

Issue #3 | 2025



WAZA

World Association
of Zoos and Aquariums

news



A CHORUS OF GLOBAL VOICES

As WAZA's 90th anniversary year comes to a close, we invite you to discover 90 Years of Impact. A Chorus of Global Voices, a special celebratory feature marking this milestone. This vibrant collection of one-line testimonials, featuring voices from our global community, captures the pride, passion and shared commitment that define what it means to belong to WAZA, and the collective impact we continue to advance for conservation and animal welfare on every continent.



WAZA

*World Association
of Zoos and Aquariums*

Editors:

Rosa Pons and
Marion Karam

Reviewers:

Martín Zordan

Proofreader:

Laurie Clinton

Layout and design:

Ink Design
Publishing Solutions

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WAZA Executive Office

Postal Address:

WAZA Executive Office
Carrer Roger de Llúria 2, 2-2
08010 Barcelona
Spain



+34 936638811



secretariat@waza.org



www.waza.org



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aquariums](https://www.linkedin.com/company/world-association-of-zoos-and-aquariums)



[@waza](https://twitter.com/waza)

WAZA Executive Office Staff

Chief Executive Officer:

Martín Zordan (ceo@waza.org)

Director of Membership and Events:

Janet Ho (membership@waza.org)

Membership and Events Assistant:

Nicole Whittle (membership@waza.org, conference@waza.org)

Head of Conservation and Animal Welfare:

Paula Cerdán (conservation@waza.org, animalwelfare@waza.org)

Conservation and Animal Welfare Assistant:

Thalia Pelegrin (conservation@waza.org, animalwelfare@waza.org)

Head of Partnerships and Advocacy:

Loïs Lelanchon (advocacy@waza.org)

Head of Communications:

Rosa Pons (communications@waza.org)

Communications Assistant:

Marion Karam (communications@waza.org)

Finance and Office Manager:

María Jesús Sanz (administration@waza.org)

WAZA Membership as of December 10

Affiliate:	9
Association:	18
Corporate:	39
Institution:	286
Honorary:	31
Emeritus:	97

Future WAZA Conference

2026: Cologne Zoo, Germany, from 25 to 29 October 2026

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Contents

02

President's Letter

03

CEO's Letter

04

From Near Extinction to New Life: The Blue-eyed Ground Dove at Parque das Aves

08

Amphibian Research Project contribution to safeguard endangered Pickersgill's reedfrog in Johannesburg Zoo

11

Changing Purpose – From a Rare Exhibition Species to a Relevant Conservation Population

14

In Conversation with Karen Fifield MNZM

17

The 90th WAZA Anniversary Celebration in Cali: A recap of the 80th WAZA Annual Conference, held in Cali, Colombia and online

23

Zoos and Aquariums at the Forefront: A New Chapter of Engagement at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025

28

Fifty Years of CITES and the Road Ahead: WAZA's Perspective from CoP20

30

Reverse the Red: Celebrating Leadership, Innovation and Global Collaboration

33

Turning Vision into Action: How WAZA's Global Goals Drive Change

36

Meet Your 2025–2027 WAZA Council

40

Update on International Studbooks (ISBs)

41

Behind the ZIMS

44

Looking ahead to 2026

46

WAZA Welcomes New Members



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Stepping into the role of WAZA President during WAZA's 90th anniversary year is a true privilege. This milestone anniversary reminds us of not only of our rich history, but also of the immense responsibility we carry as we look ahead to the future of modern, accredited, conservation-focused zoos and aquariums.

Reflecting on the weeks following our inspiring Annual Conference in Cali, I remain deeply thankful to María Clara and the Cali Zoo team for their warm hospitality and exceptional organisation. Two moments particularly resonated with me: Wade Davis's powerful keynote, which challenged us to consider the depth of our mission, and the strong participation from Region III institutions. The enthusiasm from colleagues across Latin America and Japan reaffirmed the importance of strengthening representation across all regions, something I am firmly committed to prioritising during my term.

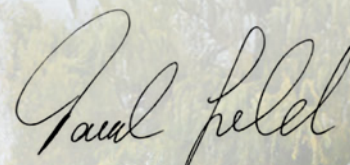
Shortly after the conference, I had the honour of representing WAZA at my first official engagement: the 33rd Southeast Asian Zoos and Aquariums Association (SEAZA) Conference 2025, held from 16–20 November. Bringing together more than 400 professionals under the theme *Building Capacity for the Future, Protecting Wildlife Together*, the meeting highlighted the value of long-term collaboration and coordinated action. The quality of presentations from so many young professionals in our community was remarkable – and the newborn pangolin video was simply inspiring. The desire to learn, share and advance knowledge was so very evident. My sincere thanks go to Mandai Wildlife Group for being incredible hosts, and to SEAZA for such a dynamic and memorable event – the annual skit show truly has to be experienced. I would also like to acknowledge the achievements of outgoing SEAZA President

Dr Cheng Wen-Haur and to warmly welcome incoming President Dr Rahmat Shah.

Looking ahead, a key focus will be to strengthen the value and visibility of WAZA membership across our diverse global community, including ensuring the unique needs of our aquarium members are fully represented within WAZA's governance and operations. In addition, we will continue to elevate WAZA's presence in international policy and conservation forums, positioning our community as a trusted partner in addressing the biodiversity crisis, aligning closely with our efforts under the Reverse the Red movement and our WAZA 2030 Conservation Goal.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Karen Fifield MNZM and the previous Council for their leadership, and to all our committees for their hard work over the past term. Your new Council is energised, committed, and ready to work closely with you.

**Let our mantra be:
Our Ambitions. Our Community. Our WAZA.
Your WAZA.**



Yours aye,
David Field
WAZA President



CEO'S LETTER

Dear WAZA Members and Friends, as we bring 2025 to a close, we mark the end of an exceptional and truly historic year for WAZA – our 90th anniversary. Very few organisations in global conservation and animal welfare can look back on nine decades of collective impact, and even fewer are as committed to continuous improvement as we are.

This milestone was celebrated on the global stage at the 80th WAZA Annual Conference in Cali, Colombia, where our community gathered both in person and online under the theme *90 Years and Beyond: Uniting for a Thriving Planet*. Thanks to the warm hospitality of Cali Zoo, our hybrid format welcomed delegates from around the world, offering a week of reflection, recognition and renewed purpose.

In this final issue of the year, you will find a detailed recap of the conference, accompanied by an image gallery for you to relive some of the highlights – from inspiring keynotes and major strategic launches like the new Animal Welfare Strategy to the celebration of excellence at the WAZA 2025 Awards Ceremony. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all delegates who joined us, whether onsite in Cali or from across the globe. Your participation made this anniversary celebration truly unforgettable.

This issue also presents a special feature: *90 Years of Impact – A Chorus of Global Voices*. This vibrant gallery of one-line testimonials represents the pride, passion and unwavering commitment that define the WAZA community. Across continents and cultures, your voices together illustrate what it truly means to belong to this global alliance – united by a shared vision for wildlife, people and our planet.

As we honour our past, we continue to look forward. I warmly invite you to **save the date** for our next gathering: the **81st WAZA Annual Conference**, hosted by Cologne Zoo, Germany, from 25 to 29 October 2026. We look forward to sharing more details with you in the months ahead.



Our 90th anniversary year has reminded us that WAZA's greatest strength lies in its community – in all of you. Thank you for your continued support, trust and partnership. Let us enter 2026 inspired by what we have achieved together, and energised by what we will accomplish in the years ahead.

With warm regards,

Dr Martín Zordan
WAZA Chief Executive Officer

FROM NEAR EXTINCTION TO NEW LIFE: THE BLUE-EYED GROUND DOVE AT PARQUE DAS AVES

The first-ever hatching of the critically endangered Blue-eyed Ground Dove under human care marks a milestone for conservation in Brazil's Atlantic Rainforest.


For more than 70 years, the *Blue-eyed Ground Dove* (*Columbina cyanopsis*) was believed to be extinct. Last recorded in 1941, the small dove with brilliant cobalt-blue eyes and wings existed only as a few museum specimens. Its rediscovery in 2015 in the municipality of Botumirim, Minas Gerais, Brazil, stunned ornithologists and reignited hope for the survival of a species thought to be gone forever.

A decade later, that hope has taken flight once again. In 2025, Parque das Aves, a zoological institution dedicated to conserving species of the Atlantic Rainforest, celebrated a historic first: the successful hatching of a Blue-eyed Ground Dove chick from parents both born and raised under human care. This moment represents far more than a breeding success: it symbolises a turning point for the species' recovery and a powerful example of what coordinated global conservation can achieve.

A critically endangered species

Among Brazil's most threatened birds, the Blue-eyed Ground Dove is listed as *Critically Endangered* by The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Its known range is limited to a small area of the Cerrado biome, where habitat destruction and fragmentation have reduced the population to only a few known individuals.

Recognising the urgency of its situation, the species was included in the National Action Plan for the Conservation of the Birds of the Cerrado and Pantanal (PAN Aves do Cerrado e Pantanal), coordinated by Brazil's Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio). This plan unites national and international organisations to safeguard the species through habitat protection, field research and *ex situ* management.



An adult Blue-eyed Ground Dove (*Columbina cyanopsis*) in the nest
© Parque das Aves

Conservation through cooperation

Saving the Blue-eyed Ground Dove has required deep collaboration. The initiative brings together Parque das Aves, SAVE Brasil (BirdLife International's partner in Brazil), Chester Zoo (UK), Toledo Zoo (USA), Bronx Zoo (USA) and the Laboratory of Genetics and Molecular Evolution of Birds at the University of São Paulo, with support from ICMBio and additional public and private partners committed to saving Brazil's threatened species.

This network of institutions represents a model of modern conservation, combining *in situ* and *ex situ* strategies. While field teams in Botumirim monitor the remaining wild population and work with local communities to protect habitat, specialists in animal welfare, genetics and behaviour develop the knowledge and protocols needed to secure the species' future under human care.

A world-first achievement at Parque das Aves

In 2025, after years of careful preparation, a Blue-eyed Ground Dove chick hatched at Parque das Aves from parents both born and raised under human care – a world first. The event marked the beginning of a new phase in the

species' recovery and the strengthening of its assurance population.

Today, 12 individuals live under human care at Parque das Aves: six adults and six juveniles. In the wild, only 11 doves were recorded during the most recent census conducted in Botumirim. Together, these 23 birds represent the entire known population of the species on Earth.

“This achievement was only possible thanks to the commitment and collaboration of many institutions and professionals,” says Roberta Manacero, Technical Director at Parque das Aves. “Every chick represents hope. It reminds us that conservation is built collectively, with science, cooperation and long-term vision.”

The reproduction of the species under human care provides an essential safeguard. The individuals at Parque das Aves form the foundation of an assurance population, which aims to maintain genetic diversity and support the long-term stability of the species, complementing field conservation actions.

Science, care and commitment

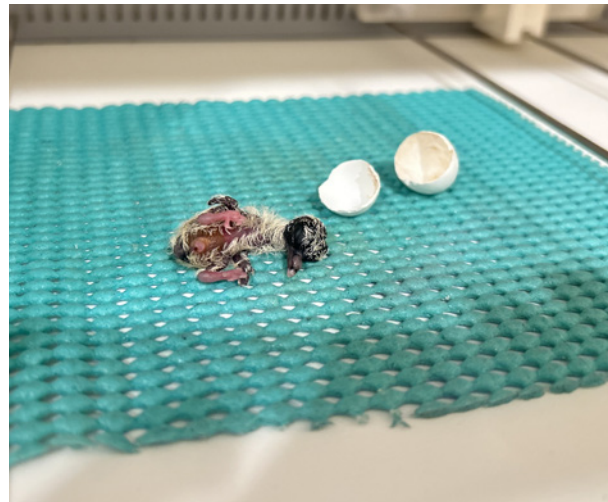
The success with the Blue-eyed Ground Dove required years of observation and adaptation.



Hand-feeding a newly hatched Blue-eyed Ground Dove (*Columbina cyanopis*) chick © Parque das Aves



A newly hatched Blue-eyed Ground Dove (*Columbina cyanopis*) chick © Parque das Aves



Early monitoring of a Blue-eyed Ground Dove (*Columbina cyanopis*) hatchling © Parque das Aves

Teams refined protocols for diet, social pairing and environmental enrichment to meet the birds' specific behavioural and physiological needs. Every stage – from nest design to chick monitoring – was guided by evidence and by an unwavering focus on animal welfare.

