

ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

REGIONAL COLLECTION PLAN (RCP) HANDBOOK

Updated 14 February 2007

General information on RCPs is available on the AZA Web site at:

<http://members.aza.org/departments/ConScienceMO/RCPS/>

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Regional Collection Plan Overview

The primary responsibility of an AZA Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) is the development of a Regional Collection Plan, or RCP. RCPs include a list of taxa recommended for management in AZA zoos and aquariums, the level at which those taxa should be managed, detailed explanations for how those recommendations were developed, and an evaluation of how much space should be dedicated to each recommended taxon. TAGs develop RCPs to help AZA institutions plan their individual collections and select species that ensure their own and the Association's animal management and conservation goals. Institutions that use RCPs to guide their institutional collection planning processes benefit from the TAGs' comprehensive taxonomic review. They have access to a larger body of expertise gained by their colleagues in other institutions and have greater assurance that the taxa they select are more likely to be available in the long term for their display, conservation, education, and research objectives.

TAG chairs oversee the development of the RCP. Working with steering committee members, institutional representatives (IRs), and advisors, TAG chairs are responsible for drafting and explaining RCP recommendations. Before they are finalized, RCPs must be evaluated and approved by the AZA Wildlife Conservation and Management Committee (WCMC). Once the WCMC has approved a TAG's RCP, it is ready for publication and distribution to all AZA institutions. Current, approved RCPs are posted on the AZA Web site to make it easier for institutional collection planners to incorporate TAG recommendations into their individual planning efforts. Visit <http://members.aza.org/departments/ConScienceMO/RCPS/> to access approved RCPs.

TAG Chair's RCP Responsibilities

Development of the Regional Collection Plan is the most important of the TAG's responsibilities. The TAG Chair is required to submit an RCP within 18 months of becoming Chair. The RCP must be updated and submitted for re-approval to the WCMC at least every three years. TAGs that have approved RCPs are responsible for overseeing all their managed programs. If the three-year re-approval deadline passes, the TAG is no longer considered as having an approved RCP and program management reverts to the WCMC until RCP approval is granted. Please see the TAG Chair Handbook for more information about TAG responsibilities and management.

AZA Protocol for Regional Collection Plans

The published RCP should include the collection plan recommendations made by the TAG as well as a description of the process and the data used to develop the recommendations. The process description should be clear enough for colleagues not familiar with the taxonomic group to understand how and why RCP recommendations were made.

The following protocol should be used to guide the development of an RCP and the structure of the finished document. WCMC members will look for each of the following elements as they review RCPs for committee approval. TAGs are encouraged to be creative within this basic format, but to address each of these key points in their final submissions:

- 1) **TAG Mission:** The TAG's mission statement should be presented in the RCP.

- 2) ***TAG Definition:*** The TAG should specify all taxa within its purview. For TAGs that encompass a very large taxonomic group (e.g., PACCT TAG, Freshwater Fish TAG) the review can be done at a more manageable taxonomic level (e.g., Family, Order, etc.). If this approach is taken, the TAG should summarize the estimated number of species within the taxonomic group. TAGs may provide summary assessments of taxa that have never been, and for logistical reasons most likely never will be, held in collections (e.g., species whose natural histories make it impossible to maintain them in managed environments can be listed in a summary section and not analyzed further in the species selection process).
- 3) ***Conservation Status of Taxa:*** The conservation status of the taxa encompassed within the TAG should be presented along with the reference source from which the data were obtained. Suggested sources include the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Endangered Species List, IUCN Red Lists, IUCN SSC Action Plans, CITES, etc. TAGs do not need to include each species' status as listed in every resource (e.g., USFWS, IUCN, *and* CITES), unless that information is used in their decision-making process.
- 4) ***Space Analysis:*** The TAG should compile a reasonably accurate estimate of the space currently available and space that will be or may be available to TAG taxa in a defined time period in the future. Typically, TAGs look at a three-year time horizon. Data on captive space is available from several sources such as ISIS records, studbooks, and space surveys.
 - a. While space surveys are likely to provide the most accurate data available, TAGs are not required to survey the membership for current inventory data. TAGs may use ISIS data, studbooks, and/or other references for this information. However, they must document the methods used to gather the data provided and give the rationale for why those methods were used.
 - b. TAGs must conduct a space survey of all AZA accredited institutions and certified related facilities to determine projected space availability. TAGs must survey all institutions, including those not participating in the TAG (if only to confirm that they are not interested in acquiring TAG taxa in the future). All AZA Institutions are expected to assign an IR to each AZA TAG in which they want to participate. If an institution does not want to specify an IR, the IL will still receive TAG information and be responsible for responding to the TAG space survey. TAGs may exclude institutions from the survey that will never be relevant to their taxonomic group (e.g., the Elephant TAG need not survey aquariums), but must give an explanation for the exclusion.

Optimally, TAGs will receive responses from 100% of all those surveyed. However, at a minimum, TAGs must obtain data from at least 80% of all surveyed AZA accredited institutions and certified related facilities. Otherwise, an RCP based on these data will not be an accurate guide for TAG and institutional decision makers.

