



TAG REPORTS 2015

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIA



Best Practice Guidelines:

The TAG has assigned different chapters of the guidelines to different members of the TAG to be updated. Progress on this will be reviewed regularly.

EEP developments in 2015:

The Grevy's zebra (*Equus grevyi*) EEP was evaluated and the programme was rated as Good. It was recommended to provide updates for the available Husbandry Guidelines for African equids and work towards publishing them as Best Practice Guidelines, which will happen as part of the TAG's currently ongoing review of the African Equid Best Practice Guidelines.

Evaluation of the Przewalski's horse (*Equus ferus przewalskii*) EEP has also begun in 2015 and final results are expected in 2016.

Apart from the Grevy's zebra EEP all equid EEPs are in need of and would welcome new holders.

Conservation involvement:

Several equid EEPs are heavily involved with field conservation projects.

The Grevy's zebra EEP continues its long-standing involvement in several Grevy's zebra field projects in Kenya with support from EEP institutions.

The Persian onager (*Equus hemionus onager*) EEP reported on a new breeding facility in Iran that will benefit the species there.

The Przewalski's horse EEP and Prague Zoo continue with their work of reintroductions of the species into western Mongolia which is supported by EEP institutions financially and in kind.

The Somali wild ass EEP is cooperating with conservation in the field in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

RHINO

TAG Chair: Friederike von Houwald (Zoo Basel, Switzerland)

TAG Vice-chair: Lars Versteeg (Safaripark Beekse Bergen, The Netherlands)

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 to ensure all rhino EEP populations are healthy, self-sustaining and genetically viable and are capable of being

an effective tool in support of rhino conservation in the wild.

TAG meetings

In 2014, the EAZA Rhinoceros TAG met at the EAZA Annual Conference in Budapest and in 2015 at the EAZA Annual Conference in Wrocław. A major aim is to continue to strengthen links with the *in situ* partners to tackle the huge poaching problems throughout the year. For the Rhino TAG meeting in Budapest, Dirk Swart, Section Ranger Hluhluwe Imfolozi Prak, Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Parks from South Africa was invited. He spoke about the use of horses to patrol the huge areas of the Hluhluwe Park and informed the audience about the daily hard work to combat poaching of rhinos in this area. In 2015, Sam Taylor, Chief Conservation Officer from the Borana Conservancy, Kenya, was invited to speak about the use of tracker and attack dogs in the battle against rhino poaching. Both speakers were invited on behalf of Save the Rhino International (SRI), with whom the Rhino TAG works in close cooperation regarding rhino conservation projects.

According to the latest news from the IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group (meeting in KNP; South Africa, February 2016), the number of African rhinos killed by poachers has increased for the sixth year in a row. At least 1338 rhinos were killed by poachers across Africa in 2015. This is the highest level since the current crisis began to emerge in 2008. Since then, poachers have killed at least 5940 rhinos.

The continued poaching has impacted on rhino numbers. According to the IUCN AfrSG numbers of the more numerous White rhino (*Ceratotherium simum*) appear to have levelled off on the continent with 2015 numbers estimated between 19.682 and 21.077. The Black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) numbers for 2015 are estimated at between 5.042 and 5.455. Despite the fact that the latter species shows a +2.9% per annum increase, poaching has however reduced growth in black rhino numbers below the usual +5% per annum target growth rate. The same applies to the White rhino population.

Despite those alarming numbers, increased law enforcement effort and expenditure in recent years have coincided with a slowing down in the rate of increase of poaching continentally from 2013 – 2015. Over the last two years, poaching has declined in Kenya and for the first time since 2008 the number of rhinos poached in the major range state, South Africa, fell slightly last year (including Kruger National Park).

Many EAZA rhino-holding facilities already support rhino conservation projects. This is highly appreciated and needed by the people who are working in the field and whose



RHINO EVENT

commitment – often at tremendous costs to themselves and their families – is 100% for rhino protection. It would make even a bigger difference if more rhino-holding zoos would contribute to rhino conservation projects.

In June 2015, the International Rhino Keeper Association (IRKA) Conference was kindly hosted by Chester Zoo. The conference was very well-attended and allowed the exchange of diverse experiences in the management of all three species in human care.

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

Black rhino EEP (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*):

At the beginning and end of 2015 there were 33.49 (82) Black rhino (*Diceros bicornis michaeli* and *D. b. minor*) held within 21 EAZA institutions.

Of those mentioned, only one pair (1.1) of *Diceros bicornis minor* is kept in EAZA at Frankfurt Zoo.

During 2015 there were 4.2 births (0.1 Chester, Dvur 1.1, Ebeltoft 1.0, Howlett 1.0, Magdeburg 1,0).

There were 1.3 deaths.

Two new holders participating in the EEP.

