is important to improve the founder base.

All holders with a non-breeding recommendation are requested to follow the breeding stop.

In November, the first online meeting for the development of an LTMP was held.

ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR

Despite all the difficulties, the Rhinoceros TAG pushed through with plans progressing towards a One Plan Approach in collaboration with every established rhino organisation worldwide. Colleagues from all over the world joined the brainstorm session giving a lot of important feedback allowing to plan for a joint way moving forward. The feedback was collected in a draft action plan for further discussion. During the joint TAG Chairs meeting in the USA the draft action plan was discussed with the AZA Rhino TAG and preparations for individual actions were prepared.

During the EAZA Annual Conference in Albufeira (Portugal), a full TAG meeting was organised with Save the Rhino International and a speaker from South Africa joined online. Once again, this showed the dedication of the TAG towards global conservation cooperation! The update presentation from Save the Rhino International on the impacts of the ongoing poaching crisis on rhinoceros populations, affecting the daily work of many rhino conservation partners on the ground, underlined the importance of holders supporting rhino conservation. Bi-monthly conservation updates can be found on the EAZA Rhinoceros TAG workspace on the Member Area.

COLLABORATIONS

In addition to the cooperation with Save the Rhino International and the International Rhino Foundation, all three EEPs have strong ties with rhinoceros conservation partners all over the world. The TAG is pushing hard to increase global cooperation. Having only five species within its remit, of which three are represented *ex situ,* makes it orderly but also complicated, as all conservation focus lies on only a few programmes. The EAZA rhinoceros *ex situ* community is represented in the IUCN SSC African Rhino SG through the TAG Chair. Input was provided on various occasions throughout the year.

Indian rhinoceroses (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) © Basel Zoo

CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH

The TAG is still working on the possible translocation of three female black rhinoceroses from Port Lympne Wild Animal Park (UK), originally planned for 2022, which is a genetic supplementation of the Grumeti population in South Africa funded and organised by the Aspinall Foundation (UK).

38 TAPIR AND SUIFORM

TAG Chair: Jörg Beckmann (Nuremberg Zoo, Nuremberg, Germany) • Vice Chair: Jan Pluháček (Ostrava Zoo, Ostrava, Czechia)

INTRODUCTION

The EAZA Tapir and Suiform TAG is responsible for the tapirs (Tapiridae), hippopotamuses (Hippopotamidae), pigs (Suidae), and peccaries (Tayassuidae).

POPULATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENTS

The new EEP Coordinators for the Chacoan peccary (*Catagonus wagneri*) and Malayan tapir (*Tapirus indicus*) started working intensively on their programmes, which is highly appreciated by the TAG!

Six (out of nine) EEPs were approved as new style EEPs, namely for the Lowland tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), Malayan tapir, Common hippo (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), Pygmy hippo (*Choeropsis liberiensis*), Visayan warty hog (*Sus cebifrons*), and Chacoan peccary.

The LTMP for lowland tapir was compiled and published. Species Committees were elected or re-elected for the Common hippo EEP, Malayan tapir EEP, and Lowland tapir EEP.