

To: Dr Kai Perret
Director of Zoo Magdeburg

Dr Peter Dollinger
Director of Verband Deutscher Zoodirektoren Geschäftsselle – VDZ

21 June, 2010

Dear Dr Perret and Dr Dollinger

Statement on behalf of the IUCN Species Survival Commission in reference to the recent conviction of staff of Zoo Magdeburg for the management euthanasia of three hybrid tigers

IUCN fully supports responsible conservation breeding by zoos, and other *ex situ* facilities, as a component of species conservation. IUCN's policy is enshrined in *the IUCN Policy Statement on Captive Breeding* (adopted in 1987) and the *IUCN Technical Guidelines on the Management of Ex-situ populations for Conservation* (adopted in 2002). *Ex situ* conservation breeding is also recognised and endorsed by the Convention on Biological Diversity as a legitimate and important aspect of species conservation. Within Europe such managed conservation breeding programmes in zoos and aquariums are coordinated by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) under the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP) and European Studbook (ESB) structures, and are managed with the aim of providing the maximum possible conservation support for the relevant species in the wild.

Within this framework, and for *ex situ* populations to support conservation aims effectively, the genetic and demographic parameters of the populations must be carefully managed. This management takes on many aspects, such as the genetic analysis of pairs for breeding, contraception for animals not appropriate for breeding or who are genetically over-represented in the *ex situ* population, and on some occasions management euthanasia of individuals. Humane management euthanasia, based on scientific analysis of the *ex situ* population to ensure its genetic and demographic sustainability, is supported by the Species Survival Commission as a legitimate and reasonable option.

In the case of the Amur Tiger EEP respected genetic experts identified a hybrid strain in this otherwise successful *ex situ* conservation breeding programme. All identified hybrids have been prevented from further breeding and the genetic integrity of the programme is being restored. Unfortunately the hybrid male at Zoo Magdeburg had already sired a litter when this information became available. In these circumstances the humane euthanasia of the cubs sired by this male was, in the view of the Species Survival Commission, an entirely reasonable and scientifically valid action.

The Species Survival Commission supports the actions of the Tiger EEP and Zoo Magdeburg in ensuring that this important conservation resource, the EAZA population of Amur tigers, is managed to the highest scientific, conservation and welfare standards. I believe that the conviction of the three Magdeburg Zoo staff, on the grounds that humane management

euthanasia is not a reasonable course of action for conservation purposes, to be a retrograde step.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Stuart', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Simon N. Stuart, PhD
Chair