



Wildlife Reserves Singapore and Central Zoo Authority of India sign Memorandum of Understanding to promote regional wildlife conservation

SINGAPORE, XX October 2010 – Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS), Asia's leading operator of world-class wildlife attractions, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) of India to commit to joint initiatives and projects to protect and conserve threatened wildlife and habitats in the region.

The MoU swung into action immediately, with WRS sponsoring two Zoo Directors from India to attend the 1st Southeast Asian Animal Enrichment and Training Workshop in Singapore from 4 to 7 October. The two Zoo Directors from Arignar Anna Zoological Park and Sepahijala Zoological Park were exposed to the principles of animal enrichment and training, which could be implemented in their respective zoos.

Under the MoU, WRS and CZA will promote and co-ordinate staff exchange programmes to share knowledge in the technical and management aspects of zoo, conservation and research matters. WRS will facilitate a two-week attachment on zoo management for senior management from selected Indian zoos annually, while CZA will host WRS staff in specialised workshops.

In line with WRS' commitment to wildlife conservation through successful captive breeding, both organizations will co-ordinate the exchange of animal specimens to improve genetic diversity and ensure sustainable captive populations. WRS is particularly interested in learning to breed the Indian rhinoceros and participate in conservation programmes for the critically endangered Asian lions. Other native Indian animals which WRS hopes to partner CZA on with regards to conservation and husbandry management include the spotted mouse deer and sarus cranes.

The three-year partnership will also pave the way for both parties to undertake joint conservation and research projects in Southeast Asia and South Asia. This includes in-situ work, as well as projects on habitat protection, public education and awareness, and environmental issues. Both organisations will also serve as the channel of cooperation on regional projects that represent the interests of zoological institutions in both regions.



In addition, WRS and CZA will look into cultural exchanges such as performances, exhibitions, festivals, documentary and film screenings, as well as community activities, which will strengthen joint programmes.

“This collaboration between WRS and CZA is part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen professional ties with top-class zoological institutions across the world to achieve the greater aim of protecting and conserving global biodiversity,” said Ms Fanny Lai, Group CEO, Wildlife Reserves Singapore. “Through this latest tie-up, we hope to share best practices and strengthen our research capabilities in improving the genetic diversity of zoo animals and those in the wild.”

“This cooperation between WRS and CZA will have great significance particularly for the Indian zoos. Through this collaboration, we seek to improve the standards of the respective zoos and enhance the expertise of the Indian zoo personnel,” said Mr B.S Bonal, Member Secretary, Central Zoo Authority. “We also look forward to promoting and coordinating the exchange of animals with WRS to ensure sustainable captive breeding and enhance species existence in captivity for both organizations.”

ABOUT WILDLIFE RESERVES SINGAPORE

Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) is the parent company of award-winning attractions Jurong Bird Park, Night Safari, Singapore Zoo and the upcoming River Safari. WRS parks strive to be world-class leisure attractions, providing excellent exhibits of animals presented in their natural environment for the purpose of conservation, education and recreation.

In the areas of conservation and research, WRS parks have undertaken multiple projects through collaborations with various organizations and institutions on the oriental pied hornbill, pangolin and orang utan. Highly popular with tourists and locals, Jurong Bird Park welcomed 900,000 visitors, the Night Safari, more than 1.1 million, and Singapore Zoo over 1.6 million visitors in 2009.

More information can be found at www.wrs.com.sg



About Central Zoo Authority (CZA)

In India, functioning of zoos is regulated by an autonomous statutory body called Central Zoo Authority which has been constituted under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. The Authority consists of a Chairman, ten members and a Member Secretary. The main objective of the authority is to oversee the functioning of the zoos in the country and to provide them technical and other assistance for the improvement. Apart from the primary function of grant of recognition and release of financial assistance, the Central Zoo Authority also regulates the exchange of endangered animals listed under Schedule-I and II of the Wildlife Protection Act) amongst zoos. Standards and norms for housing, upkeep, health care and overall management of animals in zoos has been laid down under the Recognition of Zoo Rules, 2009. The Authority also coordinates and implements programmes on capacity building of zoo personnel, planned breeding programmes and ex-situ research including biotechnological intervention for conservation of species for complementing in-situ conservation efforts in the country. Every zoo in the country is required to obtain recognition from the Authority for its operation. The Authority evaluates the zoos with reference to the parameters prescribed under the Recognition of Zoo Rules, 2009 and grants recognition accordingly. Zoos which have no potential to come up to the prescribed standards and norms may be refused recognition and asked to close down. Since its inception in 1992, the Authority had received more than 510 applications for granting recognition as zoos. Based on the scrutiny of the documents and physical evaluations of the sites; the CZA has granted recognition to 199 facilities as zoos. Many of the others zoos either have been close down after rehabilitating the animals or asked to phase out their animals. The Authority's role is more of a facilitator than a regulator. It, therefore, provides technical and financial assistance to such zoos which have the potential to attain the desired standard in animal management. Only such captive facilities which have neither the managerial skills nor the requisite resources are asked to close down. Some of the major initiatives undertaken by the Authority since its inception include the Establishment of Laboratory for Conservation of Endangered Species at Hyderabad for carrying out research in biotechnology, planned breeding of Red Panda and its restocking into the wild, upgrading of diagnostic facilities for disease diagnosis at selected veterinary institutions and their networking with zoos on regional basis for better health care of animals.

More information can be found at www.cza.nic.in