As a zoological institution focused exclusively on Atlantic Rainforest species, Parque das Aves connects field conservation with *ex situ* expertise. The institution's work relies on the principle that conservation must connect people and nature. Each visitor who walks through the Park's trail supports this mission, helping fund research and breeding programmes that benefit threatened species such as the Blue-eyed Ground Dove.

“Our role is to show that zoos can be key partners in species recovery,” Manacero adds. “By sharing these results, we hope to inspire other institutions and strengthen conservation networks throughout Latin America and beyond.”

Conservation made by many hands

The story of the Blue-eyed Ground Dove exemplifies how modern zoological institutions operate as active conservation centres. It reflects the One Plan Approach, uniting the expertise of field biologists, zoo professionals, geneticists and policymakers toward a single purpose: preventing extinction.

This effort also aligns with the WAZA 2030 Conservation Goal, which calls on zoos and aquariums worldwide to play an active role in halting extinctions, reversing population declines, and securing the future of threatened species.

Through collaboration and shared responsibility, the Blue-eyed Ground Dove project shows that hope is not abstract: it is built, nurtured and shared. Every partnership, every piece of knowledge, and every chick born represents a step forward for a species once thought to be lost.

As Manacero reflects, “When we look at this small dove, we see the result of trust, collaboration and dedication. It shows that, when we work together, even species on the edge of extinction can have a second chance.”

Acknowledgements

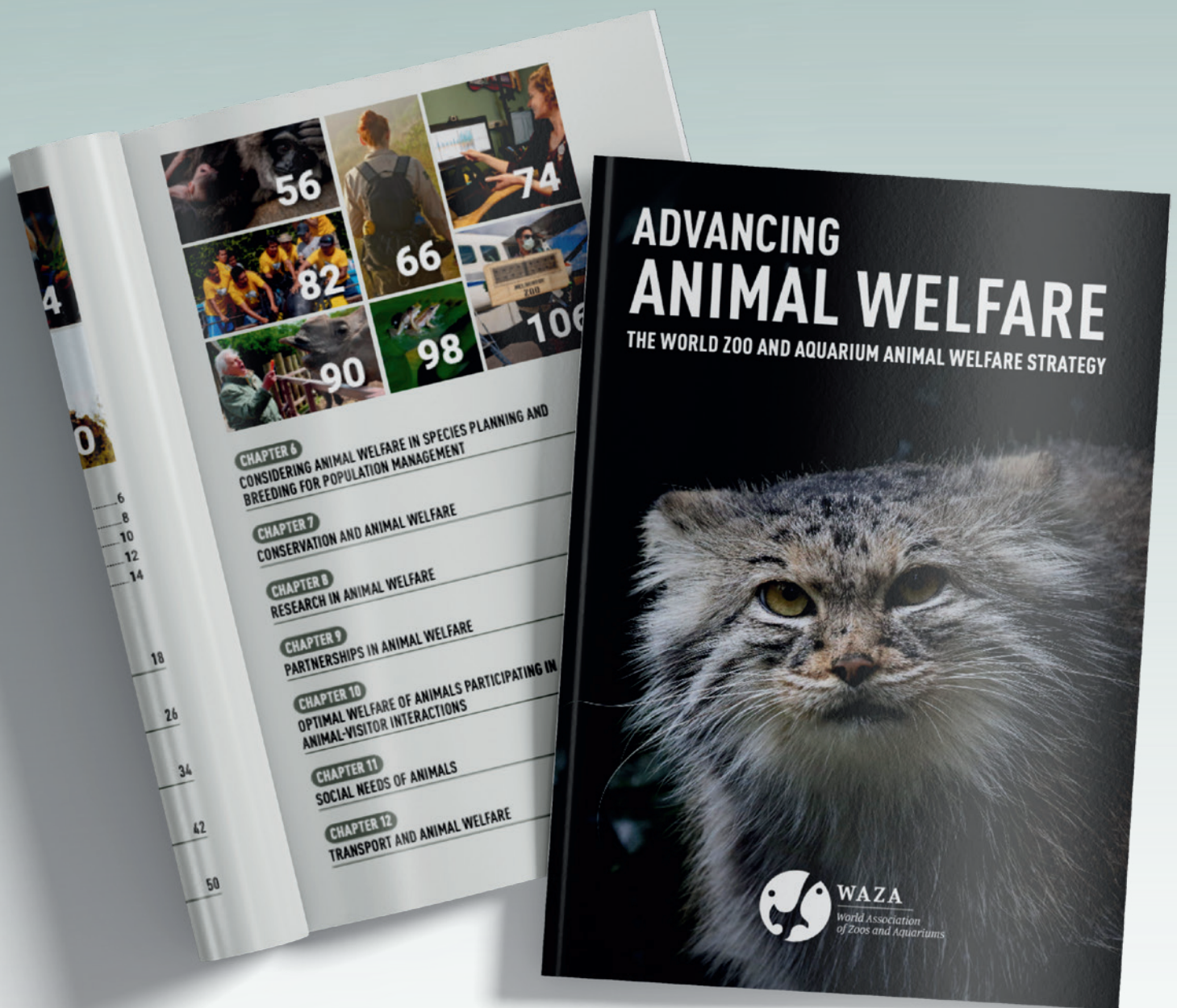
This conservation effort is part of the National Action Plan for the Conservation of the Birds of the Cerrado and Pantanal, coordinated by ICMBio, with the participation of Parque das Aves, SAVE Brasil, Chester Zoo (UK), Toledo Zoo (USA), Bronx Zoo (USA) and the University of São Paulo, as well as other national and international partners committed to the protection of Brazil's threatened species.

By Parque das Aves, Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil
Contact: diretoriatecnica@parquedasaves.com.br

Advancing Animal Welfare

The World Zoo and Aquarium Animal Welfare Strategy

A global framework guiding zoos and aquariums to strengthen science-based animal welfare.



Download it. Use it. Share it.

Scan the QR code to access the full Strategy.

AMPHIBIAN RESEARCH PROJECT CONTRIBUTION TO SAFEGUARD ENDANGERED PICKERSGILL'S REED FROG IN JOHANNESBURG ZOO

Mlando Dlomo, Curator, *Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo*

Initiated in 2006, the Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo's conservation efforts include The Amphibian Research Project (ARP). Finding and protecting endangered species is the ARP's primary objective. In order to protect the endangered Pickersgill's reed frog (*Hyperolius pickersgilli*), the ARP decided to take action.

The endangered Pickersgill's reed frog (*Hyperolius pickersgilli*) has already benefited much from the ARP's efforts to protect it. In Johannesburg Zoo, more than 700 Pickersgill's reed frog offsprings were produced between 2017 and 2020. The zoo's young were successfully relocated to the province of Durban, KwaZulu Natal, to complement the wild population. Currently, the insurance population of Pickersgill's reed frogs is kept at the Johannesburg Zoo. To improve knowledge, the Zoo developed a husbandry manual that describes how to care for and breed the Pickersgill's reed frog as part of the ARP's efforts to protect this species.

The ARP team has implemented an education programme aimed at enhancing efforts to protect the Pickersgill's reed frogs at the Zoo. Raising awareness and educating various demographic groups about the species is in

our view essential, to ensure that the public understand its importance. Since human activities are acknowledged to pose a threat to the existence of the species, increasing awareness can help encourage people to change their behaviour.

Educational initiatives on Pickersgill's reed frogs are conducted through the use of banners, chart displays and information sessions aimed at raising public awareness. The programme is hosted by the Johannesburg Zoo and extended to other partner locations.

Data on the Pickersgill's reed frogs maintained at the Zoo is still being gathered by the ARP team. In order to successfully breed the Pickersgill's reed frog in captivity and release the progeny back into their native environment, this ongoing work will contribute to further research studies on the species.



Pickersgill's reed frog (*Hyperolius pickersgilli*) © Johannesburg Zoo



Pickersgill's reed frog tadpoles before limb development (Dlomo, 2025) © Johannesburg Zoo



Sub-adult Pickersgill's reed frogs, a week after tail absorption (Montshiwagae, 2025) © Johannesburg Zoo



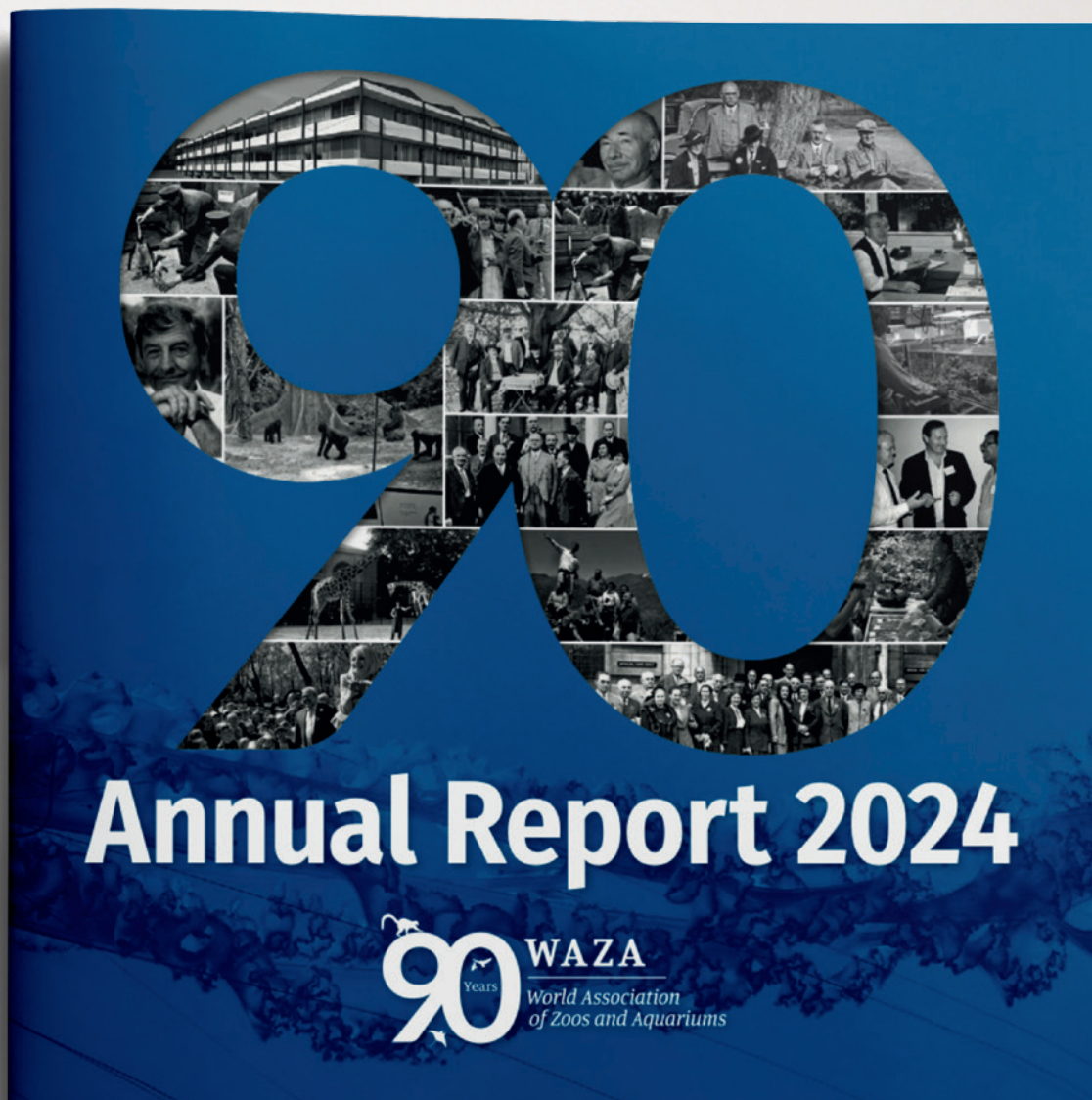
Adult female Pickersgill's reed frog (Khumalo, 2025) © Johannesburg Zoo



Pickersgill's reed frog metamorph showing the development of hind limbs (Dlomo, 2025) © Johannesburg Zoo

WAZA Annual Report 2024

The Annual Report highlights key milestones from the Association in 2024 and features '90 Years of WAZA in 90 Images', a visual journey through nine decades of shared history and global impact.



