

Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Ginger Elliott – African Lion Safari

Date of meeting: September 23rd, 2022

Who attended the meeting? What CAZA institute are they from?

1. Amy Chabot - African Lion Safari
 - a. Evan Metler
 - b. Ginger Elliott
2. Adam Grottoli - Assiniboine Conservancy
 - a. Elise Hampshire - Assiniboine Conservancy
3. Cheryl Laite - Little Ray's
4. Cheryl Sheridan - Little Ray's
5. Emiko Wong - Ecomuseum Zoo
6. *Jessica Steiner - Wildlife Preservation Canada*
7. Kendra Ross - Safari Niagra
8. Sharolyn - Riverview Park and Zoo
9. Vicky Carriere - Parc Omega
10. Catherine Shier - Edmonton Valley Zoo

Contact information for main speakers:

- Amy Chabot, Director of Conservation Research, African Lion Safari, achabot@lionsafari.com
- Jessica Steiner, Wildlife Preservation Canada & Canadian Species Initiative, jessica@wildlifepreservation.ca

Reminders:

- Please sign-up for a meeting to present your facility's conservation efforts: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/12E9HRIxI7DUTC-pKjs5duTOd122nTCX6/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109353037694980929168&rtpof=true&sd=true>
- The 2022 CAZA Conference will be hosted by BC Wildlife Park in Kamloops, October 18 - 20, 2022 registration is now open.

Meeting resources:

Poll questions PLEASE RESPOND:

<https://PollEv.com/surveys/yIxYRSoWLk5KNCfipPk8T/respond>

Vets Go Wild: <https://worldwideexperience.com/vets-go-wild/>

Canadian Snake ICAP: <https://canadianspeciesinitiative.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Canadian-Snakes-Integrated-Collection-Assessment-and-Planning-Workshop-Final-Report-2021.pdf>

EAZA TAG application form: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jsH_xUSt_7M77LI-RUpH8UL1VY9HUVcd/view?usp=sharing

GSMP vs SAFE vs EAZA https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FT1-zwL0aF3LORWnJWLzep-P_qelEifu/view?usp=sharing

Amy Chabot's slideshow:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1c4PG0AlqoJ8quzrkclcYPWqNn1bkJTsvW/edit?usp=sharing&oid=109353037694980929168&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Recording:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1r0LkM11rDYn4AKlp7cKcBRJ_hpbXTeij/view?usp=sharing

Meeting summary:

2:00pm Meeting called. Brief hellos.

2:05pm Amy Chabot, Director of Conservation Research, African Lion Safari (ALS)

The CAZA meeting will happen in Kamloops BC this October. News has been coming out through the CAZA newsletter to those of you who receive it. To those who don't know tickets are on sale now. There is a draft agenda that's slowly being updated, the Conservation committee has been allotted two slots on the last day. I would really like to set up for that meeting, so that's what today is all about.

We have a poll to help us plan for the CAZA conference. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability: <https://PollEv.com/surveys/ylxYRSoWLk5KNCfipPk8T/respond>

We will make sure to send out the resource documents and a recording of this meeting today. We hope to get feedback from as broad a group as possible. The survey will remain active throughout the week. Depending on the answers received it will help us decide what components our in-person CAZA conference needs. The poll service is anonymous and your answers are private but we would love honest answers to help see where discussions should go.

What we are going to talk about today and what I hope we can continue to discuss is 'How does CAZA want to assist with recovery of Canadian Species at Risk where ex situ can assist?' We have had preliminary discussions but would love to move forward on the subject with the poll answers and CAZA conference meeting.

So I will introduce Jessica Steiner, she has talked to us before and I thought it would be useful for her to review for us the work that was done on the Integrated Collection & Assessment Planning workshop for Canadian snakes which many of you participated in.

2:15pm Jessica Steiner, Canadian Species Initiative (CSI) and Wildlife Preservation Canada (WPC)

Thanks Amy, so this will hopefully be a re-cap for most of you. This presentation was recently given to the Canadian Herpetology Society conference this past weekend but has a nice review of the Integrated Collection & Assessment Planning workshop for Canadian snakes.

A little background, CSI was founded in 2019 by WPC and ALS and the real aim is to improve species conservation in Canada through incorporating the one plan approach to recovery planning and species conservation. Our goal is really to promote and establish a coordinated and holistic approach to species recovery in Canada by making sure the most effective processes are used which includes participation by

ex situ (zoos & aquariums). Just as a note the CSI is the recognized regional resource center for IUCN Conservation Planning Specialist Group in Canada.