- c. Space analyses should identify the space issues facing the TAG, as well as how the TAG is addressing those issues. As part of the RCP, TAGs should try to determine whether there may be significant shifts in collection composition in the future.

- d. TAGs may wish to consider space availability in other regions. If the TAG RCP includes one or more animal management programs that involve other regions (e.g., a bi-regional or global program, etc.), this space should be reported in the RCP.
- e. The RCP should include an easily understood table or other graphical representation that summarizes the TAG's space analysis. See the Summary Tables section (page 8) for examples.
- 5) ***Selection Criteria:*** TAGs should consider the following species selection criteria to determine which taxa are recommended for AZA collections and which are not. TAGs may use all or a subset of the *Selection Criteria*, and the relative importance and/or subtle definition of each criterion may vary among TAGs or species. TAGs must clearly define their use of the criteria and develop a method to recommended taxa for AZA collections (e.g., decision tree, numerical ranking system). Whatever method is selected, the reasons for recommending or not recommending taxa *MUST* be explained in the RCP. The results should be presented in a prioritized list or table format.
- ***Conservation status of the taxon:*** As per # 3 above.
 - ***Existence of a viable North American captive population:*** The viability of a captive population should be viewed in both demographic and genetic terms. The AZA Population Management Center (PMC) or a member of AZA's Small Population Management Advisory Group (SPMAG) should be used to help TAGs assess population viability. For populations that have not been analyzed, the TAG should make a scientific assessment of population viability and describe how that assessment was made.
 - ***Availability of potential founders:*** The availability of potential founders should be considered in conjunction with the viability of the North American population. The expense, legal, ethical and logistical issues, as well as interest from AZA institutions to import founders from other regions or the wild should all be assessed.
 - ***Conservation potential:*** The potential for a captive population to effect *in* or *ex situ* conservation should be considered.
 - ***Scientific/research potential:*** The TAG should evaluate *specific* research objectives and consider the need for the research and potential that it will be carried out. Research needs should be communicated beyond institutional participants to university and other scientific collaborators.
 - ***Husbandry expertise:*** The level of expertise available to meet the taxon's basic biological needs (nutritional, medical, social, etc.) as related to our ability to maintain and propagate them in zoos and aquariums should be considered within this category.
 - ***Exhibit value:*** The visitor appeal of the species should be evaluated in this category.
 - ***Education value:*** All species can serve an education function; that fact should be viewed as a baseline from which to judge the precise education value of a species. When using this category, the TAG should consider the specific educational role a taxon offers.
 - ***Taxonomic uniqueness:*** The TAG should define the level at which the taxon is unique, if this criterion is deemed pivotal in the TAG's decision-making process. This criterion may be considered in conjunction with other criteria, such as exhibit value and conservation potential.

- 6) **Management Criteria:** Once a TAG has determined which taxa are recommended for AZA collections, the next step is to assess what level of population management is appropriate for these recommended species, if any. For each recommended species/taxon, TAGs should consider the following, and refer to the Management Assessment Criteria table (page 6). These criteria are intentionally subjective and TAGs may assign different weights to each criterion; the goal is to allow the TAGs to determine their relative importance and make management recommendations accordingly:
- What is the availability of the species/taxon in AZA collections?
 - What is the availability of the species/taxon outside AZA collections?
 - What is the extinction risk for the species/taxon within AZA collections if it is not managed (using *ZooRisk*)?
 - In what direction does the extinction risk within AZA collections move if it is managed (using *ZooRisk*)? (Note, at this time, only PMC/SPMAG Members have been trained in the use of *ZooRisk* software.)
 - What is the demand for the species/taxon within AZA collections (do many institutions want to hold the species)?
 - What is the institutional commitment to the species/taxon within AZA membership (how committed are the institutions that do hold the species)?
 - How easy is it to breed the species/taxon?
 - What is the extinction risk for the species/taxon in the wild?
 - What are the program operating costs for this species/taxon?
 - Is there an international conservation/management program for this species/taxon?
 - What type of link would a management program have to conservation of this species/taxon in the wild?
 - Is there a North American governmental conservation program associated with this species/taxon?

As noted in the Management Assessment Criteria table (page 6), the answers to these questions indicate appropriate levels of management. It will be rare that a recommended species will fall into the same category for all 12 questions. Some may be divided more evenly between two or three categories. When this occurs, TAGs must use their expertise to determine which level of management is most appropriate, and describe their rationale in the RCP. It is essential that a clear statement of the basis for all decisions on each species be provided, including those not recommended for zoo/aquarium programs. The goal of this process is to make the assessment of recommended species more transparent and more consistent, not to eliminate flexibility. The TAGs are given the authority to determine the relative weight of each category, based on the TAG's objectives.

