

# ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

## **SPECIES SURVIVAL PLAN (SSP<sup>®</sup>) COORDINATOR HANDBOOK**

Updated 14 February 2007

General information on SSPs is available on the AZA Web site at:  
<http://www.aza.org/ConScience/ConScienceSSPFact/>

## Table of Contents

<b>SSP Coordinator Position Description</b> .....	<b>Pages 2-3</b>
<b>SSP General Information/Administration</b> .....	<b>Pages 3-5</b>
SSP Description .....	Page 3
Becoming an SSP Coordinator .....	Page 3
SSP Coordinator Accountability .....	Page 3
SSP Structure .....	Page 4
SSP Institutional Representatives .....	Page 4
SSP Coordinator Institutional Change .....	Page 5
Loss of Accreditation/Certification of SSP Coordinator's Institution .....	Page 5
SSP Coordinator Resignation .....	Page 5
SSP Coordinator Vacancies .....	Page 5
<b>SSP Coordinator Application</b> .....	<b>Page 6-7</b>
<b>SSP Master Plan</b> .....	<b>Pages 8 - 11</b>
Preparedness for PMC/SPMAG .....	Page 8
Master Planning Process .....	Page 9
Master Plan Components .....	Page 9
Master Plan Publication .....	Page 10
Master Plan Distribution .....	Page 10
<b>SSP Full Participation</b> .....	<b>Pages 11 - 13</b>
Full Participation in the SSP Partnership and Process .....	Page 11
Conflict Resolution .....	Page 13
<b>Non-Member SSP Participation</b> .....	<b>Pages 14 - 18</b>
General Principles of Non-Member Participation .....	Page 14
Non-Member Approval Process .....	Page 15
Non-Member Benefit to AZA SSPs .....	Page 17
<b>AZA Contact Information</b> .....	<b>Page 19</b>

# **ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS (AZA) SPECIES SURVIVAL PLAN (SSP) COORDINATOR POSITION DESCRIPTION**

## **Position Overview**

The SSP Coordinator performs various duties to lead and support AZA's SSP Program. The Coordinator works with institutional representatives (IRs), the Studbook Keeper, the Taxon Advisory Group (TAG), the Wildlife Conservation and Management Committee (WCMC), and the AZA Conservation and Science Department to develop, oversee, promote, and support the cooperative animal management, conservation, and research initiatives of the SSP. The primary responsibility of the SSP Coordinator is to complete and distribute a Master Plan of breeding and transfer recommendations for the managed population. Additional responsibilities include leadership and organization of the SSP, communication of recommendations and policies, and political expediency. The SSP Coordinator serves as the primary contact and AZA expert for her/his species and abides by the duties and responsibilities set forth by WCMC and the TAG.

## **Essential Position Functions:**

- Must publish a complete Master Plan within 18 months of approval as species coordinator (If the SSP Coordinator is also the Studbook Keeper, s/he must publish the Master Plan 18 months after completing the initial studbook)
- Must publish a complete Master Plan at least every three years
- Must work with an AZA Population Management Center (PMC) biologist or approved Small Population Management Group (SPMAG) advisor when formulating breeding and transfer recommendations
- Must send copies of all significant program documents and correspondence to the AZA Conservation and Science Department and relevant TAG Chair
- Must develop and oversee appropriate SSP management structure and advisors
- Should, if elected or invited, serve on or as an advisor to the appropriate AZA TAG and attend relevant meetings
- Should maintain contact with counterparts in other regional associations to facilitate inter-regional cooperation
- Should engage in the appropriate World Conservation Union (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Specialist Group and other relevant conservation organizations

## **Requirements for Eligibility:**

- Employment at an AZA Accredited Institution, Certified Related Facility, or Society Conservation Partner, and statement of institutional support
- Individual AZA Membership
- Statement of individual commitment
- Internet and email access
- Should take the Population Management II course from the AZA Professional Development Training Program (<http://www/aza/org/prodev/>)
- Should have strong skills in organization, communication, facilitation, conflict resolution, and in maintaining effective working relationships with diverse groups of individuals

The TAG Chair, Institutional Director, Institutional Liaison (IL), and AZA Conservation and Science Department will be kept informed as to whether the SSP Coordinator is meeting required position functions and eligibility requirements. **Failure to meet the obligations outlined in this handbook could result in the SSP Coordinator's removal from the program.**

## **SSP GENERAL INFORMATION/ADMINISTRATION**

### **SSP Description**

The SSP is a cooperative animal management and conservation program designed to oversee the population management of select species in captivity and to enhance their conservation in the wild. Each SSP manages the breeding of a species through a Master Plan to maintain a healthy, genetically diverse and demographically stable population. SSPs coordinate the individual activities of participating institutions through a variety of conservation, research, husbandry, management and educational efforts. AZA recognizes that cooperative management is critical to the long-term survival of professionally managed zoological parks and that all AZA-accredited institutions and certified related facilities should be fully committed to the goals and cooperative spirit of the SSP partnership. Because of this, all AZA member institutions/facilities must fully participate in the SSP partnership and processes (see SSP Full Participation, Page 11). SSP taxa are determined through the regional collection planning process of AZA's TAGs.

