



THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIA

TAG Reports 2018



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INTRODUCTION

This Annual Report clearly showcases the range and diversity of activities that EAZA's 39 Taxon Advisory Groups (TAG) were involved in over the course of 2018.

The implementation of the revolutionary new EAZA Population Management structure started very successfully with the first new style Regional Collection Plans (RCP) and the first new style EAZA Ex situ Programmes (EEP) approved by the EEP Committee. The Canid and Hyaenid, Prosimian, Cattle and Camelid, and Rhinoceros TAGs finalised their RCPs, with draft reports developed for the Passeriformes (Asian Threatened songbirds) and Terrestrial Invertebrate TAGs.

The RCP process informs which species EAZA will actively manage across its Member zoos and aquariums as part of an EAZA Ex situ Programme. Each EEP will then develop its own tailor-made Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP), which outlines the strategy towards achieving the species-specific goals as set as part of the RCP process. In 2018, LTMPs were published for five species including for orangutan, chimpanzee and Northern bald ibis. Further LTMP meetings were held for Edwards's pheasant, spotted and striped hyena for which publications will come out in 2019.

The process of developing the RCPs and LTMPs is facilitated by the team at the EAZA Executive Office (EEO), that was able to expand as part of launching the new structure, including the set up of the EAZA Population Management Centre (PMC). The content and approval process is very much driven by the TAG Chair and TAG members (for RCPs) and the EEP coordinator and (elected representatives) of the EEP participants (for LTMP).

This report clearly demonstrates the many and varied species conservation work that the TAGs and EEPs are involved in across all taxa. Cooperation with field conservation partners and experts including, but not limited to, IUCN Specialist Groups has been strong and this, amongst others, contributed significantly to the ability to assess the *ex situ* conservation roles for our EEPs as part of the new RCP process. In terms of conservation support, the involvement and hard work of the Passeriformes TAG in the running of the EAZA Silent Forest Campaign, aiming to address the songbird crisis in South East Asia (www.silentforest.eu), deserves a special mention here as well.

The highly successful third global Joint TAG Chairs meeting was organised by EAZA on behalf of the WAZA Committee for Population Management, and

was wonderfully hosted by Budapest Zoo (Hungary). The meeting provided a unique opportunity to discuss topics including integrated conservation, the One Plan Approach, cooperation with zoos and aquariums in other regions and animal welfare and population management. Many TAGs also held their mid-year meeting in Budapest and used the opportunity to cooperate with their counterparts from other regions, including incorporating their expertise into the RCP process.

In addition to the 29 'new style' EEPs that were approved by the end of 2018, the TAGs will continue to oversee the 'old style' EEPs (187) and the European Studbooks (ESBs; 175) until all have completed their new style EEP participation process by 2023. The first five-year TAG evaluation cycle was completed by the end of 2018 and many TAGs worked hard to complete the outstanding EEP evaluations, with only a few remaining to be finalised in early 2019. With the two evaluation cycles completed the EEP Committee can now focus on updating the evaluation processes in order to align them with the new structure.

Another core task of the TAGs is (to coordinate) developing EAZA Best Practice Guidelines that reflect the best practice management in human care of the respective taxa. With ten guidelines completed, covering 12 species, approved and made freely available on the EAZA website (www.eaza.net) 2018 was a productive year in this regard.

In addition to the above-mentioned topics EAZA TAGs worked on a number of other tasks including providing expertise input for EAZA's lobby work at the European Union, for example through feedback to Invasive Alien Species (IAS) listing proposals and EAZA Position Statements towards combating illegal wildlife trade for songbirds and tigers. With the 18th CITES Conference of the Parties scheduled to take place in spring 2019, TAGs also started getting more involved in providing expertise in the process of developing EAZA positions on the CITES listing and policy proposals.

A detailed overview of the activities of each of the TAGs can be found in this TAG Annual Report. If you wish to receive more information on any of the topics raised, please contact the EAZA Executive Office via info@eaza.net. EAZA extends its thanks to all the Chairs, members and programme coordinators for their hard work in 2018.