As a reminder, the One Plan approach is integrated development, management strategies and conservation actions for all the populations of a species whether in the wild or in human care. The one plan approach is considered the gold standard for species conservation. Traditional planning for conservation deals with in situ and ex situ separately whereas we have now learned this is not as effective as planning together.

There are many places in species decline where ex situ has the opportunity to help. They can address causes of primary threats, through activities such as research and training as well as education that directly addresses threats. Ex situ can help to offset the effects of threats (i.e. headstarting), buying time for species at imminent risk of extinction (rescue and insurance). We are advocating for species conservation planning to have both in situ and ex situ groups consider each other in the big picture of species planning. Consider ALL available options including ex situ management.

There are planning processes in place when you are planning or recommending actions, the actual role for an ex situ facility has to be clearly defined and there are processes for doing that. So ex situ conservation assessments allow in situ and ex situ experts to evaluate how ex situ can be availed to a species. The process can be tailored to any taxonomic group regardless of current or historical ex situ management and it can be used in a single or multi species context. BUT no matter how its done it really needs to always involve both in situ and ex situ experts. There is a variety of ex situ conservation assessment approaches which vary in their levels of detail.

The Integrated Collection & Assessment Planning workshop for Canadian snakes, held in March of 2021 was a collaborative initiative with CPSG. Snakes were chosen as 60% of Canadian species had a level of risk according to COSEWIC and the majority of species did not have collaborative species management plans in existence (with exception of the Massasauga Rattlesnake). Even though there were some recommended actions for Canadian snakes in recovery documents provincially. So we felt there was a great opportunity to improve snake conservation in Canada and were able to bring together a huge panel of experts from across North America to participate.

Prior to the meeting lots of work went into developing the workshop including reference materials for each species that included threats and current ex situ collections. The sheets were provided as reference materials for the workshop. Experts from all walks of life joined to participate in ex situ feasibility analysis for each of the 39 taxa. What we did was follow the 5 step decision making process of the IUCN decision making guidelines. Participants were able to evaluate conservation value, feasibility and risk for each role and each species. The results were recommendations tailored to each species for ex situ conservation, determined as achievable and with high conservation value.

Full details are available on the CSI website and provided in the resources for this talk.

We can see that results can be loosely grouped: At-risk species with established ex situ populations have the most recommendations such as breeding and release programs. Whereas training education and research was recommended for most taxa as non-threatened snakes could be model species for more threatened species.

As an example, the Massasauga Rattlesnake has been divided in Canada into two designated units which were assessed separately (Carolinian and Great Lakes/St.Lawrence). As the populations have different status and threats different ex situ recommendations were made for the two designated units.

General recommendations from the Integrated Collection & Assessment Planning workshop for Canadian snakes:

1. Ex situ conservation activities have value in the conservation of Canadian snakes
2. Conservation-based education is important for changing negative perceptions and behaviors towards snakes
3. All ex situ roles that involve releases of animals must include research to evaluate success of these efforts and be integrated with in situ conservation efforts to address primary threats.
4. In general, ex situ conservation-based research, training and education should rely on opportunities from rescue, rehabilitation and or confiscation
5. There is a need to coordinate native snake collections and share husbandry knowledge on a national scale and improved communication between in situ and ex situ communities
6. Acquiring animals for potential ex situ roles should not be used as the justification for a salvage operation in the face of development
7. Rescued snakes should be returned to their original location as the first priority

We would like to work with you further to put the recommendations from the ICAP report into action in Canadian ex situ. Also there is a genomics workshop for Massasauga scheduled for 2023 and the formation of CEMRIG - the Canadian Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Group has allowed for more conservation action for Massasauga. On another note we had really good feedback from the IUCN Viper Specialist group, they would love to replicate our process for a series of workshops with global level of vipers. Our hope is that this is the first of many workshops and that we will cover other taxonomic groups throughout the years.

Amy - thank you very much Jessica, that was great. If you could put a link to the full report we will be sure to share it with the group.

2:30 Amy Chabot, Director of Conservation Research, African Lion Safari

So now is the time to look back at the poll and answer the next set of questions 7 to 11. These are related to the iCAP and will help us in future discussions. So you all know, Jessica Steiner will be at the CAZA Conference in Kamloops and will be available for questions and discussion in person.