### **Becoming an SSP Coordinator**

Individuals interested in becoming an SSP Coordinator should communicate with TAG Chairs or review published Regional Collection Plans (RCPs) to determine priority species. A primary purpose of an RCP is to review the status of each species covered by the TAG and to establish management priorities. If no TAG exists, or no RCP has been completed, interested individuals may consult the AZA Conservation and Science Department or the WCMC Vice Chair for TAGs and SSPs for advice on becoming an SSP Coordinator. A list of TAGs, TAG Chair contact information, RCPs, and RCP approval dates is available on the AZA Web site at [http://members.aza.org/Departments/ConScienceMO/tag\\_mo/](http://members.aza.org/Departments/ConScienceMO/tag_mo/). A list of available SSPs is published in the monthly Conservation and Science report, distributed via the consci listserv. To join this or any AZA listserv, see: <http://members.aza.org/Departments/ConScienceMO/>.

All SSP Coordinator applications (page 6) should be submitted directly to the TAG Chair, if the TAG has a WCMC-approved RCP. If the RCP has not been approved, SSP Coordinator applications should be submitted to the WCMC Vice Chair for TAGs and SSPs, with a copy sent to the TAG Chair. All SSP Coordinators must be individual AZA members and employed by an AZA Accredited Institution, Certified Related Facility, or Society Conservation Partner.

### **SSP Coordinator Accountability**

All SSP Coordinators must (1) publish a complete Master Plan within 18 months of approval as species coordinator (if the SSP Coordinator is also the Studbook Keeper, s/he must publish the Master Plan 18 months after completing the initial studbook) and (2) publish a complete Master Plan at least every three years. Failure to meet these obligations could result in the SSP Coordinator's removal from the program.

If the SSP Coordinator misses a Master Plan deadline but wants to maintain her/his role as program leader, the institutional Director or IL must contact the TAG Chair within two weeks of the missed deadline to discuss the reason for the missed deadline (Note: if the TAG does not have an approved RCP or there is no TAG or TAG Chair in place, the contact will be the WCMC Vice Chair for TAGs and SSPs). If the Director/IL does not contact the TAG Chair (or WCMC Vice Chair) within two weeks of the missed deadline, the SSP Coordinator will be removed and the position vacancy will be advertised. If the TAG Chair (or WCMC Vice Chair) determines that the reason for the missed deadline is valid, a new deadline will be set.

The SSP Coordinator is responsible for working with institutional representatives, the Studbook Keeper, the TAG, WCMC, and the AZA Conservation and Science Department to ensure that the program is run effectively and efficiently. The TAG (or WCMC) can remove the SSP Coordinator if s/he does not meet these obligations (e.g., is consistently not responsive to requests for information, is consistently not responsive to/considerate of institutional needs).

If an SSP Coordinator is out of communication with the TAG (or WCMC Vice Chair for TAGs and SSPs, if the TAG does not have an approved RCP) for an extended period of time, the TAG (or WCMC) may remove the SSP Coordinator from the program.

### **SSP Structure**

SSPs are allowed to create their own, most appropriate management structure. Not every SSP requires a formal management group for effective population management. However, every SSP must be run with a minimum group consisting of the Coordinator, Vice Coordinator, and Studbook Keeper. The SSP Coordinator, Vice Coordinator, Studbook Keeper, TAG, and IRs can determine if a different management structure is necessary (e.g., a Management Group). The Vice Coordinator must be elected from the IRs through a publicly disclosed, democratic process. Specific duties of the Vice Coordinator will be outlined by each SSP, but the primary role of the Vice Coordinator is to assume leadership of the SSP should the Coordinator position become vacant. During this time, the Vice Coordinator will assume all responsibilities of the Chair. If the Studbook Keeper is not her/his institution's IR, s/he is not a voting member of the SSP. SSPs may appoint any number of non-voting advisory members to support the work of the SSP.

### **SSP Institutional Representatives (IRs)**

- All SSP owning, holding or supporting institutions/facilities must assign one IR to an SSP. The IR is designated by the Institutional Liaison (IL).
- An institution may change its IR at any time by entering the change online in the AZA C&S Programs Database. Institutions are responsible for keeping the SSP Coordinator informed of changes in IRs and contact information.
- The Coordinator of the SSP is automatically her/his institution's IR for that SSP.
- The IR is the primary point of contact with the SSP, will receive all SSP correspondence, and is responsible for disseminating SSP information within her/his institution.
- IRs are responsible for representing their institutional needs within the SSP.
- IRs are responsible for actively participating in the SSP, most importantly in the master planning process, and for responding to all SSP information requests.
- IRs must be able to conduct regular business via e-mail and have access to the Internet and the Members Only section of the AZA Web site.

- IRs are the voting members of SSPs and are responsible for voting on relevant SSP business.
- Each institution may be represented in the SSP by one IR. If the Coordinator moves to an institution that already has an IR or if a new Coordinator is appointed from an institution that already has an IR, the Coordinator automatically becomes the IR.