GLOSSARY

AZA: Association of Zoos and Aquariums
BPG: Best Practice Guidelines
EEO: EAZA Executive Office
EEP: EAZA Ex situ Programme
ESB: European Studbook
GSMP: Global Species Management Plan
ICAP: Integrated Collection and Assessment Planning
ISB: International Studbook
IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LTMP: Long-Term Management Plan
MON-P: Monitored-by-designated-person programme
RCP: Regional Collection Plan
SG: Specialist Group
SSC: Species Survival Commission
SSP: Species Survival Plan
TAG: Taxon Advisory Group
WAZA: World Association of Zoos and Aquariums
ZAA: Zoo and Aquarium Association
ZSL: Zoological Society of London

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Tesfai, R. *et al.* (2018). *Viability of the critically endangered African wild ass (Equus africanus) population on Messir Plateau (Eritrea)*. *Journal of Mammalogy* DOI: 10.1093/jmammal/gyy164

Tuckova, V. *et al.* (2018). *Overmarking by adult females in four equid species: social bonds and group cohesion*. *Journal of Zoology*. Doi:10.1111/jzo.12578

Kenya Wildlife Service (2017). *Recovery and Action Plan for Grevy's Zebra (Equus grevyi) in Kenya (2017-2026)*, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya.

RHINOCEROS

TAG Chair: Friederike von Houwald (Zoo Basel, Basel, Switzerland)
TAG Vice Chair: Lars Versteeg (Safaripark Beekse Bergen, Hilvarenbeek, the Netherlands)

INTRODUCTION

The vision and mission of the EAZA Rhinoceros TAG is to have a healthy and 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, genetically viable, and capable of being an effective tool in support of rhino conservation in the wild.

According to information from the IUCN African Rhino SG, the number of African rhinoceros killed by poachers in 2018 were 768. Two greater one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) were poached in Assam (India) in 2018. As many as 102 of these animals have been poached there since 2008.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENTS

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

Eastern black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*)

- Living on 31/12/2018: 93 (38.55) at 24 collections
- Births in 2018: 4.2 in 4 collections

- Deaths in 2018: 4.2 in 6 collections
- Transfers: 7.4

Greater one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*)

- At the end of 2018: 80 (40.40) kept in 31 EAZA zoos
- Births: 4.2 of which 4.1 survived
- Death: 0.1
- Transfers: 3.0

Singapore Zoo and non-EAZA participant Batusecret Zoo (Indonesia) have joined the EEP.

Male births have outnumbered female births in recent years, so solutions will have to be found for the surplus males and breeding restrictions will have to be considered in the near future.

White rhinoceros EEP (*Ceratotherium simum*)

- The white rhinoceros EEP population started with 316 (132.184) animals in 80 zoos.
- Births: 10.9 of which 10.8 survived.
- Deaths: 1.5 +0.1 calves that did not survive. The adult deaths include mostly older animals.
- Transfer: In total 17 (11.6) animals were transferred between the participants showing the continuous close cooperation within this EEP.
- During 2018 Singapore Zoo became an EAZA Member, adding 8 animals (+ 1.1 births) to the EEP population.

The initiatives of the EEP, with regard to the historical lack of breeding in this species are now really showing results with more and more animals breeding. Up to 45% of the female rhinoceroses are now breeding, and this percentage is rising with a large majority of younger females starting to breed without any problems. With the number of births rising, the population has become sustainable.

But with the increasing number of calves, there is an increase in the importance of additional separation/holding facilities for animals which cannot be held in the group any longer. Especially older males, no longer needed for breeding, can be a potential future problem. Holders are encouraged to be creative to be able to house surplus rhino in other hoofstock paddocks since they are easy to mix with other species.

ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR

In 2018 the EAZA Rhinoceros TAG met at the Joint TAG Chairs meeting in Budapest, which was also attended by the AZA Rhino TAG Chair.

Prior to the EAZA Annual Conference in Athens, a

Eastern black rhinoceroses (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) © Chester zoo


meeting was set up with *in situ* and *ex situ* experts as well as representatives from the IUCN, Rhinoceros conservation NGOs Save the Rhino International (SRI), and International Rhino Foundation (IRF) to work on the new EAZA RCP for Rhinoceros. Thanks to the input of various experts as well as the help from the EEO, the first edition within the new population management structure was finished and published on the EAZA Member Area.