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CHANGING PURPOSE – FROM A RARE EXHIBITION SPECIES TO A RELEVANT CONSERVATION POPULATION

Tim Schikora, CEO, Zoo Schwerin. EEP Coordinator & ISB Keeper

The Giant Otter as a case study for the importance of globally managed *ex situ* populations

The international studbook records the first confirmed captive individual in 1881 at Leipzig Zoo, Germany. Almost 150 years later, a remarkable milestone has been achieved: descendants of a now globally managed *ex situ* population form the basis of the first Giant Otter reintroduction programme. In July 2025, the first animals were released into the wetlands of Iberá National Park, Argentina, in cooperation with Fundación Rewilding Argentina. Giant Otters, once native to these vast wetland ecosystems, were eradicated several decades ago due to persecution and the fur trade. While the species is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, it remains nationally extinct in Argentina – for now!

The path to the first release of zoo-bred Giant Otters into the wild was long and full of challenges. The *Ex situ* Programme (EEP) for the species was established in 2001 at Zoo Dortmund, Germany, and early steps toward global cooperation began at The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) International Otter Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2014. This meeting led to the 1st International Giant Otter Workshop in 2017 hosted by Cali Zoo, Colombia, where

studbook keepers from the Association of Zoos and Aquarium (AZA), the Latin American Association of Zoos and Aquariums (ALPZA), The European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), as well as NGOs, researchers and members of the IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group came together to define a shared vision for collaboration and joint *ex situ* and *in situ* management. A strategic idea, today well known as the One Plan Approach.

Group of Giant Otters
© Fundación Rewilding Argentina

Back then, each regional population faced its own challenges: the EEP developed dynamically but was limited by space and founder numbers; AZA maintained a smaller, demographically vulnerable population; ALPZA institutions housed few individuals and therefore were not positioned for breeding. At the same time, range states urgently needed expertise in handling confiscated or displaced animals, and NGOs sought partners capable of long-term technical and logistical support. Among them was Fundación Rewilding Argentina, which later initiated the Iberá reintroduction project. Following the initial meeting, expert delegations visited the project area, selected appropriate animals and coordinated the first transfers.

After years of preparation, setbacks and progress, the first family group has now entered the wild. The parents originated from the EAZA EEP, while the two cubs were born within the project area. After sending the first individuals in 2019, nine individuals from eight EAZA institutions and one AZA institution have been transferred to pre-release enclosures in Iberá, where they acclimate and establish stable family units before release. These groups are expected to disperse and recolonise parts of the 750,000-hectare park. Additional transfers from zoos and wild-source translocations from range countries are planned to secure long-term genetic sustainability.

The release received considerable media attention, yet, it would not have been possible without the expertise, long-term commitment and trusting cooperation between *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation partners. Meanwhile, the partnership has evolved into the International Giant Otter

Alliance (IGOA), operating under the umbrella of the IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group. The alliance emerged from the 2nd International Giant Otter Workshop in 2022 held in Corrientes, Argentina. The aim was to further strengthen cooperation between *in situ* and *ex situ* initiatives under the principles of the IUCN One Plan Approach and to develop a coordinated global population strategy across AZA, ALPZA and EAZA, all WAZA members.

Current priorities include transferring founder animals from ALPZA institutions into the EEP, supporting the AZA population through imports from EAZA and strengthening breeding capacity within ALPZA zoos. Today, the ISB lists 191 Giant Otters in 55 institutions across four continents. Yet, subpopulation size varies significantly: the EEP currently manages 111 animals, AZA holds 28 in a critical demographic state and ALPZA with 52 individuals shows a population growth due to increased confiscations and breeding in Zoologico de Cali (Colombia) and Parque de las Leyendas (Peru). The Brazilian Association of Zoos and Aquaria (AZAB), a WAZA member, also plays a vital role as the species' core range lies in Brazil. AZAB is in the process of developing a national breeding programme, including additional transfers from the EEP. Due to strict national regulations and a high proportion of founder animals, this is both necessary and promising.

IGOA's role, however, extends far beyond providing animals. The alliance offers technical and financial support for *in situ* issues: in Brazil, a translocation involving Giant Otters in human-wildlife conflict was organised rapidly with expertise from *in situ* partners and funding from *ex situ* institutions. In another case, an orphaned wild pup in French Guiana was hand-reared by Zoo de Guyane with



Pre-release pen at Iberá National Park, Argentina © Matias Rebak

international veterinary and husbandry support and later transferred to Zoo Halle (Germany) where it is hoped to establish a new founder line. This transfer was only possible because Fundación Rewilding Argentina agreed to receive the individuals previously housed in Halle at short notice – an example of global cooperation functioning in practice.



The quality and strategic value of international workshops has benefited greatly from the involvement of the IUCN Conservation Planning Specialist

Group (CPSG) and the reports are published under: <https://sites.google.com/view/giantotteralliance/igoa>.

The 4th International Workshop is scheduled for 2027 in the Brazilian Pantanal hosted by Projeto Ariranhas, and coordination between the three regional subpopulations continues to intensify. The Iberá population has now grown to four families comprising 19 individuals and will soon receive an additional family group from Ecoparque de Buenos Aires, Argentina. Project expansion to the El Impenetrable National Park, also in the north of Argentina is being prepared.

While the recent reintroduction draws public attention, it would not have been possible without decades of work in zoos: the global management of a species in human care, the sustained financial and logistical investment, the development of husbandry and veterinary expertise and the persistence and passion of zoo staff across borders and cultures. This accomplishment should strengthen our confidence and pride as a zoo community. No other entity is capable of building and sustaining such complex conservation infrastructures and this demonstrates the irreplaceable role of zoos in species conservation.

We cannot predict which *ex situ* populations will become essential for future recovery efforts. Therefore, especially at a time when managing coordinated populations is becoming increasingly difficult, we must intensify discussions on global population frameworks within WAZA and establish a functional structure for



Giant Otter with harness and transponder
© Lucinda di Martino

cross-regional cooperation. At present, collaboration depends largely on personal relationships and lacks formal mechanisms and long-term security. WAZA, positioned as a trusted global actor and partner in One Plan Approaches could provide the framework originally envisioned through Global Species Management Plans and act as a key facilitator for engagement with national authorities.

The Giant Otter case exemplifies that when *ex situ* and *in situ* expertise, science and passion come together, real conservation impact becomes possible. The future of the species now depends not on isolated achievements, but on the continued commitment to a truly coordinated global conservation community.



Studbook keepers at the 3rd Giant Otter Workshop (from left to right): Carlos Galvis (ALPZA), Candace Sclimenti (AZA), Nancy Banevicius (AZAB) and Tim Schikora (EZA/WAZA) © IGOA

IN CONVERSATION WITH KAREN FIFIELD MNZM

*Immediate Past President of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA)
Chief Executive at Te Nukuao Wellington Zoo, New Zealand*

Karen Fifield MNZM's term as President of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) came to an end on 30 October 2025, during the WAZA Annual General Assembly (AGA) held at the 80th WAZA Annual Conference in Cali, Colombia, and online. Her presidency was defined by empathy, collaboration and inclusivity – championing the idea that meaningful progress in conservation is only possible when all voices are heard. Through her leadership, WAZA strengthened its governance, advanced animal welfare as a shared global priority and fostered a culture of dialogue and trust among its diverse membership. In this conversation, Karen reflects on her two years at the helm, sharing her proudest achievements, lessons learnt, and hopes for the future of WAZA and the global zoo and aquarium community.

I am also proud of the 2023 Animal Welfare Goal (23AWG), the 2027 Population Management Goal (27PMG) and the work on the 2030 Conservation Goal (30CG). But increasing our advocacy and partnerships with like-minded global organisations such as The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Zoo Educators Association (IZE) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is something I have felt we were very ready to do and I am proud of the progress we have made in that area over the past two years. That progress gives us a seat at the table as a trusted voice and gives us the influence we need for advancing the work of leading zoos and aquariums across the globe.

Reflecting on Leadership

Now that your term as WAZA President has concluded, when you look back, which achievement are you proudest of, and why do you believe it will have the most lasting impact on WAZA's future?

I am so proud of the work we have done during my term as President – the Council, the Executive Office, the Committees and the members. Together we have delivered value for our members and advanced conservation and animal welfare outcomes and standards for WAZA.

Karen Fifield MNZM at Perth Zoo
© Te Nukuao Wellington Zoo



Strengthening WAZA's governance was a defining feature of your presidency (new bylaws, code of ethics, etc). As you step away from the role, what principles or lessons do you hope will continue guiding future governance reforms?

Good governance is critical for a well-functioning organisation – governance sets the parameters for risk appetite, clarity for operations and sets the standards for how the organisation behaves. I hope that future Councils build on the work we have done in the past two years so that members feel the organisation is managed and governed well with good policy and practice.

Every leadership journey comes with difficult choices. Which moment during your presidency most tested your resolve, and what did it teach you about leadership?

I think having to make decisions about membership when standards are not met. That is challenging and requires good and open communication. The standards are there for a reason and we are there to help members to achieve them. Sometimes that still does not happen and difficult choices have to be made. I believe in being clear with expectations and continually communicating even if that is hard for the parties involved. Leadership can be lonely and decisions can sometimes be misunderstood – but at the end of the day you have to be able to sleep at night with the decisions you have made – you do that by being thorough, listening and being decisive with the information you have at hand at that point in time.

Leading a truly global organisation means embracing diversity in all its forms. Looking back, how did WAZA's cultural and geographic diversity shape you as a leader – and what insights will you carry forward from that experience?

I have thoroughly enjoyed that part of the role – I have learnt so much! Visiting members all around the world, seeing how people manage their zoos and aquariums in all cultural contexts is inspiring and challenging at the same time! The insights I have gained are that everyone wants to do well by the animals in our care, species in the wild and each other – we just come at it in different (and sometimes surprisingly similar!) ways. I have been so honoured to be welcomed by members during my time as President and I will treasure that experience, always.

Values, Vision and Legacy

Education has always been close to your heart. How do you hope WAZA will continue empowering members and ensuring conservation education remains central to conservation efforts worldwide?

As a zoo educator, yes – education, learning, engagement and belonging are all close to my heart. As zoos and aquariums we are so powerful – we can connect with millions of people – who also love animals – and together we can create a critical mass of change for our planet. But we have to let people into our world and trust them with our deepest thoughts so they feel they belong with us – if we do that we are unstoppable. The role of The International Zoo Educators Association (IZE) is integral to this which is why I am so pleased we now have a dedicated seat for IZE on WAZA Council.

As you reflect on your presidency, how did empathy influence the way you led – and how might that approach continue to benefit WAZA's future leaders?

To me empathy is listening, giving credit where credit is due and being prepared to talk. No one knows everything and we can always learn from others – as the world changes it will become even more critical to keep our standards but also offer to help in a true collegial way. WAZA has taught me that we are all part of something bigger than ourselves and that many people and animals are counting on us. We can only deliver for them if we have an open and willing heart.

Having witnessed WAZA's evolution over recent years, what do you think now defines a truly progressive zoo or aquarium, and how do you envision WAZA supporting that progress in the years to come?

WAZA Councils and Executive Teams over the years have all driven change in their particular contexts and the mainstay of that change is to be better – better standards, better outcomes, better zoos and aquariums. This, together with regional and national associations, has created zoos and aquariums that do it better – better animal welfare, better visitor experience, better health and safety, better business outcomes, better community support and the list goes on. I think truly progressive zoos and



Karen Fifield MNZM at Te Nukuaoo Wellington Zoo
© Te Nukuaoo Wellington Zoo

aquariums are those that continue to learn, to push the boundaries, to raise the standards, to work together and keep improving. WAZA has to continue to evolve within new contexts and find initiatives that support continuous improvements for members.

Looking Ahead

After many years in senior leadership, what personal values, habits or mindsets have proven most essential – and what advice would you give to those who wish to follow a similar path?

One of the things I always say is to say 'yes!' You never know where it may lead. I love the zoo and aquarium profession and what we achieve, so if you feel that way too, then say yes – put your hand up for leadership roles, call on your trusted networks for support, acknowledge how privileged we are to be a part of this profession and enjoy giving back. The zoo and aquarium profession has given many of us so much that we should all be willing to give back.

From your perspective, what does strong, modern leadership in conservation look like today, and how should emerging leaders prepare to meet that challenge?

We have so much to do in the conservation space and no one person or organisation can achieve what is needed to be done alone. Strong modern leadership means knowing your true north, being resilient, asking for help and helping others. It is tough at times but the rewards are immense – saving a species, working with fabulous people, learning and giving hope – being human in the best ways.