### **SSP Coordinator Institutional Change**

SSP Coordinators who are changing institutions must, within 60 days of departure from their original institution, submit to the TAG Chair and AZA Conservation and Science Department:

- A new Statement of Individual Commitment and Statement of Institutional Support (part of the SSP Coordinator Application, page 6)
- New contact information, including institution, address, phone, fax, and email

If the institution holding the SSP does not wish to relinquish the program, they must contact the TAG Chair (or WCMC Vice Chair for TAGs and SSPs, if the TAG does not have an approved RCP) within 30 days of the departure of the SSP Coordinator and submit an applicant (using the SSP Coordinator Application, page 6). The TAG Steering Committee (or WCMC Vice Chair) will request an updated application from the current SSP Coordinator and review and vote on the candidates to select the one most qualified. Upon selection of an SSP Coordinator, the TAG Chair (or WCMC Vice Chair) will inform the applicants, the supporting institutions, and the AZA Conservation and Science Department of the final decision.

### **Loss of Accreditation/Certification of an SSP Coordinator's Institution**

The AZA Board has stipulated that all SSP Coordinators must be employed at an AZA accredited institution, certified related facility, or society conservation partner. If an SSP Coordinator's facility loses accreditation, the SSP Coordinator must step down from the Coordinator position and the Vice Coordinator will assume the Coordinator's duties until the TAG (or WCMC, if the TAG does not have an approved RCP) elects a permanent Coordinator. The SSP Coordinator must send all materials relating to the SSP to the Vice Coordinator. The former Coordinator may be appointed as a non-voting advisor.

### **SSP Coordinator Resignation**

When an SSP Coordinator resigns, s/he must send a letter of resignation and all materials relating to the SSP to the SSP Vice Chair, with copies to the AZA Conservation and Science Department.

### **SSP Coordinator Vacancies**

All SSP Coordinator vacancies must be advertised in the monthly Conservation and Science report (distributed via the consci listserv). To join this or any AZA listserv, see: <http://members.aza.org/Departments/ConScienceMO/>. The TAG (or WCMC, if the TAG does not have an approved RCP) selects the most qualified applicant. Upon election of an SSP Coordinator, the TAG Chair (or WCMC Vice Chair) informs all the applicants and the AZA Conservation and Science Department of the final decision.

## AZA SSP APPLICATION

1. Applicant Information

Name:

Institution:

Institutional Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

AZA Membership Number:

Date Application Submitted:

2. Common and Scientific name(s) of the taxa to be included in the SSP:

3. Name of the current Studbook Keeper: \_\_\_\_\_

Date through which the most recent studbook data are current: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Attach a *curriculum vita*, including all relevant experience with the taxon for which the applicant is applying.

5. Attach a list of all other AZA program leader positions (e.g., Studbook Keeper, SSP Coordinator, TAG Chair) you hold and the most recent publication date of relevant program documents (e.g., Studbook, Master Plan, RCP).

Complete questions 6 – 11 only if the TAG associated with the taxon for which the applicant is applying does not have a WCMC-approved Regional Collection Plan (RCP) and the SSP program is not currently in existence.

6. List the number of AZA accredited institutions and related facilities possessing the species and the number of animals (m.f.u.) in those institutions. Also address the likelihood of obtaining additional founders.

7. Give a brief overview of the status of this species in the wild and its natural habitat, and the ability of the captive population to affect *in situ* conservation, including reintroduction, research, and educational potential.

8. Give a brief overview of the husbandry expertise and propagation potential for this species available in AZA zoos and aquariums.

9. Address the overall exhibit value and taxonomic uniqueness of this species.

10. State the justification for establishing an SSP for this taxon.

11. Attach a recommendation (for the program and the applicant) from the associated TAG (or, if it is not possible to obtain a recommendation, describe why).

Statement of Individual Commitment

As SSP Coordinator, I am willing and able to devote the necessary time to oversee the SSP and publish a Master Plan. I am willing and able to meet all deadlines and responsibilities as outlined in the SSP Coordinator Handbook. These include (1) publishing a complete Master Plan within 18 months of approval as species coordinator (if the SSP Coordinator is also the Studbook Keeper, s/he must publish the Master Plan 18 months after completing the initial studbook), (2) publishing a complete Master Plan at least every three years, and (3) working with institutional representatives, the Studbook Keeper, the TAG, WCMC, and the AZA Conservation and Science Department to ensure that the program runs effectively and efficiently. Failure to meet these obligations could result in my removal from the program.

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Institutional Support

The \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Institution) is committed to providing adequate resources and support for the management of the \_\_\_\_\_ SSP as outlined in the SSP Coordinator Handbook. Responsibilities of the SSP Coordinator include (1) publishing a complete Master Plan within 18 months of approval as species coordinator (if the SSP Coordinator is also the Studbook Keeper, s/he must publish the Master Plan 18 months after completing the initial studbook), (2) publishing a complete Master Plan at least every three years, and (3) working with institutional representatives, the Studbook Keeper, the TAG, WCMC, and the AZA Conservation and Science Department to ensure that the program runs effectively and efficiently. Failure to meet these obligations could result in my removal from the program.

The above-named institution further acknowledges that information gathered for SSPs supported by the institution is not the exclusive property of the institution and enters public domain upon publication on the AZA Web site.

