



WAZA

World Association
of Zoos and Aquariums

WAZA Committee for Population Management



Babirusa - Chester Zoo ©

Global Species Management Plans

To fulfil the full suite of conservation roles required, wild animal populations in zoos and aquariums must be demographically robust, the animals must be behaviourally competent and genetically representative of wild counterparts, and the breeding programme must be able to sustain these characteristics for the future. Individuals making up viable populations should be healthy in every respect, including a positive animal welfare state, and be sourced legally, sustainably and ethically.

Small populations are rarely sufficient for securing long-term persistence of a species. Conservation breeding programmes at the regional or global level can help form larger populations, if needed. Most programmes are managed at the regional level for logistical and regulatory reasons. A new way of fostering collaboration inter-regionally is being tested through **Global Species Management Plans** (GSMPs) administered under the auspices of WAZA (see the side bar for details).

As of 2018, there are nine working GSMPs for the Sumatran tiger, red panda, blue-crowned laughingthrush, Amur tiger, Goodfellow's tree kangaroo, Amur leopard, anoa, babirusa and banteng. Benefits of inter-regional collaboration under the GSMP framework may include: greater regional support for inter-regional transfers; more sharing of ideas and experience; increased uniformity of management; stronger links with range state partners; reduced legislative impediments to cross-border shipping; and additional commitment of resources.

What is a Global Species Management Plan?

A GSMP involves managing a particular taxon with a globally agreed set of goals, while building upon and respecting existing regional processes. A GSMP is pertinent for species where the outcomes of a strategic alliance between multiple regions can demonstrate greater sustainability or conservation deliverables than a single-region approach. To develop a GSMP, species are considered for endorsement by WAZA through its Committee for Population Management. The partners of the GSMP then produce a master plan that formalises strategies to deliver sustainable species management outcomes inter-regionally.

It has taken some time for the concept of GSMPs to gain momentum within the world zoo and aquarium community. Nevertheless, the anticipated establishment of more and more GSMPs gives testimony to how important the judicious development of inter-regional collaboration has been over the last 10 years. The current shift from a regional to a global population management framework is a change as significant as the move from institutional to regional species management in the 1980s and 1990s.



The Amur leopard GSMP fosters inter-regional collaboration in the integrated conservation of this critically endangered felid.