

SAZARC attends SEAZA meeting

2nd meeting of SAZARC at 10th conference of SEAZA at Perak, Malaysia
hosted by Taiping Zoo & Taiping Municipality Council, 7-11 October 2001



Participants from the South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (left to right) : Jayanthi Alahakoon (Sri Lanka); Madhav Ghimere (Nepal); R. K. Shreshta (Nepal); Zohare Ali Shariff (Pakistan); M. S. Khan (Bangladesh); M. M. Qazi (Pakistan); G. K. Dubey (India), R. K. Sahu (India); Sally Walker (India); Dammika Malasinghe (Sri Lanka); Lyn de Alwis (Sri Lanka)

Report of the 2nd Meeting of the South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation SAZARC – held at Perak, Malaysia on the occasion of the 10th SEAZA Conference

South Asia is the area that used to be called the Indian subcontinent. It consists of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka. The region has immense political, social and economic problems which present frequent and serious obstacles to conservation action. South Asia has approximately 300 zoos, 250 of which are in India. About 75 – 100 of these 300 zoos are “standard” zoos with a respectable area, staff, infrastructure, budget and good intentions. The remainder are deer parks, mini-zoos and small breeding centers which nonetheless are governmental institutions. There are very few private zoos in South Asia. Even these 100 South Asian zoos suffer from a multiplicity of problems. In India the Central Zoo Authority and Indian Zoo Directors’ Association are making good inroads into the problems and prospects of zoos. The zoos in the other countries – Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh do not have any national association and are more or less isolated from one another and from the global zoo community.

Zoo Outreach Organization and the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, South Asia have been working together to catalyse a Regional Zoo Association for South Asia. The first step was taken in August 2000 in Kathmandu, Nepal when ZOO and CBSG, South Asia organized zoo directors, veterinarians and educators from 15 zoos in 5 countries to gather for a zoo meeting, a CBSG meeting (attended by Dr. U.S. Seal) and a zoo educator training workshop. At the zoo meeting, South Asian Zoo personnel stated their desire for an association in a moving series

of discussions. Many of these zoo persons had not met one another even though they were from the same country. This resulted in the initiation of the "South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation" SAZARC. The Kathmandu meeting was full of good results – significant changes by all the zoos, some of which are listed below :

Pakistan -- changed their focus to indigenous animals, started maintaining records of animal origin for the first time, initiated habitat development of enclosures according to ecological principles, established contact with Sindh WL department and private zoos for improvement of cooperation for breeding, conducted a visitor survey and focused an education programme around it, got an education budget of 200,000 Pakistan rupees, initiated improvement / development of signage, etc.

Bangladesh — a Government sponsored Redevelopment programme for Dhaka and Rangpur Zoos was initiated and zoo personnel sent for further training by IUCN country office

Sri Lanka — Lyn de Alwis, former Director of Colombo Zoo, became SAZARC advisor

India — increase in educational activities and budget by participating zoos run by steel and municipal authorities

Nepal – the Director of the Kathmandu Zoo won an award

were able to visit the Singapore Zoo, Night Safari, Jurong Bird Park, and Underwater World in Singapore and Zoo Negara Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur.

The South Asian Zoo Association met with SEAZA Council for an afternoon session of Questions and Answers which was extremely useful to the new Association. The SEAZA Council and Members went out of their way to make the SAZARC participants feel welcome. Members benefited also from the excellent presentations on zoo ethics and welfare and a variety of scientific topics. SAZARC used the working group time of SEAZA to conduct its own meetings and discuss topics of importance.