Name of the Director/Governing Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Director/Governing Official: \_\_\_\_\_

AZA Membership Number of the Institution/Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the applicant an employee at your institution: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

# SSP MASTER PLAN

## **Preparedness for PMC/SPMAG**

In order to ensure the production of an effective Master Plan, the SSP Coordinator must provide population information to her/his PMC/SPMAG advisor well in advance of the master 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 SSP Coordinator 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 SSP Coordinator is more prepared.**

### **8 weeks in advance**

- Make sure a copy of an up-to-date studbook is sent for data validation to the AZA Population Management Center ([pmc@lpzoo.org](mailto:pmc@lpzoo.org)) or to the SPMAG advisor.

### **4-6 weeks in advance**

- Address data issues as instructed in the data validation feedback.
- Work with the PMC/SPMAG advisor to create a list of assumptions for animals with UNK and MULT pedigree information. Important Note: DO NOT record assumptions directly in the studbook, record them separately.
- Gather information on all participating institutions' wants and needs (specifically in terms of breeding, holding, placing, or receiving animals).
- Gather information on all participating institutions' capabilities (e.g., exhibits, holding/breeding abilities, social group information)

### **3-4 weeks in advance**

- Send a final copy of the validated studbook database to the PMC/ SPMAG advisor. The quality of the Master Plan is dependent upon the PMC/SPMAG advisor's receipt of the studbook information in advance of the meeting. Make sure to include:
  - Animal-by-animal documentation of assumptions and/or unresolved parentage issues
  - A list of any animals to be excluded from the breeding population
  - A list of any animals with medical or behavioral considerations
  - A list of approved non-member participants and their ISIS mnemonics
- Inform the PMC/SPMAG advisor of all expected Master Plan meeting attendants.

### **2 weeks in advance**

- Check in with the PMC/SPMAG Advisor.

### **Meeting day**

Bring to the meeting:

- A copy of the validated studbook on paper and on disk, as well as a list of any last minute updates to the population
- A complete list of institutional wants and needs
- A complete list of institutional capabilities
- A list of any animals to be excluded from the breeding population
- A list of IRs and their contact information

## **Master Planning Process**

The requirements to the master planning process have been instituted to ensure that all institutions have input into the SSP planning process and have access to and fully comprehend the Master Plan recommendations. Requirements of the master planning process include:

- As many IRs as possible should participate in the master planning process to increase institutional support and the effectiveness of the plan.
- The SSP coordinator, Vice Coordinator, Studbook Keeper and, if one exists, management group members must be responsible for representing the taxon and the association at large – not their individual institutions.
- A Master Plan must be published on the AZA Web site, using a standardized Master Plan reporting format (see “Master Plan Components,” below).
- A draft of the Master Plan must be published in the Members Only section of the AZA Web site and open to comment for 30 days. IRs will be automatically notified of the publication of the Master Plan.
- All IRs must have the opportunity to have input into the master planning process and have a fair chance to address any questions or conflicts over the recommendations. Institutions will be given 30 days to comment on the SSP draft Master Plan. During this time the Coordinator must be responsive to institutional comments and address them promptly. A hard close date of 30 days will be enforced. To ensure that each institution is engaged in the process and has the opportunity to comment, the Institutional Liaison (IL) will be notified if the IR does not respond to the draft document within three weeks. If the IR or IL does not respond within the next seven days, the institutional director will also be notified.
- A final version of the Master Plan must be published in the Members Only section of the AZA Web site.

## **Master Plan Components**

The Master Plan format itself is standardized and includes:

- Cover Page (should include essential information such as species common and scientific names, SSP Coordinator name and contact information, picture of the SSP species, date through which the data are current, and PMC/SPMAG advisor)
- Table of Contents
- List of participating institutions with associated IRs and ISIS mnemonics. Must note if the participant is an accredited institution, certified related facility, or approved non-member.
- Genetic and demographic status of the population. Specific items to be included will be determined by the PMC/SPMAG advisor, but should include any assumptions made for the analyses.
- Animal-By-Animal Recommendations. The master plan must include a list of the recommended actions for each individual animal in the population. These recommendations will take into account not only genetic and demographic factors, but also social, nutritional, behavioral, and medical concerns as well as the practical day-to-day management of the animals and the institutional wants and needs.
- Description of SSP program. Though not required, the coordinator may want to include in the master plan a general description of the program including the advisors and conservation, research and educational activities.

### **Master Plan Publication**

WCMC requires that draft and final Master Plans be published electronically in the Members Only section of the AZA Web site. Moving from paper to electronic documents eliminates the time, money, and material resources that are necessary to print and distribute hard copies. The following are some requirements and guidelines to facilitate Web publication of Master Plans. Please note that AZA cannot alter or edit anything sent in for publication. This means that electronic documents emailed for Web publication must look exactly as the printed version should look. Documents that are not complete will not be published.

- SSP Coordinators must send one complete document in one email to the AZA Conservation and Science Department. Do not send 'assembly required' documents that arrive as several separate files. These will be returned, as only complete documents can be published.
- SSP Coordinators must state in an accompanying email or letter that the document is to be posted on the AZA Web site. Documents will not be posted without permission.
- Pictures increase download time, so only include essential pictures and graphics.
- If documents are too large to be e-mailed, they can be copied to a CD and mailed to the AZA Office. Beware, the larger the document, the longer the download time.
- All SSP and SSP-related documents should be submitted to Rachel Penrod, [rpenrod@aza.org](mailto:rpenrod@aza.org), 301-562-0777 x245.