You will step down as Te Nukuaoo Wellington Zoo Chief Executive in April 2026, and you have mentioned your intention to continue contributing through governance and conservation work. What lies ahead for you, and where do you hope to make the greatest impact next?

I love governance work and I have a couple of options already in that area. I want to work with organisations that feed my true north and that want my skills. Of course, I will still be in the WAZA Council as Immediate Past President for the next two years so I am looking forward to that. But the universe is big so I remain open to what it brings for me.

As you handed over the baton, what are your hopes for WAZA's next chapter – and what message would you like to leave for the global zoo and aquarium community that you have helped shape?

Keep going! Keep striving to be better and lead the way for animals, people and the planet. You have got this.

Now serving as WAZA's Immediate Past President, Karen Fifield's legacy continues to inspire a more connected and collaborative global community. Her presidency embodied the belief that leadership is not about one voice, but about creating space for many – empowering others to speak, to act and to lead.

Through empathy, inclusion and collaboration, she helped shape WAZA's path toward a future grounded in shared purpose and collective strength.

THE 90TH WAZA ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN CALI: A RECAP OF THE 80TH WAZA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, HELD IN CALI, COLOMBIA AND ONLINE

Rosa Pons, *Head of Communications, WAZA*

In 2025, WAZA reached a milestone very few organisations in global conservation can claim: its 90th anniversary. To mark this extraordinary occasion, the 80th WAZA Annual Conference unfolded as a true anniversary celebration – an international gathering hosted by Cali Zoo, Colombia, where the zoo and aquarium community from across the world came together in person and online to reflect on nine decades of shared purpose and to look ahead to the next chapter.

Under the theme ‘90 Years and Beyond: Uniting for a Thriving Planet’, the conference invited our global community to celebrate our collective heritage while preparing for the future. And just like any memorable anniversary celebration, the week offered a welcoming host, an inspiring guest list, a thoughtfully curated menu of ideas, moments of recognition, a marvellous programme and a symbolic passing of the torch to next year’s host.

A Celebration 90 Years in the Making: Uniting Voices, Expertise and Purpose

Hosted by the Cali Zoo, the conference set the stage for a milestone gathering. Colombia’s vibrant cultural and ecological landscape offered a fitting ‘venue’, welcoming attendees with warmth, diversity and a deep commitment to conservation.

For the first time in WAZA’s history, this annual gathering was presented in a hybrid format, opening the celebration to online participants around the world. Delegates onsite immersed themselves in the city’s rich heritage, while online participants joined the sessions in real time – uniting voices across continents.

Throughout the five days, participants revisited the lessons of the last nine decades, explored challenges and opportunities for the future, and reflected on what 90 years of collaboration truly means for modern zoos and aquariums.





Picnic at the Botanical Garden in Cali © Cali Zoo/WAZA

The Menu: A Rich Programme of Ideas and Inspiration

Every memorable celebration offers a remarkable menu. In Cali, the programme served a series of thought-provoking ‘courses’ designed to nourish, challenge and inspire.

Day 1 Keynote – Wade Davis: Ancient Wisdom for a Modern World

The opening keynote was delivered by renowned anthropologist, author and explorer **Wade Davis**, who took participants on a journey through the world’s cultural landscapes. Drawing on decades of fieldwork, Davis highlighted the irreplaceable ecological wisdom preserved within humanity’s cultural diversity. Reflecting the essence of his work, he often reminds the world that:

“Every culture has something to say, just as each deserves to be heard.”

His keynote set a powerful tone for the celebration – inviting attendees to rediscover cultural knowledge as a source of resilience for our shared future.

Day 2 Keynote – Rosamira Guillén and Andrés Link: Conservation Rooted in Community

The second keynote featured **Rosamira Guillén** of Proyecto Tití and **Andrés Link** of Proyecto Primates, two of Colombia’s most respected conservation leaders.

They presented decades of work protecting critically endangered primates – the cotton-top tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*) and the brown spider monkey (*Ateles hybridus*) – and highlighted how long-term, community-centred, scientifically grounded approaches can transform landscapes and livelihoods.

Day 3 Keynote – Susana Cárdenas: Bridging Oceans for Marine Protection

The third keynote, delivered by **Susana Cárdenas**, Director of the Punta San Juan Programme in Peru, focused on 25 years of marine conservation driven by research, alliances and community engagement. Her keynote demonstrated how sustained international partnerships between universities, governments, zoos and aquariums can shape a model for resilience in the face of growing marine challenges.

A Toast to New Milestones: Animal Welfare Strategy and Annual Report Launches

A milestone celebration calls for symbolic toasts – and this year’s came in the form of two major releases.

Launch of the WAZA Animal Welfare Strategy 2025

On 27 October, WAZA officially launched the new WAZA Animal Welfare Strategy: Advancing Animal Welfare – The World Zoo and Aquarium Animal Welfare Strategy, a comprehensive, science-based framework guiding zoos and aquariums worldwide to advance the care, protection and welfare of animals.

An update of the landmark 2015 edition, the new Strategy has been shaped by more than 40 experts across the WAZA membership and **reflects a decade of scientific progress and evolving best practice.**

It provides members with an **evidence-based, holistic framework** to continue advancing the highest standards of animal welfare globally.

Launch of the WAZA Annual Report 2024

That same day, WAZA unveiled its Annual Report 2024, a comprehensive overview of the association’s achievements, including strengthened engagement in The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) processes, and progress on the 2023 WAZA Animal Welfare Goal.

A highlight of the report is ‘90 Years of WAZA in 90 Images’, a visual tribute to WAZA’s history – the ideal anniversary photo album.

Honouring Excellence: The WAZA 2025 Awards Ceremony

No celebration is complete without recognising the individuals and institutions that make our community extraordinary. At the Gala Dinner on 30 October, four prestigious awards honoured leadership in animal welfare, conservation and sustainability:

- **Inaugural WAZA Animal Welfare Award 2025** *Toronto Zoo (Canada)* for its holistic, evidence-based and innovative approach to advancing animal welfare.
- **WAZA Conservation Award 2025** *Fundación Temaikèn (Argentina)* for conserving threatened endemic flora in the Osonunu Reserve – demonstrating how plant conservation drives wider biodiversity protection.
- **WAZA Environmental Sustainability Award 2025** *Seattle Aquarium (United States)* for its transparent, science-based sustainability strategy and climate leadership.
- **WAZA Heini Hediger Award 2025** *Professor Theo B. Pagel (Cologne Zoo, Germany)* for more than three decades of global leadership in conservation, animal welfare and education.



Sergio Guerra (left) and Paula González (middle) from Fundación Temaikèn receive the WAZA Conservation Award from Dr Judy Mann (right) © Cali Zoo/WAZA



Karen Fifield MNZM(left), WAZA Immediate Past President, presents the Heini Hediger Award to Professor Theo B. Pagel (right) © Cali Zoo/WAZA



Dolf De Jong (left), CEO of Toronto Zoo, receives the WAZA Animal Welfare Award from Dr Alejandro Grajal (right) © Cali Zoo/WAZA



Panel “Defining Moments: Milestones That Shaped the Global Zoo and Aquarium Community”, featuring moderator Dr Alex Rübel with panellists Dr Sanna Hellström, Dr Jenny Gray, Dr Judy Mann and Lee Ehmke © Cali Zoo/WAZA



Karen Fifield MNZM presenting during the Annual General Assembly (AGA) © Cali Zoo/WAZA

Welcoming the WAZA Council 2025–2027

During the Annual General Assembly (AGA) on 30 October, WAZA welcomed its new Council for the 2025–2027 term, representing all global regions.

- **President:** Prof David Field (Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, United Kingdom)
- **Vice President:** Cynthia Whitbred-Spanoulis (Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center, United States)
- **Immediate Past President:** Karen Fifield MNZM (Te Nukuaoo Wellington Zoo, New Zealand)

The Council includes institutional representatives from Houston Zoo, South Carolina Aquarium, Toronto Zoo, Alpenzoo Innsbruck, Chester Zoo, Helsinki Zoo, Mandai Wildlife Group, Melbourne Zoo and Taipei Zoo, as well as representatives from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), the Latin American Zoo and Aquarium Association (ALPZA) and the Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia (ZAA). Also, two observers seats for The International Union for Conservation of Nature Species Survival Commission (IUCN SSC) and The International Zoo Educators Association (IZE).

A Landmark 90th Anniversary Gathering

“Reaching ninety years is not simply a marker of time – it is a testament to what we can achieve when we act together.”, said Dr Martín Zordan, WAZA CEO. “Our community’s strength lies in collaboration, and this conference showed that the next ninety years can be even more ambitious, inclusive and impactful.”

Watch the [WAZA 90th Legacy Video](#) premiered at the conference, with footage submitted by WAZA members to showcase the conservation impact of our global community.

Passing the Torch: Cologne Zoo to Host in 2026

As the celebration drew to a close, the final moment followed tradition: passing the torch to the next host. **Cologne Zoo (Germany)** will welcome the global community to the **81st WAZA Annual Conference** from **25 to 29 October 2026**.

One of Europe’s oldest zoological institutions, Cologne Zoo blends heritage with innovation – a fitting stage for the next chapter in WAZA’s story.

A Heartfelt Thank You

Like any great anniversary celebration, the success of this event can be attributed to the people who made it unforgettable. WAZA extends its warmest thanks to:

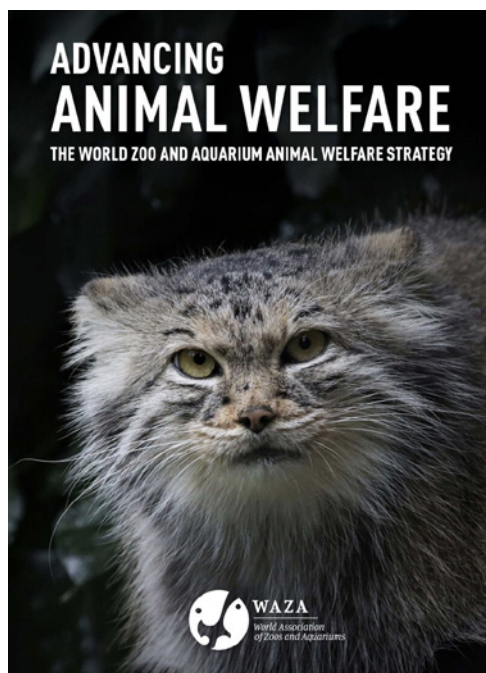
- the **Cali Zoo**, our exceptional hosts,
- **all speakers**, and
- **every delegate**, in person and online,

for contributing to this landmark moment in WAZA’s 90-year journey. Also, our sincere thanks go to our Gold Sponsor, Hanart Culture; Silver Sponsor, AfH Design; Lunch Sponsor, fahlo and Online Sponsor, TRISON.

As we look ahead, WAZA remains committed to uniting voices, expertise and purpose – for a thriving planet, now and for generations to come.



WAZA Annual Report 2024 © WAZA



WAZA Animal Welfare Strategy 2025 © WAZA



**Heini Hediger
AWARD**

World Association
of Zoos and Aquariums



**Conservation
AWARD**

World Association
of Zoos and Aquariums



**Environmental
Sustainability
AWARD**

World Association
of Zoos and Aquariums



**Animal Welfare
AWARD**

World Association
of Zoos and Aquariums

WAZA Award Categories © WAZA



WAZA is pleased to present a visual journey through some of the highlights of the 80th WAZA Annual Conference. From inspiring keynotes and engaging sessions to vibrant social events and memorable visits, the gallery reflects the energy and unity of this 90th anniversary celebration in Cali and online. These images capture the spirit of collaboration and shared purpose that defines the WAZA community—and the momentum carrying it forward with confidence into the next ninety years.



1 Wade Davis delivering his keynote, Ancient Wisdom for a Modern World. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA) 2 Evening social event in the city of Cali. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA) 3 Karen Fifield MNZM receives a gift in recognition of her Presidency, presented by Dr Martín Zordan, WAZA CEO. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA)



4 Susana Cárdenas presenting her keynote, Bridging Oceans for Marine Protection. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA) 5 Martín Zordan, WAZA CEO, presenting WAZA Updates at the Conference. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA) 6 Conference delegates visiting Cali Zoo. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA) 7 Dolf De Jong (Toronto Zoo), Sergio Guerra and Paula González (Fundación Temaikèn), and Professor Theo B. Pagel (Cologne Zoo) with Dr Judy Mann — from left to right. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA)



8 Lois Lelanchon, WAZA Head of Partnerships and Advocacy, and Paula Cerdán, WAZA Head of Conservation and Animal Welfare, at the Conference.



