



World Association of
Zoos and Aquariums
WAZA | *United for
Conservation*[®]

Caring for Wildlife
Committing to Conservation

Policy Statement on WAZA Strategies

While conservation of wildlife is the core purpose of modern zoos and aquariums, animal welfare is their core activity. WAZA released two new strategic guidance documents for both animal conservation and welfare. This gives testimony to the equal value and emphasis that WAZA places on wildlife conservation and animal welfare.

WAZA represents a global community of zoos and aquariums united for the care and conservation of wild animals. This status is shared with a multitude of stakeholders in both conservation and animal welfare.

Historically, there has been a lack of communication between the conservation and animal welfare movements, and even occasional conflicts. Clearly, however, in a century when so many human activities lead to both conservation and animal welfare problems, there are far more shared concerns between the two fields than there are differences. What is needed is a mentality and plan of action that will combine the momentum of both conservation and animal welfare to confront their common problems.

Accordingly, in 2015 WAZA concurrently launched two new global strategies: ***Committing to Conservation: The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy*** and ***Caring for Wildlife: The World Zoo and Aquarium Animal Welfare Strategy***. Major multilateral environmental agreements and international non-governmental organisations in the field of both conservation and animal welfare are supporting these strategies.



While the goal of WAZA is collective conservation action, as promoted in the *World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy*, the *World Zoo and Aquarium Animal Welfare Strategy* affirms WAZA's commitment to leading its members and colleague zoos and aquariums to build expertise, leadership and capacity in animal welfare.

The content and message of the *World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy* is aligned with reaching the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020. The development of the *World Zoo and Aquarium Animal Welfare Strategy* both reflects and contributes to other initiatives designed to improve the worldwide understanding of animal welfare and its enhancement.

These two new strategic guidance documents will substantially strengthen WAZA's efforts to make caring about animals in zoos and aquariums continuous with caring for them in the wild. We encourage our partners in both wildlife conservation and animal welfare to collaborate with us on this endeavour.



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Caring for Wildlife Committing to Conservation

For implementing the *World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy*, WAZA calls on its members and all zoos and aquariums to commit to the seven steps to conservation leadership:

Step 1: Inform
Educate your governing authorities and staff about the status of wild populations of animals on a regular and ongoing basis, and demonstrate how everyone can play a noteworthy role in reversing the declines.

Step 2: Mission
Update the mission statement and strategic plan of your zoo or aquarium to include: a *declaration* that your institution exists for a higher purpose—wildlife conservation; a *pledge* that your institution will commit resources to this effort; a *plan* for creating a culture of conservation in your staff, communities, governing authorities and donors that gives everyone the opportunity to make a measurable difference.

Step 3: Budget
Assess how much your institution currently spends on field conservation according to the WAZA definition of conservation, and benchmark that with similar regional institutions.

Step 4: Revenue
Work with staff to identify dedicated streams of revenue that can be used for field-conservation programmes. Ideally, these are streams generated both internally (from operating budgets and events) and externally (visitor, donor or government funded).

Step 5: Partnerships
Leverage resources by collaborating and partnering with other zoological institutions, conservation organisations, centres of learning, government agencies and high-net-worth individuals that share our passion for animals and conservation.

Step 6: Priorities
Identify and prioritise species which allow you to deliver conservation victories that clearly demonstrate the impact the animals in zoos and aquariums have on our ability to save their wild counterparts. Connect your animals to field conservation with personal stories of organisational commitment, both financially and with staff expertise.

Step 7: Communication
Develop a communications plan that is positive and proactive about your commitments and actions. Cultivate respected, independent spokespersons to deliver conservation stories to visitors, the greater community and society.

For implementing the *World Zoo and Aquarium Animal Welfare Strategy*, WAZA calls on its members and all zoos and aquariums to embrace our animal welfare commitment statement:

Our commitment is to:

- strive to achieve high welfare standards for the animals in our care;
- be animal welfare leaders, advocates and authoritative advisers; and
- provide environments that focus on the animals' physical and behavioural needs.

In doing this, we commit to:

- treat all animals in our zoos and aquariums with respect;
- make high animal welfare standards a major focus of our husbandry activities;
- ensure that all husbandry decisions are underpinned by up-to-date animal welfare science and veterinary science;
- build and share with colleagues animal care and welfare knowledge, skills and best practice advice;
- comply with specific animal welfare standards set out by regional zoo and aquarium associations and WAZA; and
- comply with jurisdictional and national codes of practice, regulations and legislation as well as international treaties relating to animal care and welfare.

By simultaneously committing to conservation and caring for wildlife, WAZA equally calls on governmental as well as non-governmental organisations to engage with zoos and aquariums to achieve high standards of animal welfare in support of their goals as modern conservation organisations.