### **Master Plan Distribution**

WCMC requires that draft and final SSP Master Plans be published electronically in the Members Only section of the AZA Web site. When a Master Plan is published on the Web site, a notice of its publication goes out to all IRs and in the monthly C&S report (sent over the consci listserv). SSP Coordinators may want to send an email to relevant individuals, indicating that the Master Plan is available online. SSP Coordinators may also want to mail or email a copy of the Master Plan to those individuals who do not have access to the Members Only section of the AZA Web site (e.g., IUCN specialist group chairs, program leaders from other regions).

SSP Coordinators should ensure that the following are notified of draft and final Master Plan publications:

- All institutions holding the species and participating in the SSP
- The Studbook Keeper
- The TAG Chair
- The AZA Conservation and Science Department  
8403 Colesville Road, Suite 710  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3314  
[rpenrod@aza.org](mailto:rpenrod@aza.org)

- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (final version only)  
Mike Kreger  
USFWS, Division of Scientific Authority  
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 750  
Arlington, VA 22203  
[Michael\\_Kreger@fws.gov](mailto:Michael_Kreger@fws.gov)
- The IUCN Specialist Group Chair, if applicable (final version only)  
(<http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/index.htm>)
- Other regional Species Coordinators, if applicable (e.g., EEP, ASMP) (final version only)

## **SSP FULL PARTICIPATION**

### **Full Participation in the SSP Partnership and Process**

Cooperative animal management and conservation are among the primary goals of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). These goals are best exemplified by the Association's shared commitment to its cornerstone animal management and conservation program: The Species Survival Plan (SSP). The AZA Board of Directors recognizes that (1) cooperative management is critical to the long-term survival of professionally-managed zoological parks and their valuable and often irreplaceable animal collections; and (2) all AZA-accredited institutions and related facilities should be fully committed to the goals and cooperative spirit of the SSP partnership. Therefore, in March 2000, the Board passed full participation by all AZA member institutions in the SSP partnership and process. The conflict resolution process (page 13) may be used to mediate all SSP disagreements, whether from the perspective of the SSP or the participating institutions.

Full participation in the SSP partnership and process is defined as follows:

1. All AZA Members owning or holding SSP taxa, or wishing to support an SSP program, must assign one Institutional Representative (IR) to the SSP.
2. Institutions must provide all relevant data on their animal collections to the SSP coordinator and studbook keeper.
3. All AZA owning, holding, and supporting institutions must inform the Species Coordinator of the level at which they can participate (breeding, holding, or support). If an institution has an SSP species in its collection, it is either breeding or holding. Institutions that do not have the SSP species in their collection, but have relevant experience, interest, and/or expertise can participate in the SSP in a supporting role and assign an IR. It is up to each SSP to define the qualifications and expectations of a supporting member so that it can be determined which institutions may assign IRs. Institutions that do not qualify as breeding, holding, or supporting the SSP may be appointed as non-voting advisors to the program.
4. All AZA-Member owning, holding, and supporting institutions are required to participate in the SSP partnership process.

All SSP animals held at AZA accredited institutions, certified related facilities, and approved non-members are in the SSP managed population unless they are declared nonessential (“surplus”) to the SSP. As such, these animals are subject to recommendations and management by the SSP. Because institutions’ abilities to breed or hold animals is usually dependent upon space and resources and often changes, they should inform the Species Coordinator of their capabilities before each master planning meeting.

Animals Owned by AZA Institutions/Facilities, Housed at Non-AZA Institutions/ Facilities.

Any SSP animals that are owned by AZA institutions but housed at non-participating facilities should not be bred unless the specimens are being held in another recognized regional or governmental conservation or management program (e.g., EEP, USFWS program). Each SSP should make it a high priority to resolve the issue of including such specimens in its managed population, either by recruiting the non-participant into the SSP program, relocating the specimens to participating institutions, or declaring the animal nonessential to the managed population. There are two basic scenarios under which an AZA institution might own SSP specimens but have them housed at a non-participating facility.

1. Short-term placement: Institutions may place specimens of SSP species at non-participating facilities on a short-term basis (e.g., during exhibit renovation). The SSP should be consulted prior to such placement and such placement must be in accordance with the institution’s and AZA’s policies. This allows flexibility for short-term placement and boarding relationships without forcing formal SSP approval of such temporary relocations. SSP consultation is specified to ensure that the SSP will be aware of the animals’ placement, in order to make breeding plans appropriately.
2. Long-term placement: An SSP Steering Committee may recommend that some specimens no longer be managed by the SSP. The decision to declare an animal nonessential to the SSP managed population must be recommended in a Master Plan, and should include a detailed explanation for the designation. Institutions may transfer such specimens to a non-participating institution in accordance with the institution’s and AZA’s policies. Upon such transfer, these specimens would cease to be part of the SSP managed population, and the transfer agreement should stipulate that the specimens not be bred unless the specimens are part of another recognized regional or governmental conservation or management program.

