



World Association of  
Zoos and Aquariums  
**WAZA** | *United for  
Conservation*<sup>®</sup>

# COMMITTING TO CONSERVATION

## THE WORLD ZOO AND AQUARIUM CONSERVATION STRATEGY

### Executive Summary

WAZA is pleased to deliver an updated and invigorated statement of the imperative that our community must increase its focus on creating positive conservation outcomes. *Committing to Conservation: The World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy* is concise and compelling. The objective is to inspire leaders, personnel and supporters of our institutions, and promote greater intellectual and financial investment in the multifaceted suite of activities that can help to stem the seemingly inexorable tide of wildlife and habitat loss.

It has long been stated that zoos and aquariums, with their enormous global audiences, are uniquely positioned to effect positive change. Less frequently mentioned is that the failure to act more forcefully and effectively will threaten the business model and social licence that allow our institutions to exist and thrive. This Strategy provides links to other resources and conservation success stories that will enable the zoological community to articulate, plan and implement the best possible approaches to conservation, in order to achieve its full potential.

The 2015 *World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy* is integrated more effectively with other global conservation strategies and initiatives, motivating zoos and aquariums to collaborate, rather than compete, with other like-minded organisations and agencies. It is time for zoos and aquariums to maximise their impact and become true conservation leaders in their efforts to save wildlife and habitats.

In doing this, WAZA calls on its members and all zoos and aquariums to commit to the seven steps to conservation leadership:

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**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.
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**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.
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**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.
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**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).
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**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.
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**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.
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**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.