



Conservation Welfare and a new WAZA Animal Welfare Strategy

Workshop Convenor 1. Conservation Welfare - Sally Walker

Workshop Convenor 2. WAZA Animal Welfare Strategy - Susan Hunt, Dave Morgan

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Participants

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Workshop 1

Background and Summary

A pair of workshops were held on 4 and 5 October 2012 at the CBSG Annual meeting. The first workshop discussions focused on the issue of conservation welfare, a relatively new concept described and outlined publicly by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, U.K. in a Symposium held in 2009 in Vancouver, Canada and published in Animal Welfare Special Issue 2010, 19: ISSN 0962-7286. Sally Walker began using the concept independently around the same time, along with "wildlife welfare," and brought out a number of booklets and other educational materials on this new topic, including a 600 page manual. This workshop was the second on the topic in a CBSG Annual Meeting; two other working groups took place in CBSG Mid-Year meetings. In this session Sally outlined how 'bad welfare means bad conservation' and the need to continually build animal welfare standards to ensure the conservation of species within zoos. She also called for a definition of conservation welfare from the zoo perspective. Although there was much discussion there was no closure on this request. A great many issues were discussed, several of which are very briefly summarized in the following outline:

- i. The extent to which an animal is coping with its environment (how to assess "proxy indicators")
- ii. Providing conditions that enable good welfare
- iii. How to assess 'faring well'
- iv. Conservation and welfare "trade offs"
 - a. Conservation research
 - b. Recovery programmes
 - c. Responsibility (species vs. animal, wild vs. captive)
 - d. Definition of ethics vs. welfare
 - e. Research promotion ... should zoos focus on all kinds of research...conservation only, or behavioral, medical, welfare etc.
- v. Conservation Psychology -
 - a. Relationship between human beings and nature
 - b. Links to knowledge, attitudes and behavior
 - c. Measurability not established
 - d. Value as a tool to better understand zoo audience
 - e. Clear link to conservation welfare
 - f. Attitudes of *in situ* communities

One key issue of agreement was the need to separate 'animal welfare' from 'animal ethics.' For example, the decision to euthanize an animal may be an ethical issue but the method of euthanasia and whether an animal suffers in that process is a welfare issue. This emphasized the point that euthanasia was predominantly an ethical matter and not a welfare one. It was agreed that there was some confusion and 'fuzzy thinking' in this area.

The question was raised as to whether the ultimate responsibility of zoos lies with the individual animal or the species. It was agreed that based on the direction set by the World Association of Zoos and Aquaria Conservation Strategy (WAZACS), conserving species is pivotal to the existence of a 21st century zoo. While there was agreement that zoos should strive to adhere to best practice welfare standards while delivering conservation, it was evident that the decision-making process supporting conservation-related work that may or may not have welfare implications were different for each zoos. The value of zoos having independent welfare and ethics committees to assist with decision-making was discussed, with some zoos appointing independent panels regardless of whether it is a legislative requirement.

Outcome

The group did not reach consensus on a definition of Conservation Welfare. Walker will do more research and present a range of elements for creating a definition of Conservation Welfare that is specifically relevant to all aspects of zoo animal management. This will be presented and discussed in a working group at the CBSG mid-year meeting in Gland.

Workshop 2

Discussion was far-reaching and broad and morphed from Workshop 1 to Workshop 2. There was general agreement for zoos and aquaria at the global level should have a clear Animal Welfare Statement and/or position. The current WAZA position was a mix of ethics and welfare and was not a clear statement or commitment to animal welfare. It was agreed that the welfare statement should be aspirational, just as the WAZACS is, however it should be detailed enough that it sets clear standards that allow zoos to benchmark best practice and work towards tangible goals.

On the first day, Dave Morgan delivered a lively presentation that demonstrated the absolute requirement for zoos to have credibility and transparency in animal welfare in order for them to be effective as modern zoos. The bad name of substandard or poor zoos can greatly affect the effectiveness of zoos in forming partnerships and achieving conservation outcomes: "We all share our name with bad zoos" was an overriding message.

Dave also outlined the global initiative in which he was employed to develop a comprehensive animal welfare handbook for all zoos.

The role that leading zoos play in building capacity of 'bad zoos' was discussed, however no definitive plan was agreed upon. It was agreed that this challenge requires further attention.

The 2nd day of Part II workshopped the key components of what might comprise a global Animal Welfare Strategy. This has been identified as a WAZA priority for development during 2013-14. The WAZA President and WAZA Chair of the Animal Welfare and Ethics Committee outlined this issue for the workshop and welcomed participation in the development of the WAZA Strategy. It was agreed by this group that the WAZA Strategy should link with and support the other global initiative being undertaken (as outlined above).

The Proposed Purpose of an Animal Welfare Strategy, Susan Hunt, CEO, Perth Zoo

A confident positioning of WAZA members	Affirming commitment to excellence
Affirming commitment to improvement	A benchmark document
Using high-level first principles	Globally applicable
Acknowledging the excellent practices	Aspirational for others

It was agreed that the Strategy would not be an accreditation process and would not include specific standards for compliance.

The audience for the Strategy would be:

WAZA Members	Our governing boards, Governments and other stakeholders
Protagonists/opposition	Interested others/visitors
Animal professionals	Be valid for broad use

Clarification of definitions and use of language was seen as a vital component of a successful WAZA Animal Welfare Strategy given the complexity of language and misinterpretation in this area. It was recommended that external professionals assist in providing relevant definitions on key language.

Issues identified for potential inclusion in the WAZA Animal Welfare Strategy included:

Live feeding	Culling; managing surplus populations	Euthanasia methods
Exhibit design, infrastructure		
Dispersal of young	Hand-raising	Rehabilitation of wild animals
Feeding, diets and nutrition	Management of geriatric animals	Bird free flight and pinioning
The 5 freedoms and 7 domains	Different species, different approaches?	Keeper expertise and capacity
Husbandry knowledge	Managing reproduction and the right to reproduce	Acquisition and deposition
Release to the wild and welfare	Science and research	Lack of predation and fear in the zoo experience - is this a welfare issue?
'feeding on' of animals	Keeper- animal relationships	Veterinary treatment – over testing
Invasive research	Animal transport	Pest control & non collection animals on the zoo site

As well as highlighting these issues, it was agreed that the Strategy could showcase case studies to illustrate examples of the care and welfare of animals throughout the strategy.

Issues yet to be worked through included the timeframe for the development of a Strategy. It was agreed that communication experts should be engaged in the final drafting and we should engage up to date scientific research to inform our positions within the Strategy.

Outcome

The workshop will be reviewed at the 2013 mid-year meeting of WAZA and the accepted concepts will be woven into a comprehensive Animal Welfare Strategy.