Animals Housed at AZA Institutions/Facilities, Owned by Non-AZA Institutions/ Facilities.

Animals housed at SSP participating institutions but owned by non-participants should not be bred unless (1) the SSP recommends it as part of the Master Plan and (2) the SSP institution owns any and all offspring. This ensures that AZA institutions do not find themselves in the situation of breeding animals for unapproved non-members and that all breeding takes place under the auspices of the SSP. If SSP animals owned by participating institutions are in need of space, the SSP and the institutions involved should actively work to replace animals owned by non-participating facilities with those owned by SSP participants.

## **Conflict Resolution**

If all holding institutions have the chance to be active participants in the master planning process and Master Plan reports are standardized, fewer conflicts should arise over recommendations. However, if conflict does arise, participants can use the Conflict Resolution Process. Either the SSP Coordinator or the participating institution can initiate the process.

1. **Attempt to resolve the conflict through a telephone conversation.** A professional and courteous telephone inquiry is often all that is necessary to clear up conflicts resulting from missed communications. Each party should keep notes on the conversation(s). If a resolution is reached over the telephone, the initiating party should confirm the decision in a letter that briefly details the problem and the agreed upon solution. This letter should refer to all previous communications on the subject.
2. **Document the nature of the conflict in writing.** If the issue(s) cannot be resolved over the telephone, then the conflict must be documented in writing. The first step toward resolution of any conflict is to clearly identify and agree upon the problem. This documentation should be in the form of a letter, either from the Species Coordinator to the Institutional Representative (IR) or vice versa. The letter should clearly state the nature of the problem and any actions taken. If possible, the letter should pose reasonable alternatives or solutions to the conflict. A copy of the Conflict Resolution Process should be included.
3. **Refer the matter to the SSP managing group.** If the initial exchange of letters does not produce a satisfactory resolution of the problems, the initiating party will refer this issue, in writing, to the group managing the SSP. This group will vote to determine if a resolution is possible or if the next step in the process should be taken, within 30 days of the dated referral. The SSP may consult the appropriate TAG for assistance in resolving the conflict.
4. **Communicate conflict to the institutional director, TAG, and WCMC Chair.** The Species Coordinator must provide copies of all documents to the TAG Chair, and WCMC Chair. The IR will copy his or her immediate supervisor, Institutional Liaison (IL), and institutional director. The institution will make an effort to resolve the conflict with the SSP.
5. **Refer the matter to WCMC.** If the conflict cannot be resolved at an institutional level within 30 days, then the matter will be arbitrated by the WCMC Chair, two members of WCMC (one selected by each of the parties in conflict), the SSP Coordinator, and an individual designated by the institution. This group should meet/conference call to conduct a confidential review of the problem and formulate a final resolution. Within five working days of the review, the WCMC Chair will provide a written report of the decision to the WCMC, TAG, SSP, institutional director, IL, IR, and AZA Conservation and Science Department.
6. **Note that this conflict resolution process is a two-way process.** The arbitrators may opt to suspend or expel an institution from the SSP. If the institution involved is an AZA member, a summary of the arbitration process and decision will be forwarded to the Accreditation Commission for inclusion the institution's accreditation file. The arbitrators may also determine that an SSP Coordinator is at fault. If that occurs the SSP Coordinator may be subject to sanction, including being placed on probation or being removed from the position.

## **NON-MEMBER SSP PARTICIPATION**

Non-Member SSP participation is for those facilities that will benefit population management for the SSP program (see “Non-Member Benefit to AZA SSPs”, page 17) and that hold wildlife, but do not meet the definition of a zoological park or aquarium (as defined for AZA’s accreditation program, <http://www.aza.org/Accreditation/#acc>).

### **General Principles of Non-Member Participation**

- Zoos and aquariums located in the U.S. and open to the public for exhibition purposes on a regularly scheduled, predictable basis are not eligible to be Non-Member SSP Participants.
- Zoos and aquariums located outside the U.S. and open to the public for exhibition purposes on a regularly scheduled, predictable basis are not eligible to be Non-Member SSP Participants, with the following exceptions
  - a. Zoological parks and aquariums outside the U.S. that are members of a professional regional zoological association are eligible to be non-member participants. To facilitate international cooperation, members of professional regional zoological associations are not required to pass an on site inspection unless recommended during the application review process.
  - b. Zoological parks and aquariums outside the U.S. that are not members of a professional regional zoological association but are involved in a reintroduction program can become Non-Members and will be required to go through the entire inspection and approval process.
- All Non-Member participants must be proven to provide a population management benefit to the SSP (see “Non-Member Benefit to AZA SSPs,” page 17).
- The Non-Member’s entire facility will be considered in the approval process. AZA’s Policies and Code of Professional Ethics will apply to the entire animal collection.
- Only AZA accredited institutions and certified related facilities and participating government agencies are allowed to display the SSP logo, not Non-Member facilities.
- Approval must be achieved before the Non-Member may begin participating in the SSP.
- The granting of approval is for five years, and expires at the end of that period. Facilities must successfully complete the full process again before the end of the five-year period.
- An SSP representative must visit Non-Members at least once a year, with that representative providing a report to the appropriate TAG and to WCMC. Failure by the SSP to conduct an annual review of approved Non-Members and submit a report to WCMC could result in removal of a Non-Member. In addition to annual reviews conducted by the SSP, an approved Non-Member facility may be reviewed or inspected at any time within the five-year approval period, at the discretion of the WCMC or the AZA Board of Directors.
- Application deadlines are January 15 and June 15. Facilities wishing to have their applications reviewed at the WCMC annual meeting must submit application packages (including the results of the inspection process) *by June 15*. Facilities wishing to have their applications reviewed at the mid-year meeting must submit application packages (including the results of the inspection process) *by January 15*.
- No fees will be charged for the Non-Member application. However, the Non-Member will be responsible for all expenses incurred by the inspectors as part of the inspection process. All applicants *must* submit a \$500 deposit for use towards inspectors’ expenses one month before the scheduled inspection. The SSP Coordinator will be responsible for administering the deposit through their dedicated fund and reimbursing the inspectors. SSPs that do not