9 Rosamira Guillén and Andrés Link delivering their keynote on community-rooted conservation. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA) 10 Dave Powell presenting the new WAZA Animal Welfare Strategy. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA)



11 Cameron Kerr moderating the panel From Fundraising to Income Diversification: Building Financial Resilience. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA) 12 Dave Powell moderating the panel Cryopreservation for Species Recovery: Unlocking the Power of Biobanking. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA) 13 Delegates participating in the Future Planning Workshop. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA) 14 David Field moderating the panel Disease Outbreaks in a Connected World: Risks, Responses, and Resilience. (© Cali Zoo/WAZA)



Her Excellency Razan Al Mubarak, President of the IUCN,
presenting at the Congress © IUCN

ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS AT THE FOREFRONT: A NEW CHAPTER OF ENGAGEMENT AT THE IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS 2025

Loïs Lelanchon, *Head of Partnerships and Advocacy, WAZA*

When the global conservation community converged in Abu Dhabi from 9 to 15 October for The 2025 International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress (WCC), one message resonated clearly across plenaries, pavilions and corridors alike: The zoo and aquarium community has become an essential pillar of international conservation action. This year's Congress was not simply another meeting on the global biodiversity calendar, it marked a defining moment for our community. WAZA members were present in record numbers, more engaged than ever, and increasingly recognised for their scientific rigor, policy leadership and ability to mobilise people for nature.

The heightened presence of close to 50 WAZA members (associations, institutions, affiliates and corporates) was not just symbolic. It represented a significant expansion of our community's influence within IUCN's decision-making machinery. Many institutions took part from the earliest stages of the Motions

Process: drafting proposals, negotiating text and advocating for adoption. Their involvement demonstrated a maturing community: one that combines on-the-ground conservation delivery with active participation in global environmental governance.



Martín Zordan, WAZA's CEO, participated in a session exploring the collective power of nature-based education in zoos, aquariums and botanic gardens © WAZA



Lois Lelanchon, WAZA's Head of Partnerships and Advocacy, presented the session "The Impact of Zoos and Aquariums on Conservation: Spotlight on Ex Situ Contributions" © Reverse the Red

Shaping Global Policy: Four Adopted Motions

Among the more than 140 motions adopted at the Congress were four co-sponsored by WAZA. These motions underscore the broad and growing contributions of zoos and aquariums to global conservation priorities:

- **Motion 040** – Strengthening measures to prevent, respond to and recover from natural disasters affecting wildlife.
- **Motion 058** – Tackling wildlife trafficking through improved management of seized and confiscated live animals.
- **Motion 088** – Creating a global standard for assessing genetic diversity.
- **Motion 112** – Scaling collaborative *ex situ* conservation for threatened freshwater fishes.

Collectively, these motions send a powerful message: zoos and aquariums are not only caretakers of species under human care, they are vital partners in addressing some of the most complex conservation challenges of our time, from disaster resilience to genetic research, from illegal trade to freshwater biodiversity decline.

Their adoption also reflects the sustained advocacy work of many WAZA members who contributed their expertise in genetics, animal welfare and *ex situ* population management throughout the motion development process. The active engagement of the zoo and aquarium community in IUCN governance and elections further solidified our role within the Union.

Increasingly, our community is not simply participating in discussions but helping shape the frameworks that will guide global conservation action for the decade ahead.

Presence and Participation: A Dynamic Community at Work

Beyond formal governance processes, the Congress offered a vibrant programme where zoos and aquariums were front and centre. More than 80 events were hosted or co-hosted by WAZA members and partners, reflecting the diversity of expertise our community brings, from conservation breeding to public engagement, from scientific research to climate adaptation.

The WAZA Executive Office contributed to several prominent sessions.

On 10 October, **Paula Cerdán**, WAZA's Head of Conservation and Animal Welfare, moderated 'Celebrating Success: Species Recovery', developed with the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland and Reverse the Red. Through powerful case studies of species brought back from the brink, the session offered a compelling reminder that recovery is achievable when partners unite around shared strategies and long-term commitments.

Two days later, on 12 October, **Dr Martín Zordan**, WAZA's CEO, joined leaders from the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, Toronto Zoo, Chester Zoo, Lisbon Zoo and Emirates Park Zoo and Resort for 'Exploring the Collective Power of Nature-based Education'. The dialogue emphasised the outsized role zoos and aquariums play in shaping environmental values and inspiring behaviour change, critical outcomes for a world grappling with ecological decline.

That same evening, **Loïs Lelanchon** and **Paula Cerdán** co-presented 'The Impact of Zoos and Aquariums on Conservation: Spotlight on Ex Situ Contributions'. Alongside EAZA, Species360, The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and Reverse the Red, the session demonstrated how data-driven *ex situ* programmes underpin many of the world's most successful conservation efforts. It highlighted how zoos and aquariums contribute directly to IUCN targets through studbook management, species survival planning and coordinated species recovery efforts.

Throughout the week, the WAZA team worked closely with partners, engaged in bilateral meetings, and supported members' events, amplifying our community's impact and forging valuable connections that will support joint initiatives in years to come.

A Hub of Collaboration: The Reverse the Red Pavilion

A standout feature of this year's Congress was the Reverse the Red Pavilion, co-sponsored by WAZA. More than a physical space, it served as a living demonstration of what modern conservation collaboration looks like: cross-sectoral, inclusive, regionally diverse and driven by optimism.

The Pavilion hosted interactive installations, data showcases, expert panels and community-driven dialogues. It brought together voices from conservation organisations, government agencies, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and academic and zoological institutions, each contributing to a shared narrative of hope and evidence-based action.

For zoos and aquariums, the Pavilion provided a dynamic platform to demonstrate how we connect science with public mobilisation. It underscored our collective strength: the ability to bridge *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation, to visualise species' trajectories and to inspire millions of visitors with tangible examples of recovery.

MOTION

040

Strengthening response measures for natural disasters affecting wildlife



MOTION

058

Tackling wildlife trafficking



MOTION

088

Assessing genetic diversity



MOTION

112

Scaling *ex situ* conservation



Celebrating Leadership within the IUCN SSC

This year's Congress also marked an important moment of transition for the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC). WAZA was proud to acknowledge and celebrate the leadership of **Dr Jon Paul Rodríguez**, whose tenure as SSC Chair saw remarkable advances in collaboration, species planning and global conservation networks.

Thanks to the efforts of the whole SSC team, partnerships with zoos and aquariums flourished. Centers for Species Survival, many hosted or supported by WAZA members, became pivotal hubs linking *ex situ* expertise with *in situ* conservation needs.

Looking ahead, WAZA warmly welcomes **Vivek Menon** as the new SSC Chair. We anticipate another productive chapter of shared work, particularly in mobilising specialist groups, strengthening global datasets and accelerating species recovery efforts through coordinated *ex situ* and *in situ* strategies.

A Renewed Commitment to Global Biodiversity Leadership

The Congress closed with the re-election of **H.E. Razan Al Mubarak** as IUCN President and the selection of a new IUCN Council, leaders who will guide the Union through a critical period for biodiversity.

WAZA extends its sincere congratulations and looks forward to collaborating closely with the Council as it steers the global agenda toward meaningful and measurable conservation outcomes.

If one theme defined WCC 2025, it was partnership. Across sessions, motions and pavilions, zoos and aquariums were consistently recognised as indispensable contributors to global conservation targets.

Our collective strengths: scientific expertise, conservation breeding, crisis response, education, visitor engagement and data management, position us uniquely within the IUCN family.



The record participation of WAZA members this year was more than a demonstration of support; it was a testament to our maturing role on the global stage. We are no longer peripheral actors. We are strategic partners, policy contributors and catalysts of on-the-ground change.

Moving Forward Together

As WAZA reflects on an exceptional Congress, we also look forward to strengthening collaborations, deepening our work within IUCN, and continuing to champion the essential link between *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation. The challenges ahead are immense, but so is the collective capacity of our network.

The 2025 Congress affirmed that when zoos, aquariums, governments, researchers and communities work together, species recovery becomes not only possible but achievable at scale.

We left Abu Dhabi energised, united and committed. Together, we will continue driving conservation

forward to secure a future where wildlife thrives, ecosystems recover and people around the world recognise the profound value of nature.



Paula Cerdán, WAZA's Head of Conservation and Animal Welfare, moderated an inspiring session on "Celebrating Success- Species Recovery" © WAZA



Scimitar-horned oryx © Greg Lasley



WAZA attended the CITES CoP20 to ensure the voice of the global zoo and aquarium community is represented and informs global wildlife policy © WAZA

FIFTY YEARS OF CITES AND THE ROAD AHEAD: WAZA'S PERSPECTIVE FROM COP20

Lois Lelanchon, *Head of Partnerships and Advocacy, WAZA*

WAZA, alongside several WAZA Association and Institution members, attended the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP20) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan from 24 November to 5 December 2025 to represent the collective voice of the global zoo and aquarium community. This participation was grounded in our long-standing commitment to supporting evidence-based conservation policy and to ensuring that decisions taken on the international stage reflected the realities of caring for, managing and protecting some of the world's most threatened species. CoP20 offered an invaluable opportunity for our community to contribute its expertise not only as wildlife professionals, but also as conservation partners engaged in species recovery, rescue and rehabilitation and long-term population management.

Our involvement took on heightened importance because decisions adopted at CoP20 carry legal implications. CITES, as a legally binding international agreement, expects its Parties to incorporate CoP outcomes into domestic legislation. Any shift in species listings,

annotations, or trade regulations therefore directly affects the operations of zoos and aquariums worldwide. The outcomes of CoP20 will influence how our community continues to contribute to global conservation in the years ahead. In this context, WAZA's presence ensures that our community needs, expertise and practical experience are taken into account when Parties consider changes that could impact international animal transfers and collaboration.

In addition to engaging in negotiations and providing technical input, WAZA co-sponsored two side events at the Conference, each illustrating the unique contributions that zoos and aquariums make to species conservation and the fight against biodiversity loss. The first focused on African hornbills (*Bycanistes spp.* and *Ceratogymna spp.*), a group of birds increasingly threatened by habitat degradation, hunting and unsustainable trade. The second event addressed the escalating threats faced by many songbird species. While some species are well known, countless lesser-known species have suffered steep declines due to habitat loss, trapping for trade and diminishing ecosystem stability.

The discussions at CoP20 unfolded against the backdrop of a wide array of species proposals submitted for consideration. Parties put forward 51 proposals in total, 39 concerning fauna and 12 concerning flora, reflecting concerns spanning continents, ecosystems and taxonomic groups. Among the fauna were well-known and charismatic species such as the okapi and the striped hyena, alongside numerous reptile, amphibian and invertebrate species that, although less visible to the public, play critical roles in their ecosystems. These included several gecko species, the giant galliwasp, multiple tarantulas, an array of frog species and mollusks affected by habitat pressures and exploitation.

Of particular note were the ten proposals addressing commercially exploited aquatic species. These included sea cucumbers, abalone, eels, sharks and rays. These are groups that have become emblematic of the complex interplay between commercial demand, ecological vulnerability and governance challenges and opportunities in marine and freshwater environments. Many of these species are essential for ecosystem function, yet face high levels of exploitation and insufficient management in certain parts of their range. Their inclusion in the proposals underscored the need for strengthened global coordination and science-based trade regulation.

The significance of CoP20 was amplified by the fact that the year marked five decades since CITES first entered into force. Over these fifty years, the Convention has become one of the most influential international agreements governing wildlife trade. Its effectiveness rests on the central role of science in the decision-making process, ensuring that listings and regulations reflect the best available evidence on species status, population trends, threats and ecological needs. The outcomes of CoP20 are thus expected to guide the global regulation of trade in wild species for the next three years and, in many respects, set the direction for much longer-term international conservation efforts.

CoP20 continued the established rhythm of the Conference of the Parties, often referred to as the World Wildlife Conference, which convenes every three years to review and amend the CITES Appendices. These Appendices serve as

the cornerstone of international wildlife trade regulation, determining the level of oversight applied to the movement of species that are, or may become, threatened by overexploitation. In preparation for each Conference, Parties submit proposals to add species to Appendix I or II, remove them, transfer them between Appendices, or revise the annotations that determine which parts or derivatives are regulated. These proposals are then scrutinised through processes that include scientific committee reviews, consultations among Parties and the examination of trade and biological data.