Management Assessment Criteria for Recommended Taxa

CRITERIA	SSP	PMP	No Management (DERP/PHASE IN)
Availability within AZA	LOW	MODERATE	EXTREMES**
Availability outside AZA	LOW	MODERATE	EXTREMES**
Extinction Risk without Management* (in Zoos & Aquariums)	ENDANGERED/THREATENED	VULNERABLE	EXTREMES**
Extinction Risk with Management* (in Zoos & Aquariums)	DECREASES	DECREASES/STABLE	STABLE
Demand within AZA	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
Institutional Commitment	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
Ease of Breeding	LOW/MODERATE	HIGH	EXTREMES**
Extinction Risk (Wild)	ENDANGERED/THREATENED	VULNERABLE	LEAST CONCERN
Acquisition Cost (Outside AZA)	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
Program Operating Costs	HIGH	MODERATE	LOW
International Program	YES	NO	NO
Link to Conservation of Wild Population	DIRECT	INDIRECT OR NONE	NONE
North American Governmental Conservation Program	YES	NO	NO
CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION MANAGEMENT LEVELS			
	SSP	PMP	No Management (DERP/Phase In)
Participation	FULL/MANDATORY	VOLUNTARY	N/A
Memorandum of Participation	NO	NO	N/A
Compliance	MANDATORY	VOLUNTARY	N/A
AZA Conflict Resolution Process	YES	NO	N/A
Non-member Participation	YES	PER PARTICIPANT A/D POLICY	PER PARTICIPANT A/D POLICY
Animal-by-Animal Recommendations	YES	PER PROGRAM DECISION	NO
Steering Committee	OPTIONAL	NO	NA
AZA PMC Assistance	YES	YES	NO
SPMAG Assistance	YES	YES	EVALUATED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS
AZA Regional Studbook	YES	YES	NO

**“Extremes” refers to species that are either so highly abundant or so rare as to render management impractical or unnecessary.

7) **TAG Recommendations:** The TAG should integrate the space analysis data and selection and management criteria to develop RCP taxon management recommendations. This process may require several iterations to ensure that the number and size of the recommended programs are realistic in light of space availability.

a. **Taxa must be assigned to one of the following six categories:**

- **SSP Population:** Studbook required, intense management to maintain captive population, compliance by participating institutions required, breeding and transfer recommendations communicated through a Master Plan, program managed by a Species Coordinator, non-member participants must be approved, conservation of the species a consideration, institutional input through IRs.

- **PMP Population:** Studbook required, moderate management to maintain captive population, institutional compliance encouraged, breeding and transfer recommendations communicated through a Population Management Plan, program managed by a PMP Manager, institutional input through TAG IRs, non-member participation through AZA and institutional Acquisition/Disposition policies.
 - **DERP: Display/Education/Research Population:** DERPs are not managed under the auspices of AZA or its programs and are not guaranteed population management advice or support from SPMAG/PMC. No studbook or long-term genetic or demographic management is required for these species, but TAGs may choose to identify species champions who may track DERPs through registries.
 - **Phase-Out Population:** Not viewed as a managed program. Currently in AZA institutions but should be phased out through a breeding moratorium; phase-out may be monitored through a registry and a species champion may be assigned to oversee this process; they have no studbooks and are not guaranteed population management advice or support from SPMAG/PMC.
 - **Phase-In Population:** Taxon not currently in AZA institutions but for which the TAG plans or hopes to initiate a captive population; they have no studbooks and are not guaranteed population management advice or support from SPMAG/PMC. Once in captivity, the taxon will be reassigned to another category as appropriate.
 - **Not Recommended:** Taxon not currently in AZA institutions and that the TAG recommends NOT be brought into AZA collections.
- b. ***Define specific conservation, research, or education function of all taxa recommended for a captive management program.*** Historically, many captive populations have been assembled for no particular function (e.g. specimens happened to be available or somebody liked them). Moving forward, the *specific* conservation, research, or education function of each program recommended in the RCP should be stated. This step is particularly important to AZA institutions because it allows them to understand how they can participate in each program, and how their participation may help them meet institutional goals as well as program goals. Examples include:
- **Conservation function:** Genetic reservoir for an established reintroduction program.
 - **Research function:** Research population for understanding nutritional requirements for the species.
 - **Education function:** Flagship species to generate attention for and understanding of wild populations.
- c. ***Specify reasoning used to exclude taxa.*** The rationale to not recommend that a given taxon be allocated space in AZA institutions should be explained in general or specific terms (e.g., only taxa already in captivity were considered in this RCP, husbandry expertise for this species is insufficient to consider a captive program, etc.). This information will help institutional planners understand why certain taxa were not included in the TAG's recommendations, and may discourage institutions from acquiring animals that are not recommended.
- d. ***Assign a target population size to each managed program (SSPs and PMPs).*** TAGs must work with an advisor from the AZA Population Management Center (PMC) or Small Population Management Advisory Group (SPMAG) to develop target population

sizes. Targets are only required for managed populations (SSPs and PMPs), but if a TAG faces significant space constraints, it may choose to set targets for DERPs as well. DERP targets typically communicate broad TAG goals related to how much space the TAG can afford to allocate to non-managed populations. For many TAGs, DERP targets may be equal to the current or planned inventory for DERP taxa at the time the RCP is produced. This indicates to institutional planners that the TAG does not want to dedicate additional spaces to those taxa, but supports institutions’ plans for the short-term. By contrast, TAGs may set DERP targets that are lower than the current or planned inventory to communicate to IRs that DERP space should instead be used to hold recommended taxa.