How does CAZA want to assist with the recovery of Canadian species at risk where ex situ can assist? Some background research was needed to try and move this ahead. So we tried to see how other regional zoo associations do their species management.

What it seemed like was that there was two parts, one being Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGS) and the second Species Management plans whereby we are more specific in what our roles are and who is involved. When Jessica first gave this presentation it was brought forth (potentially by Jeff) that we move forward with Canadian tags.

What is a TAG (Taxon Advisory Group). So in brief, a collaborative group of volunteer experts from the zoo community that consult about a specific taxon, but its region specific. So AZA and EAZA both have tags which are internally focused. WAZA provides resources to the TAGS but also receives resources from these TAGs and re distributes among members. So we looked into how one makes a TAG, AZA did not have described methods but EAZA had an easy form which is used to apply for a new TAG group: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jsH_xUSt_7M77LI-RUpH8UL1VY9HUVcd/view?usp=sharing

Nothing seems to be big, scary or onerous about creating TAGs. It seems to be a way to identify collective expertise in our community. AZA has 43 different TAGs some are very broad i.e. freshwater fish

vs elephant which is very focused. So a loose grouping of species or related species, so as CAZA maybe we want to think of creating TAGs for Canadian species.

I will say in the background research these TAGs have no inclusion of North American endemic species. For example the passerine TAG does not include anything from NA, which is actually what spurred the formation of the SAFE passerine group. So there is a need, there isn't a lot of overlap and our species are not being covered by existing TAGs.

I am curious as to whether any associations are associated with TAGs currently and there are questions on the poll to address this.

So then TAGs are one thing but they are not management plans, they do not provide specific framework to move ahead recommendations from for example this snake ICAP. We pulled out three different models for discussion from those we encountered in our research, if you have experience with any of these we would love to hear about it. There are some resources we have made to help:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FT1-zwL0aF3L0rWnJWLzep-P_qeIlfu/view?usp=sharing

We looked at GSMP which is a WAZA initiative, the AZA SAFE programs and the EAZA EEP/LTMP methodology which are very detailed nested plans. So there are some amazing models out there that we can take from but might not need all of. We did not look over the SSP plans from AZA as they are being phased out and between the other three plan models we should have a good basis to move ahead without comparing SSPs. If you want us to look into SSP's and think we should take a deeper dive into how they are run please contact us and we would love to discuss and dive further in.

I would like to move the discussion forward in the coming meetings based off the answers to the poll questions. We believe these will help us to guide discussion and start discussing how we move process to action for example with some of the recommendations provided by the Canadian Snake ICAP

If we refer to the GSMP vs SAFE vs EAZA pdf document (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FT1-zwL0aF3L0rWnJWLzep-P_qeIlfu/view?usp=sharing) This is a table that summarizes the three programs mentioned allowing us to compare the programs in a more direct way, this has been provided in the chat and resources in the meeting minutes

We looked at what's a species eligibility criteria?

GSMP: Species are considered for endorsement by WAZA through Committee for Population Management. Typically, the existence of an International Studbook forms the basis of a GSMP

SAFE: Species threatened with extinction/ Has established conservation plan(s) (e.g., recovery plan). Stakeholders are identified and/or engaged. Two or more AZA-accredited zoos or aquariums/certified facilities committed

EAZA: Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) decide based on Regional Collection Plans. RCP recommends species for EAZA Ex Situ Plan (EEP)

The plans required for each program are different too:

GSMP: Convenor organizes Master Planning workshop with GSMP partners within one year of GSMP approval. Master Plan produced within six months of workshop Convenor submits Master Plan to WAZA for review and approval. GSMP partners implement Master Plan. REVIEWED EVERY TWO YEARS

SAFE: Within six months of AZA agreeing to species. Template used to identify conservation objectives including conservation/science and public/stakeholder strategies to address threats. And communication

objectives. AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department (safe@aza.org) approves SAFE species Processes and Protocols. REVIEWED EVERY THREE YEARS

EAZA: EEP application template exists but the TAG can tailor options. Each application submitted to and approved by the EAZA EEP Committee. Long Term Management Plan (LTMP) is then produced for the EEP. More precisely defines the long term genetic and demographic goals and action plan to be implemented. LTMP is approved by the EEP Species Committee. EAZA templates for EEP application and LTMP REVIEWED EVERY FIVE YEARS

Staffing needs of the programs vary greatly:

GSMP: Convener & Program partner representatives

SAFE: Program Leader, Vice program leader (optional), Steering committee, Treasurer (recommended), Secretary (recommended), Program partner representatives, Advisors (recommended), Wildlife Conservation Committee Liaison & Wildlife Conservation Committee Coordinator

EAZA: Taxon Advisory Groups, EEP Committee, EEP Coordinator (ex situ plan), ESB Coordinator (studbook), Program partners.