The TAG also met at the EAZA Annual Conference where the executive director from IRF, Susie Ellis, talked about the efforts they are putting into conserving Sumatran (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) and Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*), and, as the *in situ* situation needs urgent help for these two Critically Endangered Asian species, the need of zoos to engage in rhinoceros conservation as much as possible. The second invited guest speaker was Jes Gruner, Park Manager/CEO of the Akagera Management Company (Akagera National Park, Rwanda), talking about the close cooperation of the EAZA Eastern black rhinoceros EEP with the *in situ* initiative to reintroduce five Eastern black rhinoceros from European zoos into Akagera in 2019. In preparation of this transfer, five rhinoceros were moved from Ebeltoft Zoo (Denmark) and Flamingo Land (UK) to

Dvůr Králové Zoo (Czech Republic) in 2018.

COLLABORATIONS

The EAZA Rhinoceros TAG has found reliable partners like SRI and IRF who are also members of the TAG and members of the respective IUCN African Rhino SG/Asian


Rhinoceros Regional Collection Plan workshop in Athens © EAZA

Rhino SG.

More information and materials are available for EAZA Members on the EAZA Rhinoceros TAG workspace.

CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH

The following topics are studied in black rhinoceros:

- Quantifying the genetic diversity of the Eastern black rhinoceros EEP (Franziska Elsner-Gearing, Manchester University, UK)
- Gut microbiome and diet in rhinoceros (Linda Bruins-Van Sonsbeek, Rotterdam Zoo, the Netherlands)
- Role of oxidative stress in the pathogenesis of Iron Overload Disorder in captive black rhinoceros (Hanae Pouillevet, Vet student - Oniris, Nantes, France).

Many participants are involved in White rhinoceros conservation projects, especially through the large conservation organisations SRI and IRF.

Many EAZA rhinoceros holding facilities already support rhinoceros conservation projects and according to the EAZA Conservation Database, rhinoceros were the second most supported species by EAZA Members in 2017. The ongoing challenge of the Rhinoceros TAG is to motivate each zoo already keeping rhinoceros as well as every new rhinoceros holder to participate in *in situ* conservation activities.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Antwis R. *et al.* (2019). *Rare gut microbiota associated with breeding success, hormone metabolites and ovarian cycle phase in the critically endangered eastern black rhino*. *Microbiome* 7:27.

Gimmel, A. *et al.* (2018) *Milk composition of Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) and changes over lactation*. *Journal of Zoo and Wildlife Medicine* 49(3): 704 – 714.

TAPIR AND SUIFORM

TAG Chair: Bengt Holst (Copenhagen Zoo, Copenhagen, Denmark)

TAG Vice Chair: Jochen Reiter (Aquazoo Löbbecke Museum, Düsseldorf, Germany)

INTRODUCTION

The EAZA Tapir and Suiform TAG is responsible for the tapirs (Tapiridae), the hippos (Hippopotamidae), the pigs (Suidae), and the peccaries (Tayassuidae). The TAG was created in 2014 when the former Tapir and Hippo TAG and the Pigs and Peccaries TAG were merged. The TAG has very close links to the IUCN SSC Tapir SG, The IUCN SSC Hippo SG and the IUCN SSC Wild Pig SG.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENTS

During 2018, the evaluation of the Babirusa EEP was completed, and results from the evaluation were circulated to the participants. The overall evaluation of the programme was fine, although it is obvious that the programme suffers from too few founders. However, breeding results have improved lately.

ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR

During the EAZA Annual Conference in Athens, the TAG met twice with the first session focusing on tapirs and hippos, and the second one on pigs and peccaries. The overall focus for both meetings was the *in situ* status and activities for the various species covered by the TAG. In addition to the *in situ* reports from the various EEP species, reports were given on the Chaco ecosystem and reasons for its deforestation, affecting key species like Chacoan peccary (*Catagonus wagneri*) and Lowland tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*) in Paraguay. The Javan warty pig (*Sus verrucosus*) programme on Java, the Red river hog (*Potamochoerus porcus pictus*) programme in Bénoué National Park (Cameroun), the forest hog (*Hylochoerus meinertzhageni*) project supported by Fondation Segré, and the pygmy hog (*Porcula salvania*) reintroductions carried out early 2018. Last, but not least, short reports were given on the cooperation with the relevant IUCN SSC SGs.

After many years of duty as species coordinator for the Lowland tapir EEP, Aude Haelewyn-Desmoulins (Parc du Reynou, France) stepped down, and Stephanie Jessen from Aquazoo Friesland (the Netherlands) took over as new species coordinator. A warm welcome to Stephanie and a