

Key Takeaways from the WAZA Webinar – Conservation Isn't Closed

On 22 April, WAZA hosted its third webinar in a series related to COVID-19. The webinar was facilitated by Dr Martín Zordan, WAZA CEO and featured panellists Mike Barclay, CEO of Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS), and David Walsh and Eric Miller from Zoo Advisors. Participants engaged in fruitful discussions, with people adding their thoughts from all around the world.

The full recording is available to watch [here](#). The password to view the recording is: 0v#A\$=M3

Below are some key takeaways from the webinar:

- COVID-19 is the biggest external threat we have experienced in our generation.
- Simplify your priorities – what is absolutely essential for your organisation to get through what is going to be a very tough one - two years.
- Commitment to conservation – zoos and aquariums as conservation-minded organisations – protecting wildlife is core to the mission of many, and gives social legitimacy to operate a zoo; it is something we need to maintain.
- Conservation should not be viewed as a luxury which can be dropped when times are tough; it should be viewed as an on-going commitment in good times and bad.
- Collaboration and partnerships are key – look for new possibilities and partnerships as we are all in this together. We are a global community.
- This crisis has presented an opportunity to address the illegal wildlife trade in multiple ways. Now is the opportunity to turn up the heat on the wildlife trade, lobby communities to change sentiments and lobby governments for tougher legislation.
- Coordinated advocacy – working with a single, coordinated voice will have more impact.
- Livelihoods, healthcare and engagement with local communities needs to be considered in tandem with bans of illegal wildlife trade.
- Zoos and aquariums can use the things they are really good at, particularly community outreach and education, to engage the public without spending a lot of money. This can help to fill some of these gaps that are not being addressed in the bigger, national-level discussions.
- Have your conservation partners be a part of helping you along in terms of sharing their good news stories, as a lot of them are still continuing the work they are doing. Share these stories with your members and donors to give them another level of connection with your zoo/aquarium.
- Donors want to know everything is still going okay, and they want successes – your conservation partners can provide that in many ways.
- Speak to your conservation partners in the field and work together to find solutions to address budget shortfalls.
- Provide transformative dialogue with your current donors to engage them and let them feel that they are a part of something good.

- There is an opportunity to broaden influence and find new audiences.
- Develop micro-funding strategies and ideas to help fund your conservation efforts. Use social media to engage supporters and ask for small donations.
- Look at the various partners of the conservation projects that zoos and aquariums are supporting. There are potentially a number of other zoos which might also be supporting the same project as your institution. Get all the other donors together on a call and discuss how to work together to keep the project afloat.
- It is important that zoos and aquariums provide input into the conservation databases of their regional/national zoo and aquarium associations.
- CITES needs data to help make its decisions and the data which zoos and aquariums provide through ZIMS and Species360 Conservation Science Alliance is incredibly important to this process.
- Opportunity to link habitat-based conservation efforts in the field with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly with regards to offsetting carbon footprint. **REDD+** ('Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and land Degradation') projects provide a great opportunity to match money from corporates wanting to buy carbon credits to offset their carbon footprints with good field conservation work.