Institution roles are basically the same across the board, you promote the management plans and participate in the program

TAGs participation varies greatly among the different plans with EAZA's being most complicated and SAFE requiring no TAG assistance.

The last section gives a brief overview to the components each plan requires including the text required.

Another reminder that this is the time to complete the poll. I love that we have twice a month meetings but realize it's hard for everyone to make it an eerie time so I thought that it would be valuable for us and CAZA to discuss this subject moving forward. It's an idea, Jim asked what we would like to do during our time at the conference, this is what we came up with, but I would love any feedback.

Cheryl Laite: I'm curious with the different styles, different plans, I'm curious as to what your opinion is and I wondered if we could pull components from plans? And I am wondering what with your experience would be your thoughts?

Amy Chabot: I do have some thoughts, so these models are those I thought would be best for us to pull methodology from. Though I think we can pick and choose. I have to say in my view EAZA is far ahead of us in working on the OPA and their documentation shows they have been at it for years so it seems largely prescriptive and this is part of them having time developing and adding in stipulations as things happen over time in the program. SAFE also has great aspects but my favorite is the WAZA GSMP models, I really like the structure. It also has the benefit of WAZA could assist with developing a studbook for the species so I feel like we would get a lot of support if this is the model we move forward with. I don't know honestly if WAZA would be okay with regional tweaking. Across the board the concern will always be who can lead the effort and who makes sure everybody does what they said they would do. Which is what I really like about the GSMP convener. SAFE it seems that groups get together but we can't find the follow up on it whereas the convene in a GSMP pushes things along.

Cheryl Laite: Everything has pros and cons but I do find sometimes the time for execution of any plan for any species gets so much red tape and it delays starting. By the time you have got any initiative moving the species are severely threatened. It would be nice to start in advance of the threatened status, go

upstream and accomplish the whole spectrum of preventative and protective measures as well as defensive measures so that is where my thought process goes.

Amy Chabot: Those are excellent thoughts which I echo; which is why I personally like GSMP as its not onerous. I think we want to discuss bringing on other partners to help us move ahead, so with Jessica and WPC with CSI's connection to the IUCN CPSG and these activities such as the ICAP and A2P, COSEWIC is really far behind in their assessments and I think there would be a role for us we could step up collaborating to CSI and partner with them. Which is awkward for me to say as I am cofounder of CSI but it could give us a link to IUCN that will provide support moving forward.

Please if you have any feedback and comments email us we would love to make the most of our Kamloops discussion negative or positive we really want to hear what you think.

2:55 Cheryl Laite, Little Ray's Reptile Zoo

Yeah so! If you look up Will Sowlds he runs a program called Vets Go Wild; a conservation based course for vet students. He really throws the students in. First day they were doing translocation, then collaring elephants, sedating lions etc. He has a course somewhat equivalent for vets as well and these are things we really don't have a lot of exposure to, if it weren't for my work with Rhinos I wouldn't have known about it. So I went to audit the course because he does have a global approach to conservation and he is also working to perform landscape expansion in rhino strongholds expanding habitats. Which is part of a long term plan to reclaim these ecosystems and having the habitat expansion for rhino conservation so he does flora and fauna. It was quite amazing and I did quite a lot of assisted teaching on it which was lovely. Excellent experience for any vet or vet student or vet technician. And there is a separate course for vets that are already working.

I would love to bring an introduction to conservation medicine course to vet students and vets in Canada and Grenada. So I have sent in a proposal to the school for this course. I didn't get a lot of exposure to this in school myself, maybe there was some One Health exposure but unless they take it on themselves vet students are not educated about their role in conservation.

Amy Chabot: I was speaking to a member of St Lawrence College where they have a vet tech program and expressed interest in talking to us at ALS before so I would love to put you in contact if interested.

<https://worldwideexperience.com/vets-go-wild/>

The poll will be open all week, thank you everyone for coming. We shall see you soon.

ADJOURNMENT: 3:00pm

Next Meeting Date: Friday, October 7th 2022 2pm EST