The sum of the target population sizes should be approximately equal to the space available to TAG taxa. See page 18 for information about preparing for target population size meetings with the PMC biologists.

- 8) **Summary Tables:** Please note that these examples are simply provided for illustration. TAGs should feel free to be creative with their own table designs, provided that the basic data are presented in table form in the final RCP submission.

The RCP must include a “Recommendations Summary Table” that serves as an easily understood and succinct list of all taxa recommended for management programs (SSPs/PMPs), those recommended as DERP, Phase In, and Phase Out, and those not recommended at all. This table should also include the target population size for each taxon. Within this table the RCP should provide the name, phone number and e-mail address of all SSP Coordinators, PMP Managers and Studbook Keepers, or indicate if a position is vacant.

SAMPLE RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY TABLE

Common Name	Scientific Name	<u>Recommendation</u>	Program Leader/ Species Contact
Resplendent whatnot	<i>Whatnotus resplendentii</i>	SSP	SSP Coordinator: Program Leader Comfy Critter Zoo & Aquarium 202-555-1212 pl@comfyzoo.org Studbook Keeper: Program Leader Aardvark Haven 301-555-1212 sbk@aardvarks.org
Fritillated whatnot	<i>Whatnotus fritillarii</i>	PMP	PMP Mgr and Studbook Keeper: Program Leader Comfy Critter Zoo & Aquarium 202-555-1212 pl@comfyzoo.org
Blue-throated whatnot	<i>Whatnotus azurgula</i>	DERP	No champion needed at this time
Spangled whatnot	<i>Whatnotus scintillus</i>	Phase-in	Species Champion: Whatnot Fan Comfy Critter Zoo & Aquarium 202-555-1212 sc@comfyzoo.org

The RCP must also include a “Space Analysis Table.” This table must include 1) Current Population Size (obtained from studbooks, ISIS data, or a space survey); 2) Projected Space (obtained from a space survey); and 3) Target Population Size for SSPs and PMPs (as determined by PMC/SPMAG).

SAMPLE SPACE ANALYSIS TABLE

Common Name	Scientific Name	Current Population Size (from X source)	Projected Space (from survey)	Target Population Size
Resplendent whatnot	<i>Whatnotus resplendentii</i>	22.14.6	52.76	100.100
Fritillated whatnot	<i>Whatnotus fritillarii</i>	73.156	82.94	75.75
Blue-throated whatnot	<i>Whatnotus azurgula</i>	25.25	25.25	25.25
Spangled whatnot	<i>Whatnotus scintillus</i>	0.0	12.20	30.30

All TAGs must include a “Program Status Table.” This table should include the date each program was initiated, date the current program leader assumed leadership of the program, and the date of last studbook/master plan/PMP publication for all existing programs.

SAMPLE PROGRAM STATUS TABLE

Program	Date Program Initiated	Current Program Leader	Date Leadership Assumed	Date of last studbook update	Date of last PMP publication	Date of last master plan publication
Resplendent Whatnot SSP	01/01/02	Program Leader, Comfy Critter Zoo & Aquarium	01/01/02	N/A	N/A	01/01/05
Resplendent Whatnot Studbook	01/01/00	Program Leader, Aardvark Haven	01/01/00	01/01/04	N/A	N/A
Fritillated Whatnot PMP and Studbook	01/01/00	Program Leader, Comfy Critter Zoo & Aquarium	01/01/06	01/01/01 (by previous studbook keeper)	Not yet completed	N/A

For TAGs submitting updated editions of previously approved RCPs, the RCP must also include a “Recommendation Updates Table.” This table would list any changes in status (from DERP to PMP, from SSP to Phase Out, etc.). This table will provide a clear sense of TAG progress from one RCP to the next edition, and may identify areas of focus for future TAG attention.

SAMPLE RECOMMENDATION UPDATES TABLE

Common Name	Scientific Name	<u>Previous Program Status</u>	<u>Current Recommendation</u>	Program Leader Change?	New Program Leader/ Species Contact
Resplendent whatnot	<i>Whatnotus resplendentii</i>	SSP	SSP	No	N/A
Fritillated whatnot	<i>Whatnotus fritillarii</i>	PMP	PMP	Yes	PMP Mgr and Studbook Keeper: Program Leader Comfy Critter Zoo & Aquarium 202-555-1212 pl@comfyzoo.org
Blue-throated whatnot	<i>Whatnotus azurgula</i>	PMP	DERP	Yes	No champion needed at this time
Tufted whatnot	<i>Whatnotus spicae</i>	SSP	Not Recommended	Yes	N/A

For TAGs that need to direct IRs to phase out previously recommended taxa or to build populations of currently underrepresented taxa, a “Replacement Table” may be of use, but is not required. This table can be used to communicate which recommended taxa would work well in exhibits currently holding non-recommended species. For example, a replacement table may focus on recommended taxa that fulfill specific roles in institutional collections, based on characteristics such as body size, geographic range, habitat type, etc.