have a dedicated fund must create one before beginning the inspection process. Deposits may be waived if agreed upon by the SSP and both members of the inspection team.

- WCMC recognizes that, in those instances where the entire population is owned by a non-AZA entity (e.g., Golden Lion Tamarins, California Condors), requests from the owning entity may supersede the AZA Non-Member policy.
- SSPs must petition WCMC for the inclusion of all current non-members. SSPs have two years (until 31 December 2007) to determine if currently approved non-members benefit the managed population and to have a complete application submitted to WCMC. During this time the SSP cannot move additional SSP animals to that facility.
- When a facility loses AZA accreditation/certification, the SSP may work with the facility for up to two years to help manage the population and facilitate disposition of animals owned by AZA institutions. The facility will not be a member of the SSP, but may still be considered during the planning processes. During this time the SSP cannot move SSP animals to that facility.

### **Non-Member Approval Process**

**Benefit.** The application process begins with the SSP requesting that its PMC/SPMAG advisor evaluate a Non-Member's population management benefit to the SSP (see "Non-Member Benefit to AZA SSPs," page 17). All Non-Member SSP participants must benefit population management for the SSP program. If a benefit is not determined, that Non-Member cannot be approved as an SSP participant. The results of the evaluation must be sent to the AZA Conservation and Science (C&S) Department.

**Application Submission.** Once the PMC/SPMAG determines that the Non-Member's participation provides a population management benefit to the SSP, the Non-Member must submit a completed application package to the AZA C&S Department, where completeness of the overall application package will be determined.

**Primary Reviewer.** The AZA C&S Department will send a complete application to the SSP Primary Reviewer. The Primary Reviewer is the Coordinator of the SSP (or her/his designate) to which the Non-Member is applying. The Primary Reviewer examines the facility's application materials in depth to determine basic accuracy in preparation of materials, completeness of the overall application package, and to identify potential issues for the consideration of the Inspection Team. The Primary Reviewer notifies the AZA C&S Department of the results of their review. The Primary Reviewer serves as chief examiner on behalf of the SSP and the WCMC, assembles and works in conjunction with the Inspection Team, and must be available for the Non-Member's review by WCMC.

**Inspection Team.** Once the application is reviewed and completeness determined the Primary Reviewer will assemble an Inspection Team. The Inspection Team will include at least two individuals and must encompass: demonstrated expertise with the taxon/taxa under consideration for SSP participation; AZA accreditation inspector training; individual membership in AZA; and veterinary expertise (AAZV-member veterinarian). Before the inspection takes place, the Inspection Team must be submitted by the SSP to the AZA C&S Director for review to ensure all the necessary elements of expertise are included. The C&S Department will then send

complete applications to the Inspection Team members. The Primary Reviewer may or may not serve on the Inspection Team.

**Scheduling The Inspection.** As soon as a complete application is submitted and an Inspection Team confirmed, the Non-Member will be notified by the Primary Reviewer. The inspection will be scheduled shortly thereafter by the Primary Reviewer in consultation with the Non-Member and Inspection Team.

**The Inspection.** During the inspection, the Inspection Team is acting on behalf of the WCMC, the SSP, and the Board of Directors. Inspectors will usually tour the grounds and facilities as a group, and individually return to areas of particular interest or expertise thereafter. During this time they will speak with staff members, view records, and make note of positive and negative impressions. Inspections are generally conducted in one to three days. At the conclusion of the inspection, the facility will be presented with a list of items the facility must address to be considered in compliance with standards.

**Inspection Team's Written Report to WCMC.** In the weeks following the inspection, the Inspection Team shall prepare a full written report for WCMC. That report, as well as the List of Concerns presented to the facility during the exit interview, shall be submitted to the WCMC Vice Chair for Non-Member SSP Participation, who will then facilitate the review process within the WCMC. The report provides insight regarding the Inspection Team's impression of the facility, its operations, and the care provided to the animal collection. Applicant facilities shall receive a copy of the full Inspection Team Report at the conclusion of the WCMC review. The facility must provide a written response to the List of Concerns to the Primary Reviewer at least one month before the review date. The Primary Reviewer will submit this response to the WCMC Vice Chair for Non-Member SSP Participation, for distribution to the WCMC.

