



TAG Reports 2011

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIA

EEPs have been published on the EAZA website and the recommendations included span across many years ahead. The Asian elephant EEP has reached a level of demographic self sustainability, with the same number of births and deaths. The breeding results for African elephants have to be improved, though, with the main problem seeming to be the exchange of breeding bulls between facilities. Therefore a working group was established. Results are documented and published on the TAG workspace under 'Risks of transferring big bulls' During the various meetings several rules and standards were discussed, including:

- the procedures for importing animals into the EEP;
- post mortem reports which should be send to veterinary advisors;
- status and care procedures for Herpes (EEHV);
- transport procedures (review of IATA Live Animal Regulations) and testing (all animals should be tested prior to transport and found negative for tuberculosis);
- updates on the discussions on German standards for keeping elephants;
- AZA's new safety rules and implications for the EAZA region;
- the 'Elephant Fund' (setting up a fund that could assist the functioning of the elephant programmes was discussed but it was decided not to move forward with this idea for the moment).

A full overview of elephant management decisions taken by the EAZA Elephant TAG over the past ten years is available on the Member Area of the EAZA website.

The Elephant TAG reviewed and compiled several publications in 2011. The husbandry guidelines in English and French were published on the TAG workspace and a Spanish version is currently being prepared. The TAG Mission statement was reviewed and published on the TAG workspace:

'All elephants held globally under human care in zoological gardens can be regarded as iconic, flagship animals helping raise the awareness of the plight of the elephant to the zoo-going public. Due to their intellect, longevity and social awareness, elephants are ambassadors that generate immediate empathy from zoo visitors, and while there are no immediate plans to return elephants back to the wild, their role under human care in terms of profiling education,

conservation and research cannot be overstated.

'The goals of the Elephant TAG are to have a self-sustaining population under human care. Within this remit, social, physical and psychological needs must be adequately catered for, and standards of excellence in terms of general husbandry, medical welfare – including research into prevalent disease, along with conservation breeding – are pivotal as the cornerstones to maintaining this species under human care.

'The TAG is also an information platform that disseminates and shares scientific knowledge worldwide; it encourages research, *in situ* conservation and staff training, and identifies new challenges that push forward the advances of elephant management as a whole.'

In *Zooquaria* 76 the Elephant TAG reported on the demographic change in the Asian elephant population.

Aside from publications, the Elephant TAG also established a working group on the RCP development. The TAG also announced various advisors to the TAG:

Conservation advisor:	Harry Schwammer
Educational advisor:	vacant
Nutrition advisors:	Joeke Nijboer; Andre Fidgett
Scientific advisor for reproduction:	Ann-Kathrin Oerke
Special advisor for Seville:	Jesus Fernandez Moran
Veterinary advisors:	Michael Flügger; Thomas Hildebrand; Willem Schaftenaar; Endre Sos

RHINO

TAG chair Friederike von Houwald, Zoologischer Garten Basel, Basel, Switzerland; TAG vice chair Lars Versteeg, Safaripark Beekse Bergen, Hilvarenbeek, The Netherlands

The vision of the EAZA Rhino TAG is a healthy, viable population of free-ranging and intensively managed rhinos in intact ecosystems where they are valued and cherished, both locally and globally. The mission of the TAG is to ensure all

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captive populations are healthy, self-sustaining and genetically viable, and capable of being an effective tool in support of rhino conservation in the wild. The EAZA Rhino TAG met once during 2011, at the EAZA Annual Conference in Montpellier, France.

The population of black and Indian rhinos is steadily increasing due to sufficient breeding. The white rhino population is still suffering from a lack of breeding. The White rhino EEP is working to improve this poor birth rate.

The TAG has been very active throughout the year. A new version of the RCP has been written and published on the EAZA rhino webpage. The RCP states that all three rhino species should continue to breed to ensure that each EEP population is self-sustaining and genetically viable in the long-term. Zoos also have the potential to support rhino conservation projects by raising awareness, by financially supporting field projects and by providing animals as requested by range states when approved by the appropriate specialists group and the TAG. All three EEPs have gone through the evaluation process in which the holders, species committee members and the EAZA Executive Office evaluated each programme on the basis of functionality.

There have been some changes amongst TAG membership and TAG advisors: a Research Advisory Team and an Education Advisory Team have now been appointed. The overall aim of the Education Advisory Team is to help the Rhino TAG and the zoos that keep rhinos to raise awareness about the current poaching crisis of rhinos.

On World Rhino Day (22 September 2011) a position paper was published in cooperation with the AZA Rhino TAG Chair. On this special day, people around the world stood up for rhinos and shared the message that rhino horn is NOT medicine.

For the first time, the TAG chair was invited by the chair of the IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) to attend their annual meeting. During this meeting the TAG Chair was given the opportunity to report on the efforts by zoos not only to breed and manage rhino species in captivity but also to raise awareness for conservation needs. At the end of the meeting it was encouraging to see a wish for a closer cooperation between zoos, the AfRSG and NGOs. The Rhino TAG is promoting a list of projects which are run by experts and NGOs in Africa and Asia which can be found on the EAZA

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website.

Much of the focus of this year's efforts has been on trying to strengthen ties with *in situ* partners to tackle the huge poaching problem. 2011 was the worst poaching year for South Africa in the last decade: 448 rhinos were shot and had their horns cut off. In contrast to Africa, Asia – with a focus on Nepal – can share some good news: no rhino was lost there, while India lost fewer than 30.

For the TAG meeting, the executive director of the IRF, Dr Susie Ellis, was invited to speak about their conservation work, and in each of the species presentations the importance of *in situ* conservation was also stipulated.

The Rhino TAG has also been in very close contact with the executive director of Save the Rhinos (SRI), Cathy Dean. Both directors from SRI and IRF work worldwide and already have close relationships with some zoos working towards rhino conservation, but there is still a huge need for further field support.

An everlasting aim of the Rhino TAG is to encourage every zoo that keeps rhinos to get in contact with field projects and to support them morally and financially, as help is urgently needed.

TAPIR AND HIPPO

TAG chair Bengt Holst, Copenhagen Zoo, Copenhagen, Denmark

The Tapir and Hippo TAG had its annual meeting on 23 September during the EAZA Annual Conference in Montpellier. During the meeting the ESB keeper for the common hippo, Jan Pluhacek, gave a presentation on suckling behaviour in common hippos, and Chris Ransom (ZSL) gave a presentation on the conservation strategy for the pygmy hippo. The latter initiated a fruitful discussion on how to secure a closer link between the IUCN/SSC pygmy hippo subgroup and the EAZA Tapir and Hippo TAG in the future.

There is a long tradition of a close relationship between the EAZA Tapir and Hippo TAG and the IUCN/SSC Tapir Specialist Group (TSG), and in 2011 this close cooperation was reflected in the preparation of the 'V International Tapir Symposium' that was held in Kuala Lumpur from 17-21 October. The TAG chair was part of the organising team. During the symposium a new