SAMPLE REPLACEMENT TABLE

	Recommended Species
Habitat Type	
Tropical Rainforest	Resplendent whatnot, fritillated whatnot, red-eared whatnot, warbling whatnot
Desert	Spiny whatnot, grey-necked whatnot, Todd River whatnot
Temperate Forest	Pileated whatnot, blue-throated whatnot
Geographic Range/Theme	
Asia	Rufous-bellied whatnot, elegant whatnot
North America	Pileated whatnot, spiny whatnot
Australia	Todd River whatnot, green laughing whatnot
South America	Resplendent whatnot, fritillated whatnot

9) ***TAG Policies and Guidelines:***

The RCP should include all the approved TAG policies, guidelines and procedures to facilitate their communication to AZA institutions. **Note that all policies must be AZA Board-approved.** Guidelines do not need to be approved by the AZA Board.

Examples of policies include:

- TAG-specific variation(s) on AZA Acquisition/Disposition policy
- TAG policies on important issues affecting TAG taxa (e.g., performing animal issues)
- AZA Animal Standards

Examples of guidelines include:

- Statements of TAG positions (e.g., certain species of breeding birds should not be pinioned, some species do not make good pets)
- AZA Standardized Guidelines for Animal Care

Regional Collection Plan Submission and Review Process

1. Regional Collection Plans (RCPs) are accepted throughout the year, but final decisions on RCPs are made during closed sessions at the two annual WCMC meetings – the September annual conference meeting and the spring midyear meeting.
2. TAGs should submit their RCPs to the AZA Conservation & Science Department. C&S Staff review them for completeness before distributing them to the WCMC. Each TAG has an assigned WCMC liaison who acts as the Review Leader for that TAG’s RCP. This liaison can be a great resource to the TAG during RCP development and review.
3. RCPs received by the AZA Conservation & Science Department by January 1 are reviewed at the midyear WCMC meeting; RCPs received by June 1 are reviewed at the September (annual conference) meeting.
4. At the biannual review sessions, Review Leaders (typically the WCMC Liaison to the TAG) lead the discussion of the RCPs assigned to them. The purpose of the review session is to facilitate substantive discussion of RCP goals and procedures. See the WCMC RCP Review Checklist (page 17) for a summary of key discussion points and RCP required components.
5. The TAG Chair will be invited (but not required) to participate (in person or by phone) in a portion of the closed review session in order to answer questions or provide clarification on the RCP. The Review Leader will notify the Chair at the anticipated time of the RCP review.
6. WCMC review votes will result in one of three possible outcomes:
 - a. **Approved:** RCP is approved in its submitted form
 - b. **Conditionally approved pending required changes:** RCP requires a number of changes/clarifications. If the TAG re-submits the RCP to the Conservation and Science Department with the required changes made by the next review deadline (1 June or 1 January), it will be approved. If the TAG does not make the required changes by that deadline, the RCP will be considered Not Approved, and must be resubmitted for consideration at a subsequent biannual review session. TAGs receive program oversight authority only when their RCPs receive final approval.

- c. **Not approved:** RCP requires significant changes, and must be resubmitted for consideration at a subsequent review session.

If the WCMC approves the RCP, the TAG should produce a final electronic copy of the RCP and distribute it to the following:

- AZA Conservation & Science Department (C&S will automatically post the RCP to the AZA Web site and notify all IRs of its publication)
- Non-AZA institutions participating in TAG programs
- Appropriate IUCN Specialist Groups
- TAG Chairs in other regions
- USFWS Office of Management Authority
- Other stakeholders as identified by the TAG

If the WCMC conditionally approves or does not approve the RCP, the TAG should not distribute the plan and must address the concerns raised by the WCMC and resubmit the plan for approval.

RCP Updates and Three-Year Revisions

The RCP may be formally updated at any time. Significant RCP revisions made by the TAG that expand the scope of TAG programs or result in significant changes in species priorities (e.g., program change from PMP to SSP or vice versa) must be submitted to the WCMC for approval (if a TAG questions whether changes warrant being viewed as “significant,” the RCP draft revisions can be sent to the WCMC Vice Chair for TAGs and SSPs for an opinion). The update addition, or supplements, should be distributed as described above.

TAGs MUST update their RCPs every three years. Resubmission requirements do not differ from original submission requirements and should include a review of the status of all of the programs under the TAG’s umbrella and an updated space survey.

TAGs become responsible for the administration and oversight of all of the programs under their umbrella (SSPs, PMPs and studbooks) following RCP approval. WCMC’s role is to oversee the TAGs and ensure that they are carrying out this responsibility.

Any new program leaders identified by the TAG in their RCP are approved as program leaders at the time the RCP receives WCMC approval. All vacant program leader positions must be advertised in the AZA Conservation & Science monthly report. WCMC does not evaluate program leader applications for TAGs with approved RCPs, unless the TAGs specifically request WCMC’s participation in the review process.