The decisions reached at each Conference directly shape how the international community responds to the conservation needs of species affected by trade. They also influence broader strategies to address the interconnected pressures that wildlife face, from habitat loss and fragmentation to emerging diseases and the accelerating effects of climate change. CoP20 was no exception. The deliberations and outcomes are expected to have far-reaching impacts not only on international trade but also on ecosystem stability, biodiversity recovery and the long-term sustainability of species.

For the global zoo and aquarium community, participation in CoP20 reaffirmed our commitment to supporting species survival both within and beyond our institutions. Our community has long been engaged in research, *ex situ* community, field-based initiatives and the prevention of illegal wildlife trade. By contributing expertise and engaging constructively with Parties, WAZA ensures that the practical realities of species care, conservation breeding and scientific collaboration are reflected in the decision-making process. As the world confronts accelerating biodiversity loss, the outcomes of CoP20 will shape the environment in which zoos and aquariums continue to fulfil their mission of protecting wildlife and promoting a sustainable future.



REVERSE THE RED: CELEBRATING LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION AND GLOBAL COLLABORATION

Lois Lelanchon, *Head of Partnerships and Advocacy, WAZA*

The 2025 The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi marked a powerful moment for global conservation, and for the Reverse the Red movement it was the largest, most vibrant presence yet. According to IUCN, this Congress was one of the most inclusive gatherings in its history, bringing together more than 10,000 participants on-site and an additional 800 online, representing 203 nationalities across 12 regions. Amid this extraordinary convergence of conservationists, policymakers, scientists, artists and community leaders, the Reverse the Red Species Pavilion stood as one of more than 100 pavilions and booths, buzzing with exchange, creativity and momentum for positive change.

For those who travelled great distances to join in person, and for those who could not, this is a summary of Reverse the Red's activities, celebrations and collaborations that unfolded over an unforgettable week in Abu Dhabi.

Honouring Excellence: The First-Ever Reverse the Red NBSAP Medal

One of the highlights of the Congress was the announcement of the inaugural Reverse the Red NBSAP Medal, created to recognise outstanding national commitments to species recovery. These awards commend governments that have demonstrated excellence in developing and delivering evidence-based National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), a foundation for real, measurable progress in tackling the biodiversity crisis.

In this first round, 26 countries were awarded the NBSAP Medal: Argentina, Australia, Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Slovenia, State of Palestine, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, and Uganda.

Golden Lion Tamarin (*Poco das Antas*)
By Bart van Dorp © Flickr



“These plans reflect a strong national commitment to biodiversity and species conservation, driven by local data and expertise that underlie evidence-based public policies,” said Michael Clifford, Strategy Director for Reverse the Red. “We commend these countries’ leadership and efforts.”

The work demonstrated within these NBSAPs signals a growing global shift: countries are increasingly connecting high-quality data with targeted action, building the structures needed for long-term species recovery. This shift, from intention to evidence-led implementation, is precisely the movement Reverse the Red aims to support.

Accelerating Action: Announcing the First Reverse the Red Accelerator Awards

Another major moment arrived with the announcement of the inaugural Reverse the Red Accelerator Awards, developed with the support of the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund and Synchronicity Earth. The awards were designed to spur innovation, sharpen recovery-focused planning, foster collaboration and accelerate the concrete actions essential for species survival.

This year, nine projects were selected (including two from WAZA members*) representing five animal species, one fungi species and three plant species. Each project addresses critical conservation needs using creative, community-rooted and evidence-based approaches.

2025 Accelerator Award Recipients

- **Bristol Zoological Society – Turquoise Dwarf Gecko (*Lygodactylus williamsi*), Critically Endangered***
- Ethnobiological Society of Indonesia (PMEI) – Kalimantan Mango (*Mangifera casturi*), Extinct in the Wild
- Fungi Foundation – Loyo Mushroom (*Butyriboletus loyo*), Endangered
- Grootvadersbosch Conservancy Trust – Tradouw Redfin (*Pseudobarbus burchelli*), Critically Endangered
- Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas, A.C. – Townsend’s Shearwater (*Puffinus auricularis*), Critically Endangered
- IUCN SSC Center for Species Survival Nigeria – A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute – African Rosewood (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*), Endangered
- The Morton Arboretum – Arroyo Oak (*Quercus brandegeei*), Endangered
- Nature Concerns – Taita Apalis (*Apalis fuscigularis*), Critically Endangered
- **Zoological Society of London – Potosi Pupfish (*Cyprinodon alvarezi*), Extinct in the Wild***



Inaugural Reverse the Red Accelerator Awards © Reverse the Red

These nine initiatives represent powerful examples of what is possible when local knowledge, scientific expertise and global support converge to accelerate positive impact. Each awardee is also featured in an international art exhibit that premiered at the Congress, a fusion of conservation and creativity that celebrates hope, innovation and the vibrancy of life these species represent.

A Hub of Energy: Events, Art and Engagement at the Reverse the Red Pavilion

Over the course of the Congress, the Reverse the Red pavilion emerged as a dynamic hub of dialogue, celebration and collaboration. In total, the pavilion hosted:

- 21 events
- Around 100 speakers from all over the world
- An international art exhibition spotlighting the Accelerator Award finalists
- A wildly popular tattoo station offering temporary species-themed tattoos
- Hundreds of formal and informal conversations, networking moments and spontaneous collaborations.

This extraordinary level of engagement reaffirmed something essential: the global conservation community is ready not just to raise awareness about the biodiversity crisis, but to take coordinated, data-driven, hopeful action to reverse it.

These events brought together leading experts on species conservation, national policy, financing, community engagement and innovative technologies. Sessions ranged from high-level discussions on global strategy to interactive workshops and storytelling forums. Across all formats, one theme was unmistakable: conserving species is not just a scientific or policy challenge, it is a shared societal mission.

The art exhibition added a powerful human dimension to the pavilion, celebrating the species at the heart of our work and the communities striving to protect them.

Transporting these stories into visual form helped to bridge science and emotion, inspiring deeper reflection and connection among participants.

And in true Reverse the Red fashion, the tattoo station added a touch of fun and creativity, sparking conversations about favourite species, conservation successes, and what it means to show your commitment, literally and figuratively, to reversing the trajectory of biodiversity loss.

Looking Ahead: Continuing the Momentum

This time spent in Abu Dhabi was more than a series of events, it was a catalyst. The connections forged, ideas sparked and commitments renewed are already shaping the next phase of Reverse the Red's work.

In the months ahead, new updates will be shared on:

- Additional opportunities to engage in the Reverse the Red global movement
- How the Accelerator Award projects are progressing
- The next steps for strengthening NBSAP implementation
- Resources for zoos, aquariums and conservation organisations to join or deepen their participation in the growing global coalition.

To everyone who joined in person, who stopped by our pavilion, who participated online, or who continues to champion species conservation from afar: thank you. The energy and collaboration witnessed in Abu Dhabi strengthened the global momentum needed to build a world where species recovery is not only possible but inevitable.

Together, we can and will Reverse the Red.



TURNING VISION INTO ACTION: HOW WAZA'S GLOBAL GOALS DRIVE CHANGE

Paula Cerdán, Head of Conservation and Animal Welfare, WAZA

WAZA's greatest strength lies in its global reach and diverse membership. We bring together zoos and aquariums, national and regional associations and like-minded organisations from around the world, all committed to advancing conservation and animal welfare. With members in over 50 countries and regions, our community reflects a rich tapestry of perspectives, cultures and contexts.

This diversity, while one of our key strengths, also means that implementing shared priorities, such as animal welfare evaluation, population management and conservation, can take different shapes across the globe. These variations may stem from cultural differences, resource limitations, or access and capacity challenges.

As we work towards WAZA's vision of being a globally recognised leader in conservation and animal welfare, we have been mindful and have embraced these realities. Our approach has been to build bridges, create shared frameworks and support our members in achieving common objectives. The WAZA Goals have become a cornerstone of this effort, ensuring that WAZA members, whether individual institutions or associations, align around shared values and consistent understanding of the areas most central to the mission of modern zoos and aquariums.

WAZA Goal

A WAZA Goal is a strategic, time-bound commitment by WAZA members to drive progress, strengthen global collaboration and align regional and national frameworks for conservation and animal welfare.

From Animal Welfare to Population Management – and Beyond

In 2020, and after years of development and discussions, WAZA launched its very first Goal, the **WAZA 2023 Animal Welfare Goal (23AWG)**. This ambitious initiative called on all WAZA national and regional association members to develop an Animal Welfare Evaluation Process (AWEP) for their member zoos and aquariums. It also required that all WAZA institutional members undergo evaluation through these frameworks within five years of their regional process being confirmed as meeting WAZA's requirements.



A White-eyed parakeet (*Psittacara leucophthalmus*) stands close to a visitor © Parque das Aves



Malachite butterfly (*Siproeta stelenes*) © Cali Zoo

By 2024, and following a year's delay due to a global pandemic and geopolitical challenges that required shifting regional priorities, we were proud to celebrate the associations that had successfully met the Goal through the development and implementation of their AWEPS, a milestone achievement for WAZA and its members.

While the process also brought challenges, including the departure of one of our member regional zoo and aquarium associations, it underscored WAZA's commitment to integrity and consistency in advancing animal welfare worldwide. To date, over half of WAZA's member zoos and aquariums have gone through the evaluations conducted by their relevant regional and national associations, while monitoring and engagement is ongoing to ensure sustained progress.

Building on the success and lessons learnt from the 23AWG, and following broad consultation among WAZA members, committees and Council, a new chapter began in 2024 with the establishment of the **WAZA 2027 Population Management Goal (27PMG)**.

This Goal calls for regional associations to develop **science-based population management frameworks** that reflect effective professional practices and involve active participation from their institutional members. So far, three associations – the **Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)**, the **European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA)**, and the **Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia (ZAA)** – have already met the Goal, while others continue to make steady progress toward its achievement.

Looking Ahead: The WAZA 2030 Conservation Goal

The momentum continues. Following the adoption of *Resolution 79.2* in November 2024, WAZA members entrusted the Conservation Committee with the development of WAZA's third major Goal: the WAZA 2030 Conservation Goal (30CG).

This Goal will see WAZA member zoos and aquariums actively contributing to halting extinctions, reversing declines, restoring populations and securing a future for threatened species. National and regional associations will, in turn, establish systems to monitor and report on these contributions.

Ultimately, this will help WAZA and its members understand, and demonstrate, the global scale and impact of our collective conservation work. It will also allow us to identify where our contributions can be scaled up or targeted more effectively.

Establishing this Goal presents enormous opportunities: internally, to help WAZA and its members become more impactful, strategic, intentional and effective in our conservation contributions to save species; and externally, to strengthen WAZA's voice in international forums and agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

As we write this article, the framework for the Conservation Goal is taking shape. We extend our sincere thanks to all WAZA members who have contributed their expertise and feedback through workshops and consultations.

Your collaboration is shaping the next era of WAZA's global commitments to advance conservation and animal welfare.

Together, through the WAZA Goals, our global community continues to transform vision into action, and is building a stronger, more connected, and more impactful global zoo and aquarium community for animals, people and the planet.

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MEET YOUR 2025–2027 WAZA COUNCIL

During the 80th WAZA Annual Conference, WAZA marked an important moment of transition, welcoming the 2025–2027 WAZA Council and thanking outgoing members for their leadership in guiding the Association through a landmark period. The WAZA Council provides governance and strategic leadership for the Association and supports collaboration among member zoos and aquariums.