**Preparing For The Review.** The review will be held at the WCMC meeting for which the application is submitted. The Primary Reviewer must be available, in person or by phone, and prepared to update WCMC on any additional progress made since the written response to the List of Concerns was submitted. The collective information from both the written and verbal reports will be considered, along with the inspection report and other current information, in determining the outcome.

**The Review.** Reviews are closed sessions, and are attended by WCMC members and advisors and AZA staff. Members of the AZA Board of Directors, members of the Inspection Team, the SSP Coordinator, and the Primary Reviewer, may also attend reviews. Once a decision is reached, the WCMC Vice Chair for Non-Member Participation will inform the Primary Reviewer and the facility's Owner/CEO/Director of the outcome. A copy of the full Inspection Team Report will be provided at that time, and an official letter noting the decision and reiterating points of discussion will be sent to the facility in approximately four weeks.

**WCMC's Decision.** WCMC's decision will be based on what exists at the time of the inspection and final review, not on future plans. WCMC may take one of the following actions:

- *Grant Approval:* WCMC will grant approval when it is reasonably satisfied that the applicant facility meets the requirements of an approved Non-Member SSP Participant.

- *Table Approval:* WCMC may table a facility's materials if it determines that certain conditions must be met or additional information submitted before the facility can be considered as meeting Non-Member SSP Participant standards. In addition, WCMC must believe that the facility is capable of meeting those standards within one year.
- *Deny Approval:* WCMC will deny approval when a facility does not meet the minimum requirements to be recognized as an approved Non-Member SSP Participant at the present time and, in its opinion, would require in excess of one year to successfully do so.

### **Non-Member Benefit to AZA SSPs**

It is only by proving this genetic and/or demographic benefit that a Non-Member can participate in an AZA SSP. No other criteria are considered for participation.

*ZooRisk* software will be used for the purposes of determining if a Non-Member provides "a significant genetic or demographic impact on the managed population." *ZooRisk* is a computer program designed to assist managers in making scientifically based decisions for captive populations. It provides a quantitative assessment of a population's risk of extinction due to the demographic, genetic, and management processes that affect captive populations. This assessment is based on a population's history, the science of the biology of small populations, and the ability to manage captive populations.

In order for a Non-Member to demonstrate "a significant genetic or demographic impact on the managed population" they must meet the following:

1. Provide complete studbook history for all Non-Member specimens proposed for inclusion in the SSP managed population.
2. Improvement in a *ZooRisk* category that is already LOW RISK without the Non-Member specimens does not qualify.
3. Inclusion of the Non-Member specimens must do no harm to the population in any of the *ZooRisk* categories.
4. Inclusion of the Non-Member specimens must improve the population's forecast in at least ONE of the following *ZooRisk* categories identified as VULNERABLE, ENDANGERED, or CRITICAL and by the amount indicated.
  - a. Probability of Extinction in 25 Years: The probability of extinction must be reduced by an amount equal to or greater than 10%.
  - b. Probability of Extinction in 100 Years: The probability of extinction must be reduced by an amount equal to or greater than 10%.
  - c. Breeding Group Distribution: Inclusion of the Non-Member must move a VULNERABLE, ENDANGERED, or CRITICAL category to one lower risk category.
  - d. Number of Breeding-aged Animals: If there are less than 20 breeding age animals in the SSP, the Non-Member must add at least 6 breeding age animals. This category is not available to programs that already exceed 20 breeding age animals.
  - e. Reproduction in Last Generation: Inclusion of the Non-Member increases reproduction in the last generation by 3 pairs.
  - f. Genetic Diversity in 100 years: Inclusion of the Non-Member must move a VULNERABLE, ENDANGERED, or CRITICAL category to one lower risk category.

- g. Resilience Test: With the addition of the Non-Member, the Resilience Test Comparison (comparison of mean population after 10 years with and without the loss of the two largest institutions) increases the population, with loss, by 20%.

In addition:

1. Determination of a Non-Member's impact should only be utilized for initial inclusion in the SSP, not during subsequent five-year renewals. If a Non-Member is effective at improving the SSP population, the impact will decrease over time and the Non-Member should not be penalized and excluded later for helping at an earlier point.
2. If a Non-Member loses approval, for any reason, the benefit *will* have to be reassessed and proven before the application process can proceed. If the benefit is not proven, that Non-Member cannot be a member of the SSP.
3. The impact of a Non-Member should be determined for a single institution. Although several Non-Members may be proposed, the participation and continuation of each individual member is independent and should be modeled as such.
4. The impact is evaluated using the managed population at the time of evaluation, which includes AZA Accredited Institutions, Certified Related Facilities, and Approved Non-Members.
5. Analysis of a prospective Non-Member should be conducted and/or approved by a SPMAG planning member or an AZA Population Management Center (PMC) biologist; the same approval process used for validating breeding and transfer plans.
6. *ZooRisk* should be run with a baseline scenario that includes breeding management using only mean kinship.

## **AZA CONTACT INFORMATION**

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### **Small Population Management Advisory Group (SPMAG)**

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### **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/>