RCP approval and publication dates will be tracked through the AZA C&S Programs Database. Once an RCP update deadline has passed (three years after initial/previous WCMC approval), the TAG is no longer considered as having an approved RCP. Thus all decisions regarding program changes (e.g., studbook transfers, selection of new program leaders) revert back to the WCMC until the TAG completes the RCP review and approval process.

AZA Contact Information

Conservation and Science Department

Interim Director
Brandie Smith
301-562-0777 x241
bsmith@aza.org

Program Assistant
Rachel Penrod
301-562-0777 x245
rpenrod@aza.org

Interim Assistant Director
Ruth Allard
301-562-0777 x239
rallard@aza.org

Program Assistant
Melissa Yuen
301-562-0777 x246
myuen@aza.org

Population Management Center

Sarah Long
Population Biologist
312-742-3993
slong@lpz.org

Steve Thompson
Advisor/Administrator
312-742-7765
sthompson@lpzoo.org

Colleen Lynch
Population Biologist
312-742-7229
clynch@lpzoo.org

Joanne Earnhardt
Advisor/Administrator
312-742-7745
jearnhardt@lpzoo.org

Louise Bier
Studbook Analyst
312-742-7250
lbier@lpzoo.org

Lisa Faust
Research Biologist
312-742-7227
lfaust@lpzoo.org

Small Population Management Advisory Group (SPMAG)

Chair
Robert Wiese
San Diego Zoo
bwiese@sandiegozoo.org

Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs)

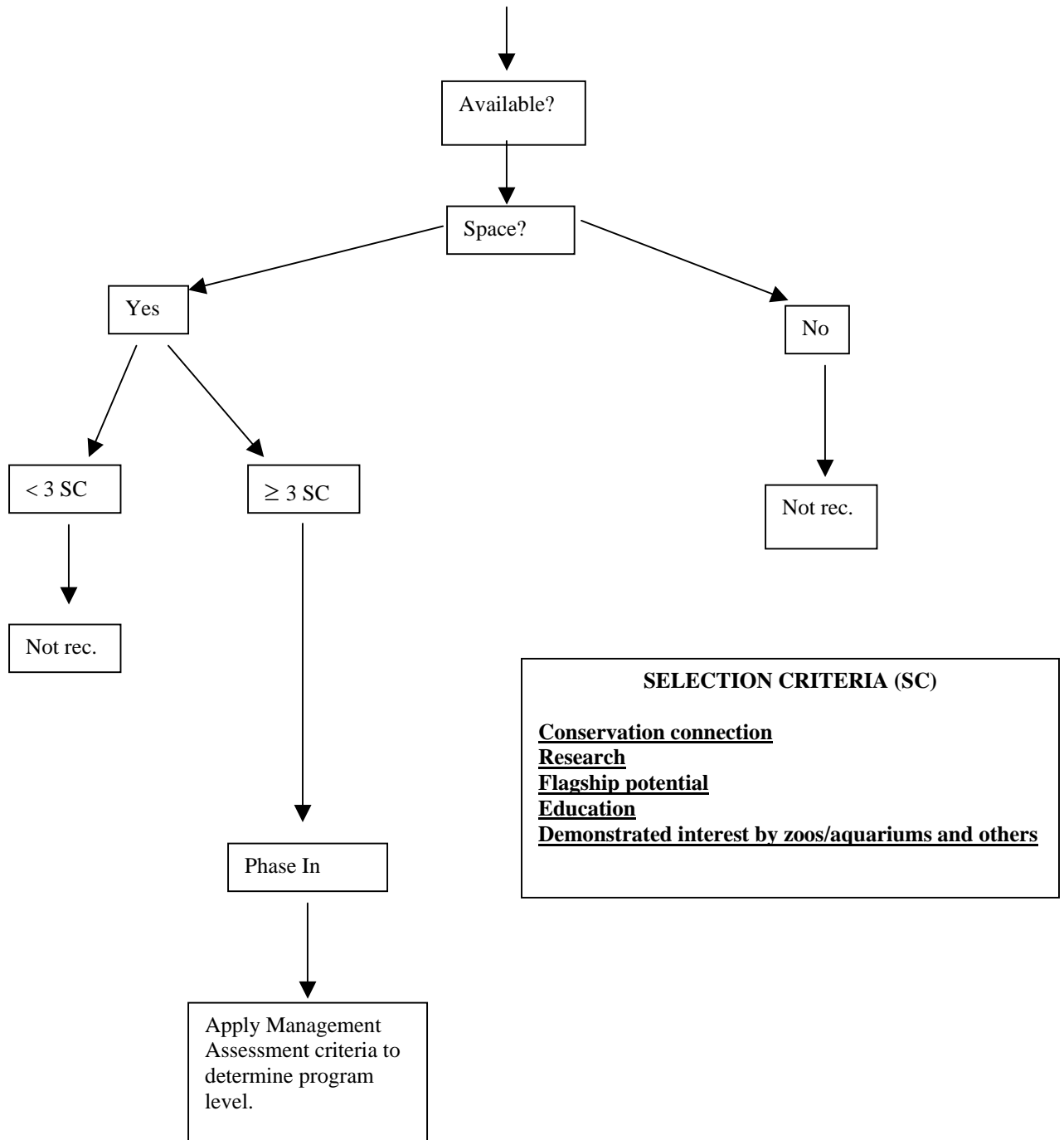
A current list of AZA TAGs, including TAG Chairs and their contact information is available on the AZA Web site at: <http://members.aza.org/Departments/cands/>