2025–2027 WAZA Council



President
Prof. David Field
Royal Zoological Society of
Scotland, United Kingdom



Vice President
Cynthia W. Spanoulis
Virginia Aquarium,
United States



Immediate Past President
Karen Fifield MNZM
Te Nukuaio Wellington Zoo,
New Zealand

Region I: Canada, USA and Mexico



Houston Zoo
USA
Lisa Peterson



South Carolina Aquarium
USA
Kevin Mills



Toronto Zoo
Canada
Dolf DeJong

Region II: Europe and the Middle East



Alpenzoo Innsbruck
Austria
Dr André Stadler

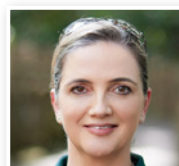


Chester Zoo
United Kingdom
Dr Simon Dowell



Helsinki Zoo
Finland
Dr Sanna Hellström DVM

Region III: Central America and the Caribbean, South America, Africa, Asia (excluding the Middle East), and Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and the Pacific Islands)



Mandai Wildlife Group
Singapore
Dr Sonja Luz



Melbourne Zoo
Australia
Dr Sally Sherwen



Taipei Zoo
Taiwan
Dr Eric Tsao

Association Seats



Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)
USA
Craig Hoover



European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA)
The Netherlands
Myfanwy Griffith



Latin American Zoo and Aquarium Association (ALPZA)
Chile
Dr Alexandra Guerra



Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia (ZAA)
Australia
Nicola Craddock

Observer Seats



IUCN Species Survival Commission
Australia
Dr Kira Mileham



International Zoo Educators Association
USA
Dr Sarah Thomas

Thank You to Our Outgoing Leaders

We extend our deepest appreciation to Karen Fifield MNZM, Chief Executive at Te Nukua Wellington Zoo, for her exceptional leadership as WAZA President over the past two years. Karen strengthened WAZA's role as a global unifying voice and advanced the 2030 Conservation Goal. She will continue to serve on Council as Immediate Past President and Chair of the Nominating Committee.

WAZA also thanks outgoing Council members Dr Clément Lanthier, Dr Alejandro Grajal, Dr Brandie Smith, Jamie Christon, Elaine Bensted, Dr Judy Mann-Lang, and Council Observer Peggy Sloan for their outstanding dedication and service.



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As WAZA marks its 90th anniversary, we invite you to join “90 Years of Impact. A Chorus of Global Voices” – a vibrant gallery of one-line testimonials from our global community. Each sentence will speak to the heart of what it means to belong to WAZA: the pride, the passion and the shared commitment that, together, advance conservation and animal welfare on every continent.

Rosa Pons | WAZA, Spain
Being part of WAZA makes me feel connected to a shared story of conservation and collaboration for our planet.

Kumiko Hara | JAZA, Japan
Being part of WAZA empowers us to connect globally and advance conservation for our planet.

Thalia Pelegrin | WAZA, Spain
Being part of WAZA empowers me to protect wildlife and meaningfully contribute to the conservation of our Planet's Biodiversity.

Dolf DeJong | Toronto Zoo, Canada
Being part of WAZA connects us with leaders across the world to help us evolve and grow.

Dr Jens-Ove Heckel | Zoo Landau in der Pfalz, Germany
Being part of WAZA means that our zoo is on the path to the future, guided by visionary principles.

Sandy Trautwein | Species360, USA
Being part of WAZA helps fulfill my lifelong passion for conserving species on a global scale.

Janet Ho | WAZA, Spain
Being part of WAZA allows me to connect and learn from colleagues worldwide to drive global conservation impact.

Kasumi Nagakura | JAZA, Japan
Being part of WAZA gives me the courage that I have colleagues wherever I am.

Paula Cerdán | WAZA, Spain
Being part of WAZA allows me to help reverse the trajectory of species that need our help.

Deborah Luke | The Florida Aquarium, United States
Being part of WAZA inspires my collaborations with a community dedicated to driving positive change and advancing global resiliency.

A CHORUS OF

Peggy Sloan | The Seattle Aquarium, United States
Being part of WAZA fosters an understanding of diverse cultural perspectives across international aquariums, zoos, and conservation organizations. Our shared understanding accelerates success for conservation, animal wellbeing, and supporting human communities.

Nicola Craddock | ZAA, Australasia
Being part of WAZA enables me to actively contribute to a positive future for our sector, for wildlife and people, worldwide.

Sarah Fedele | AZA, United States
Being part of WAZA connects me to colleagues from around the world tackling similar issues and striving towards shared missions.

Nikki Whittle | WAZA, Spain
Being part of WAZA is being part of an inspiring community that values our nature and wildlife.

Simon Marsh | Wild Welfare, UK/International
Being part of WAZA is an opportunity to collaborate with the community and drive forward animal welfare across the membership and beyond.

Judy Mann | Two Oceans Aquarium, South Africa
Being part of WAZA gives me the opportunity to support the positive changes in our community and a chance for colleagues around the world to become friends.

Lois Lelanchon | WAZA, Spain
Being part of WAZA unites voices worldwide to shape biodiversity and animal welfare policies.

Alejandro Grajal | Woodland Park Zoo, USA
Being part of WAZA has given me a global perspective of the opportunities for zoos and aquariums in changing human attitudes toward our planet.

Jenny Gray | Melbourne Zoo, Australia
Being part of WAZA has expanded my thinking, improved my skills and connected me with some of the smartest and most passionate people on the planet.

Sonja Luz | Mandai Wildlife Group/ Mandai Nature, Singapore
Being part of WAZA gives me hope that there will be a future in which every zoo and aquarium on this planet is managed ethically, with highest levels of animal welfare and strong contributions to species conservation.

Martin Zordan | WAZA, Spain
Being part of WAZA gives me sense of unity and shared responsibility to care for the wonderful wildlife in our planet.

David Field | The Royal Zoological Society Of Scotland, UK
Being part of WAZA is being part of an elite community that advances mission impact on a global scale.

Helen Church | ZAA, Australia
Being part of WAZA helps me to contribute to a global movement achieving better lives for all animals.

Alexandra Guerra | ALPZA, Chile
Being part of WAZA ensures that the voice and commitment to conservation of Latin America are heard around the world.

Cynthia Spanoulis | Virginia Aquarium, United States
Being part of WAZA connects the Virginia Aquarium to solutions that genuinely improve animal welfare worldwide.

Lance Miller | Brookfield Zoo Chicago, United States
Being part of WAZA provides an opportunity to work with amazing individuals across the community to promote high levels of animal welfare around the world.

Cécile Erny | AFdPZ, France
Being part of WAZA is a privilege, uniting inspiring inclusive global community for animal welfare and shared conservation goals.

Kevin Mills | South Carolina Aquarium, United States
Being part of WAZA gives me hope that a global community of dedicated individuals and institutions can make a profound difference in protecting wildlife and wild places.

Clint Wright | Vancouver Aquarium, Canada
Being part of WAZA is the comfort that we are in the shared company of powerful and positive changemakers for nature.

Louise Gordon | JHB City Parks and Zoo, South Africa
Being part of WAZA give us a global authentic voice in caring for wildlife and Biodiversity.

Elizabeth (Lisa) Kelley | Saint Louis Zoo, United States
Being part of WAZA is being a part of the global conservation movement.

Adrián J. Sestelo | Ecoparque Interactivo, Argentina
Being part of WAZA provides opportunities to access highly available knowledge and experiences from around the world.

Clement Lanthier | Calgary Zoo, Canada
Being part of WAZA provides opportunities to access highly available knowledge and experiences from around the world.

Bonnie Mendoza | Phoenix Zoo, USA
Being part of WAZA is witnessing impactful wildlife organizations who are more alike than imagined.

GLOBAL VOICES

Ivan Rehak | Prague Zoo, Czech Republic
Being part of WAZA expresses belonging to a global community united for biodiversity conservation.

Thomas Kölpin | Wilhelma Zoo Stuttgart, Germany
Being part of WAZA is saving species together around the globe.

Grant Abel | Singapore Oceanarium, Singapore
Being part of WAZA means joining a global alliance of zoos and aquariums committed to advancing animal welfare, conservation, and environmental education through collaboration and best practices.

María Jesús Sanz | WAZA, Spain
Being part of WAZA connects me deeply with nature and with the purpose of caring for life in all its forms.

Karen Fifield MNZM | Te Nukuao Wellington Zoo, New Zealand
Being part of WAZA has been such a privilege – great people, awesome animals and meaningful outcomes.

André Stadler | Alpenzoo Innsbruck – Tirol, Austria
Being part of WAZA makes me proud to champion species conservation and animal welfare globally across the leading zoos.

Andy Hall | BIAZA, United Kingdom
Being part of WAZA means working together to conserve nature.

Maria Clara Dominguez | Cali Zoo, Colombia
Being part of WAZA has meant setting up higher standards of what we can do and learning from the best.

Rob Hicks | Merlin Entertainments, UK
Being part of WAZA allows our community to create world-wide impact inspiring guest/public and conserving nature.

Beatriz Sainz | AIZA, Spain
Being part of WAZA represents commitment, responsibility, and collaboration for global animal conservation and welfare.

Simon Dowell | Chester Zoo, UK
Being part of WAZA amplifies hope and multiplies advocacy for our beautiful natural world.

Nadine Lamberski | San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, USA
Being part of WAZA synergizes our nature conservation efforts and enhances global impact for people and planet.

Lisa Peterson | Houston Zoo, USA
Being part of WAZA raises our collective voices and share knowledge to protect wildlife and wild places.

Howard Chuk | Ocean Park Corporation, Hong Kong
Being part of WAZA empowers global partnership for species sustainability and biodiversity conservation.

Eric Tsao | Taipei Zoo, Taiwan
Being part of WAZA means saving species regionally and globally together!

UPDATE ON INTERNATIONAL STUDBOOKS (ISBS)

Changes between 15 October 2024 and 15 March 2025

International Studbooks

Published International Studbooks

- **Visayan Spotted Deer** (*Rusa alfredi*), 2023–2024 ed. – Christina Schubert (Zoo Landau in der Pfalz)
- **Vicuña** (*Lama vicuna*), 2024 ed. – Lena Bockkreiß (Münchner Tierpark Hellabrunn)
- **Hartmann's Mountain Zebra** (*Equus zebra hartmannae*), 2024 ed. – Tanya Langenhorst (Marwell Wildlife)
- **Grévy's Zebra** (*Equus grevyi*), 2024 ed. – Tanya Langenhorst (Marwell Wildlife)
- **Cheetah** (*Acinonyx jubatus*), 2024 ed. – Laurie Marker (Cheetah Conservation Fund)
- **Orangutan** (*Pongo sp.*), 2024 ed. – Megan Elder (Como Park Zoo & Conservatory)

ISB Transfers

- **Lear's Macaw** (*Anodorhynchus leari*), from Angélica Midori Sugieda (São Paulo Zoo) to Fernanda Guida (São Paulo Zoo)
- **Cape Ibis** (*Geronticus calvus*), from Harrison Edell (Dallas Zoo) to Luis Neves (Woodland Park Zoo)
- **Madagascar Sacred Ibis** (*Threskiornis bernieri*), from Harrison Edell (Dallas Zoo) to Kim Gray (Dallas Zoo)

- **Gelada Baboon** (*Theropithecus gelada*), from Achim Johann (NaturZoo Rheine) to Nicolas Brüning (NaturZoo Rheine)
- **Spix Macaw** (*Cyanopsitta spixii*), vacancy filled by Silvia Neri Godoy (CEMAVE São Paulo)
- **Musk Ox** (*Ovibus moschatus*), vacancy filled by Angelica Åsberg (Lycksele Djurpark)

Vacant International Studbooks

- **Buff-crested Bustard** (*Lophotis gindiana*)
- **Aruba Island Rattlesnake** (*Crotalus durissus unicolor*)
- **Alaotran gentle lemur** (*Hapalemur alaotrensis*)

Would you or someone in your team like to keep an International Studbook? Would you like to know more about Global Species Management Plans?

Get in touch with the WAZA Executive Office at conservation @waza.org



Or visit www.waza.org to learn more about these programmes and how to get involved



Pesquet's parrot (*Psittichas fulgidus*) © Prague Zoo

BEHIND THE ZIMS

A Q&A with WAZA International Studbook Keepers

Behind the ZIMS aims to showcase the behind the scenes work of International Studbook Keepers and their management using Species360's Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS), to show the relevance and contributions of WAZA International Studbooks in the work we do in wildlife conservation and professional population management.

Q&A with Janno Weerman



Janno Weerman

Red Panda ISB keeper,
GSMP convenor and
EEP coordinator



ISB kept and featured: *Ailurus fulgens*
ISB host Organisation: Rotterdam Zoo
Year Started as ISBk: 2020 GSMP and 2021 ISB

[For how many years have you been acting as the species' International Studbook Keeper \(ISBk\) and why did you become an ISBk?](#)

I have coordinated the EAZA *Ex Situ* Programme (EEP) for red pandas since 2014, building on the foundation laid by Angela Glatston, who established the International Studbook in the late 1970s. In 2020, during a Global Species Management Plan (GSMP) master planning session at Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park in Darjeeling (PNHZP), I was asked to take on the role of GSMP Convenor.