There were a total of 5.4. transfers over the year.

2.4 transfers took part within EAZA ,

2.4 transfer took part out of EAZA,

0.2 transfers to Japan.

The first analysis of the ISB was performed.

Indian rhino EEP (*Rhinoceros unicornis*)

69 (35.34) Indian rhinos are kept in 27 EAZA zoos.

In 2015, 3.1 births occurred: Berlin TP (1.0), Munich (1.0), Plankendael (0.1) and Whipsnade (1.0). All young survived, the male at Munich is a great addition to the EEP as he is the offspring of a potential founder.

1.1 animals died and 4.2 transfers took place.

The Indian rhino EEP is increasing, but it is becoming more and more difficult to find holders, who not only send appropriate plans in time, but also build the facilities in time. It is vital for the Indian rhino EEP to find new holders that reliably build their exhibits within two to three years of contacting the EEP.

The EAZA Best Practice Guidelines for Greater one-horned rhinos have been finished and are available on the EAZA public website.

White rhino EEP (*Ceratotherium simum*)

The White rhino EEP population started with 260 (101.159) animals in 71 zoos.

Births: 4.4 of which 3.4 survived.

Deaths: 1.3 + 1.0 calf that did not survive. Majority are old animals with the exception of 1 female that died because of veterinary complications.

Transfers: 3.5

Imports: None

14 zoos are reported to participate in White rhino conservation projects, but it is known that more zoos donate money to the large Rhino conservation organisations Save the Rhino International and International Rhino Foundation.

The White rhino EEP had their annual meeting during the EAZA Conference in which the focus lay upon veterinary issues and conservation. Both subjects are playing a crucial role in this EEP. The population in the EEP is slowly growing. More calves are born, and more important, more females start reproducing. The EEP feels that with the initiative to exchange animals which are not breeding and by exchanging young females out of their maternal herd a big step has been taken to increase the population growth. Only because the large percentage of old “import” animals from the 1970s are now slowly dying out, the population is not yet sustainable, but with the potential and the development it seems this will only be a matter of time. The EEP population grew up to 262 animals (102.160) during 2013. And even more exciting, eleven animals have been reported to give birth in 2014!

TAPIR AND SUIFORM

TAG Chair: Bengt Holst (Copenhagen Zoo, Denmark)

TAG Vice-chair: Jochen Reiter (Duisburg Zoo, Germany)

In 2014 it was decided to merge the two former TAGs, the Tapir and Hippo TAG and the Pigs and Peccary TAG into one TAG, now called the Tapir and Suiform TAG. In order to reflect the various taxa included in the new TAG it was decided to use the term “Suiform”, representing the Pigs and Peccaries as well as the Hippos and Pygmy hippos, and then just add the only remaining taxon, the Tapirs to the name. It thus doesn’t indicate any prioritisation of species, only idiomatic concerns.

General activities:

The Tapir and Suiform TAG met once during the report period, on 17 September 2015 in Wrocław. The main topics

discussed during the meeting were the structure of the new TAG and of who is doing what. The TAG has two subgroups – one for the former Tapir and Hippo TAG species and one for the former Pigs and Peccary species. Both groups are characterised by their close links to their respective IUCN SSC Specialist Groups which was also reflected in the agenda of the meeting. In addition to short reports from all programmes in the TAG there were a number of presentations focusing on the situation in the field. Roland Wirth (Zoological Society for the Conservation of Species and Populations, Germany) gave an update on wild pig conservation in Asia, Kristin Leus CBSG updated the TAG on news from the IUCN SSC Wild Pig Specialist Group and gave on behalf of James Burton an update on “Action Indonesia”. The chairman gave an update on “the fifth species of tapir” that is still not officially approved as a new species, and Frédéric Housaye gave a presentation about the World Tapir Day at CERZA, France.

Based on the critical situation for the Chacoan Peccary in the wild and the promising breeding results in Europe since the species was reintroduced into European zoos for conservation purposes in 2012 it was proposed to establish an EEP for the species. The proposal was approved by the EEP Committee in April 2015 with Christian Kern from Tierpark Berlin as the species coordinator.

Jan Pluháček, Common hippo ESB keeper, was in 2015 appointed Co-chair of the IUCN SSC Hippo Specialist Group, thus creating yet another strong link between the TAG and the IUCN SSC Specialist Groups.

Evaluation of programmes:

During the report period the following programmes have been evaluated:

Malayan tapir EEP: Evaluation questionnaires have been completed by the relevant parties and have been returned to the TAG Chair. A summary has been developed by the TAG Chair and forwarded to the evaluation subgroup in the EEP Committee for consideration. Animal data will be forwarded



COMMON HIPPO (*HIPPOPOTAMUS AMPHIBIUS*), ZOO BASEL