Wildlife Conservation and Management Committee (WCMC)

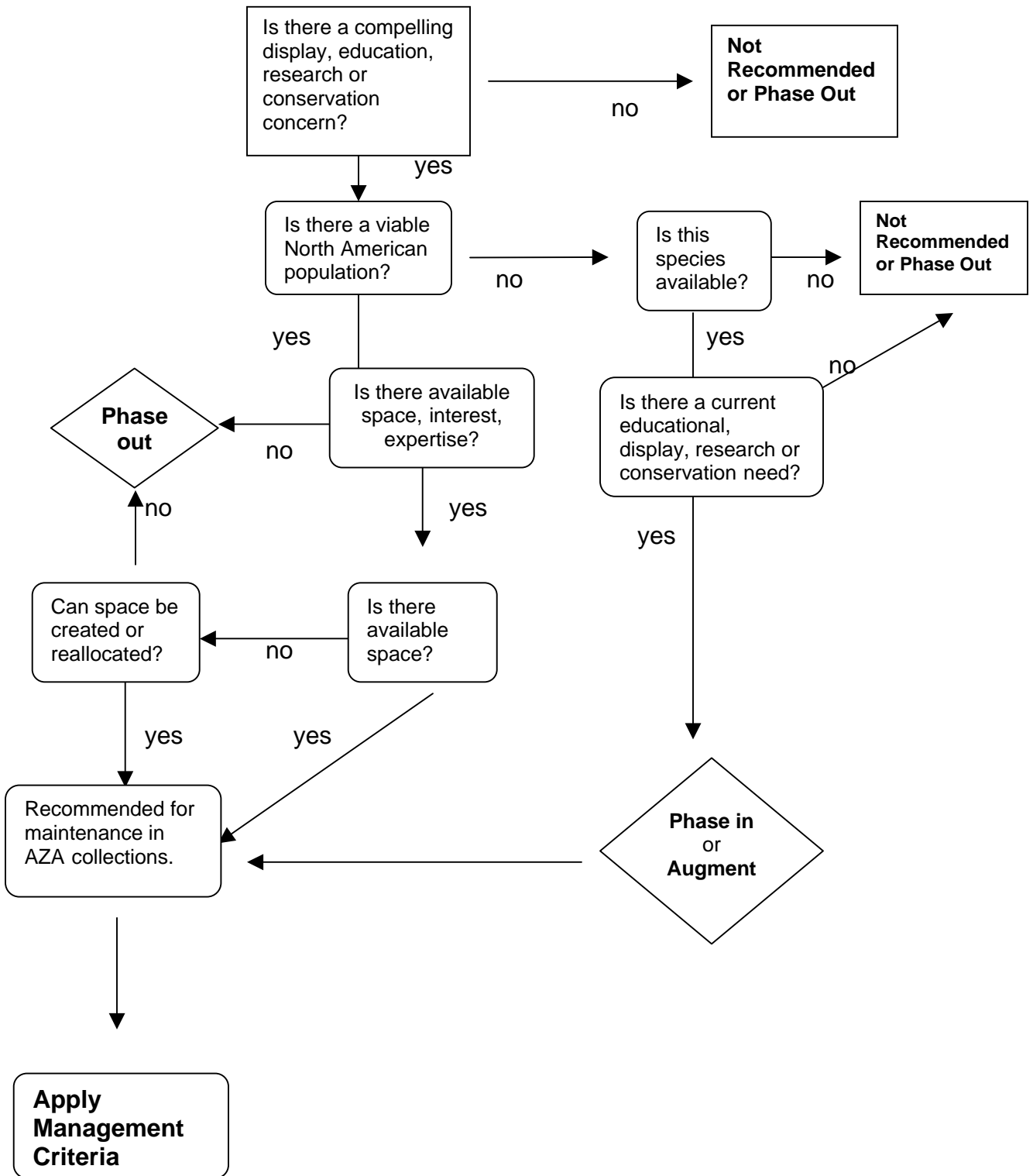
A current list of WCMC members and advisors is available on the AZA Web site at: <http://www.aza.org/AboutAZA/ComWCMC/>