This was not about stepping into the spotlight – it was about ensuring continuity and strengthening global collaboration. My experience with the Red Panda Network in Nepal and joint projects with Darjeeling Zoo showed me how vital it is to connect *ex situ* and *in situ* efforts. Zoo populations are not just ambassadors; they are a lifeline for genetic diversity and a resource for wild population recovery.

The GSMP allows us to unite regional programmes under one global strategy, ensuring that every decision – whether in Europe, Asia, or North America – contributes to the species' long-term survival.

[How has the International Studbook \(ISB\) contributed to the species' conservation? What do you see as the value of your ISB?](#)

The ISB and GSMP are the backbone of global red panda management. It brings together genetic and demographic data from all regions, creating a single, science-based framework for decision-making.

It's more than a database – it's a tool for action. For example:

- **Genetic research:** A PhD project with Rotterdam Zoo and Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam is using ISB data to study conservation genomics in red pandas.
- **Applied studies:** Controlled environments allow us to test GPS collars, study (endemic) viruses and observe behavioural patterns that inform fieldwork.
- **Reintroduction support:** Through the 'Back to the Wild' initiative coordinated by PNHZP and the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) India, five captive-bred red pandas were released into Singalila National Park, India, to strengthen the wild population.

This integrated approach ensures that red pandas thrive in managed care and have a future in their natural habitat.

[How has the ISB contributed to *ex situ* conservation in practical terms?](#)

The ISB and GSMP provide the foundation for managing red pandas globally. By consolidating data from regional programmes, it enables coordinated decisions that maintain genetic diversity, demographic stability and behavioural competence –critical for a species under severe threat.

It supports:

- **Population management:** Guiding (intercontinental) transfers and pairings to prevent inbreeding.
- **Husbandry and welfare:** Answering questions on nutrition, health and care.
- **Genetic research:** Identifying where to collect samples and clarifying relationships between individuals and their geographical origin.
- **One Health initiatives:** Linking animal health with circumstances (temperature, humidity).

GSMP data stored in the ISB has already informed population viability analyses, genetic diversity studies (comparison *in situ* and *ex situ*) and even practical husbandry improvements. For example, we track trends like infant mortality, weight fluctuations and correlations with environmental factors such as temperature – insights that help zoos adapt care protocols.

How do you see your work as an ISBk supporting conservation action for the species in the wild?

Being an ISB keeper and a GSMP Convenor is less about leading and more about enabling. It's like being a caretaker who keeps the system organised so others can do their best work. When it runs smoothly, conservation, research and population management can flourish.



Red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) in Ilam district, Nepal
© Red Panda Network



Janno Weerman in Jaubari, Nepal © Red Panda Network

By maintaining accurate and accessible global data, we can:

- **Protect genetic diversity**, the foundation of species survival.
- **Develop strong population models**, guiding breeding and transfers.
- **Support *in-situ* projects**, sharing expertise and, when appropriate, animals for reintroduction.

Ultimately, the ISB and GSMP ensures that *ex situ* populations are not isolated but actively contribute to the species' long-term future in the wild.

What do you see as the next chapter or role for International Studbooks?

ISBs and GSMPs are powerful tools with practical value. They bring together global data that help answer key questions about species management, genetic health and adaptation to changing environments.

Rather than being static records, GSMPs provide actionable insights that support:

- Collaborative research across regions to address conservation challenges.
- Identification of knowledge gaps that guide better decisions for threatened species.

International Studbooks and GSMPs have evolved from historical archives into dynamic management resources. They now play an active role in shaping strategies that improve population sustainability and contribute to long-term biodiversity goals.



WAZA

81ST CONFERENCE

**25-29 OCTOBER 2026
COLMAGNE | GERMANY**



We are very much looking forward to the 81st WAZA Conference 2026 in COLMAGNE, in the heart of Europe. Share our enthusiasm for animals and be part of it!

SAVE THE DATE! [WAZA2026.ORG](https://waza2026.org)



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026:

As the new year approaches, the WAZA Executive Office reflects on what inspires and energises them most about the path ahead for WAZA and its global community. In this short piece, the team shares the opportunities they are eager to embrace – from deepening collaboration and strengthening member support to advancing collective impact for wildlife, people, and the planet.



DR MARTÍN ZORDAN

CEO

What excites me most about 2026 is the people we will get to work with, a mix of continuity and fresh energy. New and existing council and committees members in our journey to carry forward our legacy, and new people discovering WAZA. We will embrace new ideas, get new inspiration while we share the joy and responsibility of building a stronger and more vibrant WAZA.

ceo@waza.org



MARÍA JESÚS SANZ

Finance and Office Manager

What gets me most excited is the awesome energy and passion in the WAZA community. This year is all about teaming up, speaking up, and showing how much we can do together for wildlife and biodiversity.

maria.sanz@waza.org



JANET HO

Director of Membership & Events

I am most excited about deepening our connections and enhancing collaboration across the globe. The year ahead presents fantastic opportunities to bring our diverse membership closer through dynamic virtual and in-person events and new initiatives, strengthening our collective impact on conservation and animal welfare worldwide.

membership@waza.org



NICOLE WHITTLE

Membership & Events Assistant

I am excited to see the growth of our global members network, strengthening collaboration and uniting to advance our shared mission. I look forward to welcoming our members to this year's upcoming events, including the 81st WAZA Annual Conference.

membership@waza.org, conference@waza.org



LOÏS LELANCHON

Head of Partnerships & Advocacy

I am particularly energised by our growing presence in global forums translating into stronger influence for WAZA members in key policy processes, especially as we broaden engagement in international frameworks where expanded participation can further strengthen our collective impact.

advocacy@waza.org



PAULA CERDÁN

Head of Conservation & Animal Welfare

The year ahead is our chance to drive a step-change in global conservation, strengthening the frameworks that support and amplify our members' efforts to halt extinctions, reverse declines, restore populations, and secure a future for threatened species, while elevating the collective conservation impact of zoos and aquariums worldwide.

conservation@waza.org, animalwelfare@waza.org



THALIA PELEGRIN

Conservation & Animal Welfare Assistant

I look forward to driving and supporting progress on the 2027 Population Management Goal, empowering our member associations to strengthen their effective population management frameworks. By doing so, we will reinforce the foundation fundamental to amplifying our collective conservation impact, safeguarding biodiversity, and building a better future for wildlife globally.

conservation@waza.org, animalwelfare@waza.org



ROSA PONS

Head of Communications

I am excited to continue building WAZA's role as a thought leader in global conservation, while expanding the support we offer our members in navigating communications challenges. The year ahead is a valuable opportunity to amplify our collective voice and help our community communicate with greater confidence and clarity.

communications@waza.org



MARION KARAM

Communications Assistant

I am excited to see how our global community continues to collaborate and grow in 2026. With the new Council in place, I look forward to the connections and ideas that will emerge across our network, and how we can bring these to life with our wider online community.

communications@waza.org

WAZA WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS



Diving in Galapagos with marine life © Rewild Safaris

WAZA welcomes two new Corporate Members

Rewild Safaris, US

Rewild Safaris designs wildlife journeys that both inspire travellers and support global conservation. By partnering with leading zoos, aquariums, museums and conservation organisations, they create travel experiences tailored specifically for institutional stakeholders and donors. These experiences allow travellers to witness and contribute directly to preservation efforts while engaging with communities and ecosystems in a respectful and ethical way.



Eurasian eagle-owl © Natural Encounters, Inc

Natural Encounters, Inc., US

Founded in 1991, Natural Encounters, Inc. brings over three decades of experience in animal behaviour, professional training and educational programme production. The organisation has worked with more than 130 zoological facilities across 45 countries, helping to elevate animal welfare and deliver conservation messaging through world-class behaviour management, exhibit design and public engagement. They are recognised as a leader in animal welfare and conservation education.



Scimitar-horned oryxes, giraffes, and zebras © Monarto Safari Park

WAZA welcomes seven new Institution Members

Monarto Safari Park, Australia

Monarto Safari Park is one of the world's largest open-range zoos and is home to numerous threatened species. The park offers immersive visitor experiences, including safaris and educational programmes, all designed to raise awareness about endangered wildlife and the importance of conservation. As part of Zoos South Australia (Zoos SA), Monarto Safari Park works alongside Adelaide Zoo. Its operations are guided by a commitment to ethical animal care, a science-based approach to conservation and meaningful community engagement.



Penguin habitat at SeaWorld Yas Island © SeaWorld Yas Island

SeaWorld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi

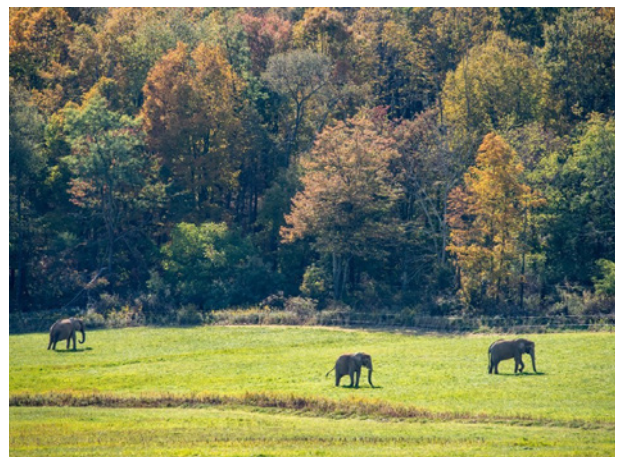
SeaWorld Yas Island is a marine life theme park committed to inspiring ocean conservation through its 'One Ocean' story. The park brings this story to life through educational programmes, guided tours, interactive exhibits and immersive animal habitats, highlighting the interconnectedness of marine life. SeaWorld Yas Island also operates the Yas SeaWorld Research & Rescue Center, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region's first dedicated marine research and rescue centre, supporting conservation and education.



Encounter with birds © Al Ain Zoo

Al Ain Zoo, United Arab Emirates, UAE

Al Ain Zoo is home to over 4,000 animals and is dedicated to the conservation of desert species such as the Arabian Leopard, Arabian Sand Cat, Arabian Oryx, Arabian Tahr, and Dama Gazelle. Many live in natural habitats like the 54-hectare African Safari. Conservation, education, research, and animal welfare guide the zoo's mission, with programmes supporting endangered species and public engagement through the Sheikh Zayed Desert Learning Centre, a hub for biodiversity, sustainability, and UAE heritage.



Elephants at the Pittsburgh Zoo International Conservation Center © Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium

Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium, US

Founded to connect people to wildlife, the Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium is home to over 8,000 animals representing hundreds of species. Guided by a comprehensive strategic plan, the zoo focuses on animal welfare, conservation, education, sustainability and community engagement. In 2023, it unveiled a 25-year masterplan to reimagine the facility, advancing animal wellbeing, creating immersive visitor experiences and strengthening long-term sustainability.

International Crane Foundation, US

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) is working worldwide to conserve cranes and the ecosystems they depend on. Its nearly 300-acre headquarters is home to the only complete group of all 15 crane species worldwide and features visitor experiences including guided tours, a research library and nature trails. With staff and partners in over 50 countries, ICF combines science-based species recovery, habitat protection and public engagement, advancing conservation, education and animal welfare globally.



Sarus crane © International Crane Foundation

BIOPARC Valencia, Spain

BIOPARC Valencia, which opened in 2008, is part of the Spanish company Rain Forest, a pioneer in designing and managing next-generation zoological parks. The zoo uses the 'zoo immersion' concept, recreating animals' natural habitats to provide visitors with an emotional and educational experience that fosters respect for wildlife and the environment. BIOPARC Valencia is committed to conservation, ethical animal care and raising awareness about biodiversity loss.



Elephants walking across the savannah at BIOPARC Valencia
© BIOPARC Valencia

Fundação Jardim Zoológico de Brasília (Brasilia Zoo), Brazil

Fundação Jardim Zoológico de Brasília, established in 1957, has evolved into a modern institution focused on biodiversity conservation, environmental education and ethical animal care. The zoo maintains native and exotic species, participates in breeding and research programmes, and engages the public through immersive educational initiatives. Its operations combine sustainable practices, advanced animal welfare standards and community engagement to foster respect for wildlife and promote long-term conservation impact.



Golden lion tamarin © Fundação Jardim Zoológico de Brasília



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