Attendees

Dr. M. S. Khan, Curator (Director), Dhaka Zoo, Bangladesh
 Dr. G.K. Dubey, Superintendent, Bhilai Steel Plant Zoo, India
 Dr. R.K. Sahu, Supt., Kamala Nehru Zoo, Ahmedabad, India
 Dr. Madhav Ghimere, Curator, Central Zoo, Nepal
 Sri. R. K. Shreshta, Director, Central Zoo, Nepal
 Dr. Zohare Ali Shariff, Director, Jungle Kingdom, Pakistan
 Dr. Mansoor Qazi, Director, Karachi Zoo, Pakistan
 Sri Lyn de Alwis, Retd. Director, Colombo Zoo, Sri Lanka
 Dr. Jayanthi Alahakoon, Vety. Officer, National Zoo, Sri Lanka
 Mrs. D. Malsinghe, Asst. Director, National Zoo, Sri Lanka

Some important decisions of SAZARC were

Venue for 2002 agreed – to be discussed with desired hosts before announcing

Venue for 2003 decided – invitation from Sri Lanka

Draft Constitution and By-laws vetted – further discussion



SAZARC Participants along with SEAZA President, Bernard Harrison, in front of the conference banner.

This year a series of workshops (SAZARC, Design Workshop, CBSG, South Asia & Sri Lankan Elephant PHVA) which was to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka could not take place due to a variety of these reasons. Instead, thanks to the generosity of sponsors from UK, Europe and USA, and the the South East Asian Zoo Association it was possible to take 10 key zoo personnel to the SEAZA meeting in Perak. They then had an opportunity to observe a functioning Asian zoo association and to interact with its members as well as one another. They could attend three days of scientific presentations on the theme of Zoo Animal Welfare and Ethics. They could visit behind the scenes of several zoos (Taiping Zoo, EcoPark Zoo, and Penang Butterfly Park and the Sumatran Rhino Conservation Centre). Some participants



SAZARC participants pose for a photo at the Taiping Zoo. Later at the closing dinner every country participated seperately in a talent show and did the region proud.

Core Committee members replaced after administrative transfers and advisor appointed.

Bangladesh – M. S. Khan (new this year) ;

Pakistan – M.M. Qazi;

Sri Lanka – Jayanthi Alahakoon



Zohare Shariff, Jungle World, Pakistan admires the butterfly display in the Penang Butterfly Park Museum.

Advisor to SAZARC

An Advisor to SAZARC was appointed -- Mr. Lyn de Alwis, former Director of the Colombo Zoo and a doyen of South Asian zoos known all over the world

Listing of Training Priorities

Capture, immobilization, tagging / marking of wild animal (Microchips); Zoo Education; Sexing of birds, Zoo / Enclosure Design / Masterplanning; Behavioural & environmental enrichment; Preventative medical care / general zoo medicine; Care of young (parent-reared and handrearing) to prevent neonatal death; Record keeping / Studbook management; MedArks ; Animal nutrition; Transportation / transport cages, etc. ; Planning; Crisis management; Marketing, Publicity, Fundraising; Human Resource Development; Collection Planning and Management

Formation of committees to forward projects

Veterinary (for identifying new medicines and means for obtaining them) – Ghimere and Dubey
 Nutrition Handbook (with NY Zoological Society) – Jayanthi A.
 Data base of species in South Asian zoos – M. M. Qazi

Conference Committee for 2002 – 2003

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh - possible venues
 Sally Walker, R.K. Shreshta, M. S. Khan, R. K. Sahu

Publicity and Communication

Logo decided (for time being for use in promotion and fundraising – bear representing all countries)
 Brochure approved with changes which will be incorporated
 Newsletter items mandatory (Zohare Ali Shariff will handle)



Qazi and Sahu at Mangrove Park

Coordinated breeding programme

List of threatened species presented, errors corrected;
 Walker approved as Conservation Coordinator for time being.

Sponsors of SAZARC participants to SEAZA

Lord Robin Russell, Woburn Safari, Thrigby Hall Wildlife Garden, Appenheul Primate Centre, Koln Zoo, Germany, Wildlife Information Network, St. Louis Zoo, USA



SAZARC participants from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India at the Sumatran Rhinoceros Conservation Centre



One of the possibilities for the SAZARC logo, represented by a generic Asian bear as some species of bear is found in almost every country.