DECISION TREE Example 1.1

Species/Taxon Not Currently Held in North American Collections



DECISION TREE Example 2



Regional Collection Plan (RCP) Review Checklist for WCMC Reviewers

	Yes	No	Concerns
<u>I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION</u>			
A. TAG Mission statement			
B. TAG Definition, specifying all taxa within TAG purview			
C. Conservation Status of Taxa			
<u>II. CORE INFORMATION</u>			
A. Space Analysis			
1. Number of institutions to which the survey was sent			
2. At least 80% of all institutions holding TAG taxa responded?			
3. Space Analysis Table			
B. Species Selection Criteria			
1. Selection criteria defined			
2. Relative importance of criteria defined			
3. Management Assessment Criteria considered			
C. Decision tool for prioritizing taxa presented			
D. Results of species selection process presented			
1. Includes rationale for including/excluding taxa under TAG purview			
E. Summary list/tables of recommendations			
1. Recommendations Summary Table			
2. Program Status and Recommendation Updates Tables			
3. Replacement Table (if appropriate)			
F. Detailed recommendations, including:			
1. Assignment of taxa into recommendation categories			
SSP Population, PMP Population, DERP, Phase-out, Phase-in, Not Recommended			
2. Target Population Sizes			
Includes explanation of how targets established, including name of PMC or SPMAG biologist serving as advisor.			
3. Conservation function of recommended species			
Includes definition of functions			
<u>III. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</u>			
A. Contact information for recommended species' program leaders			
B. TAG Operational Structure, including Steering Committee members' and advisors' contact information			
C. TAG Policies and Guidelines			
D. Program review:			
1. How many SSP/PMP programs are recommended in the RCP?			
2. How many of the TAG's established SSP/PMP programs have met their publication requirements (studbooks, master plans?)			

Please place an X in front of your vote:

- Approve
 Approve conditionally with required changes
 Do not approve

Changes suggested:

Changes required:

Preparing to Set Target Population Sizes

In order to ensure the production of an effective RCP, the TAG Chair must provide population information to her/his PMC/SPMAG advisor well in advance of the planning meeting. The following is a checklist of activities that must be completed to ensure that the advisor can appropriately prepare for the meeting. **If the TAG Chair fails to meet any of these deadlines, the PMC/SPMAG advisor can cancel their participation in the meeting and reschedule for a time when the TAG Chair is more prepared.**

6 months in advance

- Contact your PMC (pmc@lpzoo.org) or SPMAG advisor to schedule a meeting for your TAG. To help determine meeting length, assume one hour is necessary for each species requiring a target population size.

4 - 6 months in advance

- Make sure a copy of an up-to-date studbook of all studbooks is sent for data validation to your PMC/SPMAG advisor.
- For PMP/SSP taxa lacking studbooks, designate someone to fill out a Life History Worksheet (page 19). Your PMC/SPMAG advisor will obtain an ISIS download for the population, and in many cases may ask the TAG chair to designate a person to “clean” the data or provide additional data and/or clarification. Please note that the amount of time it takes to gather this information is highly variable. You may need more time to meet these data requests, depending on the size and quality of the data sets available. Work closely with your PMC/SPMAG advisor to ensure that you can complete these steps in a timely manner.

2 months in advance

- Send the results of your space analyses (current and future) to your PMC/SPMAG advisor.
- Send a list of all species for which target sizes are needed to your PMC/SPMAG advisor.
- Send your completed Life History Worksheets to your PMC/SPMAG advisor.
- Make sure final copies of the validated studbook databases have been sent to the PMC/SPMAG advisor.

1 month in advance

- Check with your PMC/SPMAG advisor to ensure that all required materials have been received, a meeting date and agenda have been set, and meeting attendees have been confirmed. Note that participants should include studbook keepers, species coordinators, and TAG steering committee members – it is imperative to have experts on each species present at the meeting.

Meeting day

Bring to the meeting:

- Paper and electronic copies of all studbooks
- A draft RCP or TAG recommendations
- Results of your space analyses (current and future)
- Completed Life History Worksheets for non-studbook species for which target sizes are needed
- Each managed species' most recent Master Plan or PMP

Life History Worksheet

In many cases, target population sizes need to be set for species that do not have a studbook. For these species, your PMC/SPMAG advisor can help estimate an appropriate target population size in two ways:

1. by using studbook data from a surrogate species (i.e., a closely related species or one with similar natural history traits)
2. by compiling the necessary information from other sources, such as ISIS, space surveys, scientific literature, etc.

The following worksheet must be completed to help set target population sizes for taxa that do not have a studbook:

Species (Latin name):	Your data	Your source
Current population size		
Space info.:		
total spaces occupied		
breeding spaces		
holding spaces		
potential additional spaces in future		
Sex ratio		
Age at first reproduction (females; males)		
Age at last reproduction (females; males)		
Life span		
Infant mortality (%)		
Average population growth rate (%)		
Age distribution of current population:		
# juvenile, # reproductive age, # post-reproductive <i>or</i>		
shape of age distribution (pyramidal, columnar, inverted pyramid, etc.)		
Litter/clutch size		
Inter-litter/clutch interval		
Average probability of a pair breeding (%)		
Number of founders (with living descendants)		
Number of generations in captivity		
Possibility of additional founders?		